2015 ANNUAL REPORT

COME OUT AND PLAY

mParks℠ | Michigan Recreation & Park Association

The voice of Michigan's parks and recreation community

WE ADVOCATE | WE TEACH | WE INSPIRE

mParks.org

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I can hardly believe it's been a year! It seems like just last week that we left Lansing after a great Conference & Trade Show! The annual event is a wonderful way to begin a new year, with many opportunities to learn and re-connect with colleagues and friends. I have no doubt that the 2016 Conference will be a great way to jump start 2016.

As with 2014, many people contributed their time, energy, and ideas to advance mParks' mission in 2015. I want to thank the Board of Directors, our Chief Operating Officer Ann Conklin, mParks staff, the chairpersons of our committees, networks, and focus areas, and everyone who made contributions to make 2015 such a great year! Everything that is accomplished by the Association is due to the work of many, and I truly appreciate everyone's efforts over this past year.

One of the most important accomplishments of 2015 is the fact that grant dollars are flowing into mParks. Thanks to the efforts of our COO, staff, and many others, mParks and parks and recreation departments are being viewed as key players in improving the health and wellness of our residents. The link between **parks and recreation** and **health and wellness** (which P&R professionals know has existed forever) is finally being recognized by funders, grantors, and decision makers. This recognition will impact many of us in the profession as we develop programs and facilities. More information on mParks health and wellness grants is available on pages 10-11, and I invite you to read up about the related resources that will be available to members in 2016.

In addition, 2015 saw the launch of our new identity – mParks. Flip to page 4 to learn more about the new brand, as well as our efforts over the past year to invite residents to "Come Out & Play" through Michigan's plentiful parks and recreation opportunities.

I'm very excited about 2016 and the future of mParks! I hope everyone has a fun, safe year and I look forward to my final stretch as mParks president – all of you have made it a fun ride!

Sean Fletcher, AFO, CPRP, CPSI
mParks President
City of Kalamazoo Parks and Recreation

This full report is available online at mParks.org/AnnualReport.

LETTER FROM THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Years from now when our members are exploring the history of our Association, 2015 will stand out as a pivotal time.

First of all, membership is growing and the Association re-gained financial stability and created policies and systems to maintain fiscal integrity. That, in itself, is plenty to celebrate.

Secondly, our Association underwent the first name change in more than 40 years, adopting its new, more easily-understood identity of mParks and the tagline "Come Out & Play." This brand transition was made possible with the financial support of longtime member and former president Vic Chiasson, and orchestrated by the Factory Detroit team under direction of Mark Lantz, one of the creators of the Pure Michigan brand. While we are still the Michigan Recreation and Park Association, we are doing business as (dba) mParks. The discussions leading to this transition were lengthy and spirited, and Mark really did a great job leading us through the process, challenging us to understand the universal symbolism of parks and the connection we have in our communities. The support and positive feedback we have received from our members, from our partners, and from the public has been very encouraging.

Building on the success of MI Big Green Gym, 2015 also saw increasing connections between parks and recreation and health and wellness, and mParks received four different grants to create resources that connect parks to health. Details on the four different grants and the funding they provide can be found throughout this report. This connection and recognition is a major step forward in establishing support for the essential services parks and recreation provide in our communities.

Many have heard me say this over and over again - in my 40 years in the business, I've never seen a better time for parks and recreation. Our time is now. We need to seize the opportunities knocking on our door.

Ann Conklin
Chief Operating Officer
mParks, the Michigan Recreation and Park Association

mParks AT THE TABLE

In 2015, mParks provided a voice for the parks, recreation, and leisure services industry within the Michigan Sense of Place Council, the Michigan State Parks Advisory Council, and the Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan – Resources and Environment Committee.

We also had a presence at national gatherings, including the Greater Greener Conference in San Francisco (hosted by City Parks Alliance) and the National Institute on Walkability and Active Communities in Nashville (hosted by the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

Parks and recreation were recognized as key contributors to health and wellness in 2015, as evidenced by our receipt of funding from Michigan Health Endowment Fund. Only 13 organizations were invited to apply, so we are doing something right to be both invited and funded. We have also forged partnerships with the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services.

mParks UPDATES

mParks℠ | Michigan Recreation & Park Association

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New Year, New Look: MRPA Rebrands as mParks in 2015

In 2015, the Michigan Recreation & Park Association (commonly known as MRPA) officially adopted the new identity and brand of mParks – the voice of Michigan's parks and recreation community.

The development of a new brand began at the 2014 Strategic Planning Retreat on Mackinac Island. An Integrated Marketing Ad Hoc Committee was formed shortly thereafter, and through good fortune and cultivated relationships, a connection was made with Mark Lantz of the advertising firm Factory.

Mark and his team guided the process and developed a promotional campaign. Production costs were funded by an extremely generous donation from Past President Vic Chiasson, who proficiently led the Integrated Marketing Committee.

The mParks brand was unveiled at "Come Out & Play at the Capitol" – our annual outdoor education and advocacy event in Lansing (see details on page 13). This new identity represents an exciting new chapter for the Association and profession, and the promotional campaign has created enhanced awareness for parks, recreation, and natural resources in Michigan, as well as a greater understanding of what our organization does.

The Name Game

mParks was selected as a short, catchy replacement for MRPA. The inclusion of the word "parks" in the name gives those unfamiliar with the organization a glimpse of what we're all about, whereas the previous acronym "MRPA," on its own, provided no hints about our mission or purpose. Our Association is committed to serving parks, recreation facilities, and community centers of all types, and the new name supports the mission by giving the public a quick, at-a-glance idea of what we do.

The legal name remains the same - Michigan Recreation and Park Association doing business as (dba) mParks.

New Outreach Campaign: Come Out & Play

In addition to the new brand identity, Factory developed a theme song for the Association and the parks and recreation community at large: "Come Out & Play," featuring Michigan musician Taylor Taylor. The song is an invitation to all residents to join us in celebrating and enjoying Michigan's parks, recreation facilities, community centers, and trails.

Factory and mParks also teamed up to create a short pitch explaining who we are, as well as a digital toolkit featuring radio public service announcements, sample social media posts, and a host of other resources that can be tailored for use at the local level. mParks Premier Agency members were provided exclusive access to the "Come Out & Play" online resource toolkit in fall 2015, and the toolkit is available to all members following mParks Conference, February 16-19, 2016.

More to Come in 2016

As 2015 drew to a close, mParks went to work collecting and organizing members' P&R footage for a "Come Out & Play" video PSA. The final product is being unveiled at the 2016 Conference & Trade Show.

Conference attendees were also invited to attend an educational session about the mParks branding tools at the 2016 Conference & Trade Show. Through this educational session and continuing efforts, the Association will further strengthen the mParks brand.

New Faces at mParks

Along with its new brand identity, mParks welcomed several staff members in 2015.

The Association was awarded $1.1 million from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund in 2015 for the creation of a "Come Out & Play" fitness curriculum, designed to get kids active in parks and recreation to improve the health and fitness of Michigan's citizens. (More information on the grant-funded program is available on page 10.)

Ann Kostin-McGill joined the team as the mParks Field Coordinator for the Come Out & Play program in 2015. An avid fitness and outdoor enthusiast, Ann came to mParks a wealth of experience in the parks and recreation arena. She served as the liaison between mParks and Come Out & Play partners, providing assistance with programming, logistics, reporting, and more.

mParks welcomed Communications & Marketing Manager Jacquelyn Baker in October. She has already put her background in parks and recreation communication to great use, managing, executing, and improving all mParks marketing and communications initiatives, including website, email updates, and social media.

Kari Woloszyk joins the mParks team in early 2016. Her responsibilities will include administration of the Building Healthy Communities grant, as well as support of the Come Out & Play curriculum.

Come Out & Play Theme Song on iTunes

There are lots of ways to use the "Come Out & Play" theme song, which is free for mParks members! The full .mp3 version can be downloaded for free from the online toolkit (both with and without lyrics), and members can share the link from SoundCloud for residents and visitors to listen. The general public can also purchase the song on iTunes for $0.99 – be sure to promote this catchy song to residents and individuals who may wish to purchase it!

Now Playing on YouTube

Visit our new YouTube channel to see a music video showing the making of our "Come Out & Play" theme song, footage from "Come Out & Play at the Capitol," and shareable videos about Active Living through Parks! Search mParks at YouTube.com or visit **tinyurl.com/mParksYouTube.**

Free Resources: How to Access the Branding Toolkit

View the entire toolkit including the catchy new tune "Come Out & Play" at **mParks.org/mParks.**

MEMBERSHIP

Breakdown of 2015 Membership Categories*

Premier Agencies	73	Individual Professionals	77
Premier Additional Professionals	925	Affiliate	12
Basic Agency	94	Associates	25
Basic Agency Addl' Professionals	173	Retired Professionals	46
Board & Commissioners	437	Students	232
		Vendors	94
		Partners	25

As the voice of Michigan's parks and recreation community, mParks is proud to represent 2,200+ diverse professional, student, vendor and agency members, each of whom actively impact the lives of Michigan residents.

Membership Growth in 2015

mParks membership grew more than 20 percent in 2015, from 1,800 to more than 2,200 members! We have to offer a heartfelt thank you for your support. Our Association is only as strong as its membership, and none of the work highlighted in this annual report would be possible without your involvement. Again, thank you.

mParks Students: Enhanced Opportunities & Increased Membership

After several years of slowly-declining student membership, mParks leadership decided it was time for a change in 2015, and renewed their focus on student membership and opportunities.

Partnership efforts sprung to life with colleges and universities and a new Student Focus Area established exciting new goals, a new mentorship program, and enhanced volunteer and internship opportunities. With these new initiatives, mParks student membership has taken an exciting turn, and we looking forward to welcoming new student members and expanding student offerings. Learn more at **mParks.org/students**.

Premier Agency Membership participation grows

Since the introduction of the Premier Agency membership in 2013, participation continues to grow. In addition to the benefits of basic membership, premier membership includes membership for all employees plus up to ten Board & Commission members, and includes exclusive discounts, services and information:

- Free use of GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar Software
- Eligibility for MI Big Green Gym funding opportunities
- Five hours of free consulting services
- Priority and/or exclusive professional development registration & resources
- Special discounts on events and services
- Five print copies of membership directory
- Member article written & shared via mParks.org and eBlast
- Dedicated post highlighting agency on mParks social media channels

A huge thank you to the 2015 mParks Premier Agencies:**

Berkley Parks & Recreation
Bridgeport Township Parks & Recreation
Chesterfield Township Parks & Recreation
City of Birmingham
City of Detroit Recreation Department
City of Grosse Pointe Farms Parks & Recreation
City of Grosse Pointe Parks & Recreation
City of Jackson Parks and Recreation Department
City of Kalamazoo Parks & Recreation
City of Monroe Recreation
City of Port Huron Parks & Recreation
City of Rochester Hills Parks & Recreation
City of St. Joseph
City of Traverse City Parks & Recreation
City of Ypsilanti Parks & Recreation
Clare County Parks & Recreation
Clinton Township Parks & Recreation
Davison Township
Dearborn Recreation and Parks Department
Delta Township Parks & Recreation
DeWitt Area Recreation Authority
East Lansing Parks, Recreation and Arts
Eaton County Parks and Recreation
Emmet County Parks Department
Family Outdoor Adventure Club
Farmington Hills Special Services
Ferndale Recreation
Freeland Community Sports Association
Fremont Community Recreation Authority
Frenchtown Township Recreation
Grand Traverse County Parks & Recreation
Grosse Ile Recreation Department
Grosse Pointe Woods
Hamtramck Recreation Department
Howell Area Parks & Recreation Authority
Huntington Woods Parks & Recreation
Huron-Clinton Metroparks
Independence Township Parks, Recreation & Seniors
Ingham County Parks Department
Kalamazoo County Parks
Lansing Parks & Recreation Department
Livonia Parks & Recreation
Meridian Township Parks & Recreation
Michigan DNR
Midland Parks & Recreation
Mount Pleasant Parks & Recreation
Northville Parks & Recreation
Oak Park Recreation
Oakland County Parks & Recreation
Oakland Township Parks & Recreation
Oxford Township Parks & Recreation
Pittsfield Township Parks & Recreation
Recreational Authority of Roseville & Eastpointe
Redford Leisure Services
Richland Township Park
Rochester Avon Recreation Authority
Saginaw County Parks and Recreation
Saline Parks & Recreation
SELCRA
Southfield Parks & Recreation
Southgate Parks and Recreation
Springfield Township Parks & Recreation
St. Clair County Parks & Recreation
St. Clair Shores Parks & Recreation
Trenton Parks & Recreation
Troy Recreation Department
Village of Fruitport
Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation
Waterford Parks & Recreation
West Bloomfield Parks & Recreation Commission
Wyandotte Recreation
Ypsilanti Township Recreation
Zeeland Public Schools

Information on mParks membership is available online at **mParks.org/membership.**

*Membership breakdown as of 01/15/2016
** Premier Agency members as of 1/15/2016

ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES

mParks Green Gift PROGRAM

The Green Gift program
The Green Gift program is an environmentally-friendly alternative to providing gifts for mParks Conference attendees. Instead of handing out portfolios, tote bags, or other small gifts (which are often forgotten shortly after conference) mParks strives to provide a lasting impact by instead donating gift funds to an environmentally-focused project submitted by a member agency.

The 2015 Green Gift was awarded to Petoskey State Park to install recycling receptacles for beach and day use visitors, playing an important role in reducing waste, protecting natural areas and wildlife. Learn more about the Green Gift at **mParks.org/GreenGift.**

Convert Capitol Avenue: Parks & Placemaking Advocacy with the Michigan Municipal League
In July, mParks and the MI Big Green Gym initiative participated in MML's Convert Capitol Avenue event, designed to show how parks and placemaking could transform the corridor, which serves as the front door to the State Capitol building.

The event included street transformation, a farmers market, "Fitness Friday", and park(ing) days – where community partners transformed parking spaces into small "parklets" for public enjoyment.

mParks partnered with Miracle Midwest and Ingham County Parks to create a parklet with real sod grass and fun playground equipment – it was a hit! The parklet engaged visitors, provided materials about mParks and MI Big Green Gym, and received a wealth of media coverage.

More details on the #mibiggreengym program can be found on page 11.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Since its inception, the Association has provided valuable education, training, and professional development opportunities. In 2015, mParks expanded its educational offerings even further, facilitating more than 1,300 registrations at various educational events in addition to the annual Conference.

2015 Conference & Trade Show

The Annual Conference & Trade Show is the premier professional development event for Michigan's parks and recreation industry, joining together hundreds of P&R professionals, advocates, vendors, and students for four days of education, networking, and camaraderie.

Educational Sessions and Special Events

The 2015 conference in Lansing provided 100+ education sessions, networking events, award ceremonies, a mentorship lunch, an all-Conference think-tank, and much more.

Pre-Conference Sessions

In addition to conference sessions and events, mParks hosted several Pre-Conference education opportunities:

- **Bonus Marketing Session for Premier Agencies (new in 2015)**
  This interactive marketing workshop featured strategies from business, psychology, and behavioral economics applied to P&R marketing. (More about Premier Agency membership on page 6.)
- **Certified Playground Safety Inspector Course & Exam**
  This program is the most comprehensive training opportunity available on public playground safety, through which nationally-certified safety experts share information on how to successfully complete the CPSI exam.
- **Camp Institute (new in 2015)**
  Camp administrators and senior seasonal camp staff participated in hands-on activities and received valuable results of a statewide camp survey at this session, which featured award-winning speaker Michael Brandywine.
- **Michigan Trails Summit**
  This annual assembly of trail enthusiasts, advocates, and organizations covers all facets of trails, including regional efforts and issues, water trails, economic impact, and funding.
- **NAYS Academy for Youth Sports Administrators (new in 2015)**
  This opportunity, geared toward professionals pursuing the Certified Youth Sports Administrator (CYSA) credential, provided a day of hands-on training, followed by the opportunity to complete the certification process online.
- **Technology Forum (new in 2015)**
  The free Tech Forum brought together developers and users of current recreation software for a discussion of undiscovered features, shortcuts, and other software program benefits.
- **Therapeutic Recreation Institute**
  Topics in this session included humor for health, horticulture, celebrating the older adults story, music and art therapy, traumatic brain injuries, and dementia care.

2015 NEW TRAININGS & EVENTS

In evaluation of Conference 2015, mParks members voiced a desire for more professional development and education opportunities outside of the Conference & Trade Show – and we listened, adding the following programs with the help of committees, focus areas and many other valuable partners.

- ADA Training (March 2015)
- Chainsaw Safety Training (May 2015)
- Summer Staff Workshop (June 2015)
- Creating a Culture of Customer Service Excellence (September 2015)
- CPSI Course & Exam (October 2015 - new date)
- Trail Maintenance Workshops (October 2015)
- Southeast Michigan Park System Tour (October 2015)
- Urban Parks Partnership Workshops (October 2015)
- Social Media Training for Local Government (November 2015)

Career Center - mParks.org/jobs
The mParks Career Center housed 220 jobs in 2015, making it a valuable place for professionals to advance their career! Posting is free for mParks basic agencies and premier agencies, $50 for all other members, and $100 for non-members.

Looking Ahead to 2016
The mParks New Professionals group (formerly known as "Young Professionals") expanded its focus in 2015 to include professionals of all ages who joined the parks and recreation industry in the past seven years. Visit **mParks.org/NewPros** to learn more about the New Pros Focus Area.

Several 2016 educational opportunities, such as the CPSI course, have already seen high registration rates, which indicates a strong year for professional development and the industry as a whole.

Thank you to all the partners and sponsors who made the 2015 professional development opportunities a success. Thanks especially to the 2015 Conference Committee, and presenting sponsor Miracle Midwest (complete list of 2015 partners on page 19).

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Parks and recreation initiatives across the state are enhancing quality of life by improving resident health and wellness, which happens to be a top initiative of the mParks Board. The Association is proud of our commitment to telling these positive stories and demonstrating the undeniable value of our industry.

COME OUT AND Play!

MICHIGAN health ENDOWMENT FUND

Come Out & Play: mParks' Health and Wellness Curriculum, Supported by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund mParks.org/MHEF

In June 2015, mParks put into action $1.1 million from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund to create "Come Out & Play" – a program to improve the health and fitness of Michigan youth, families, and seniors. This program supplements existing community health and activity initiatives to strengthen agency impact.

Extending the invitation to Come Out & Play

All Come Out & Play programs are designed to meet physical fitness and health guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control, with flexibility for local agencies to maximize local impact. Program priorities include:

- after-school & summer camp youth programming
- senior fitness resources
- virtual classes for homebound seniors
- family fitness opportunities

Providing Partner Resources

mParks provided administrative support, digital resources, and equipment for agencies, including a custom measurement tool, comprehensive youth curriculum, virtual senior class materials, marketing information, supportive research, pedometers, and incentives.

Achieving Astonishing Results

In 2015, 41 local partners initiated 21 programs, and 1,433 participants logged 112,315,655 steps!

Looking Ahead to 2016

The Come Out & Play program will continue with financial support from the MHEF and will implement improvements based on 2015 feedback. mParks will present a 2016 Conference session about the program, its impacts, and how communities can implement it locally.

A nonprofit corporation and independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

MI Big Green Gym
mibiggreengym.org

The MI Big Green Gym program promotes Michigan's plentiful active opportunities in public parks, trails, and outdoor spaces.

Join the movement!

Use **#mibiggreengym** on social media content, share the Active Living Through Parks videos and other resources online, and post 5Ks, guided hikes, geocaching events and other physical activity-based events to the online calendar.

Healthy Recreation Catalyst Award
mParks.org/healthyrecreationcatalyst

In 2015, a new grant opportunity was funded by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, awarding $15,000 to mParks agency members for projects focused on health and physical activity.

2015 winners: Genesee County Parks, Lansing Parks & Recreation, the Michigan DNR, and Tecumseh Parks and Recreation.

Eat Healthy Oakland County Parks

In summer 2015, mParks helped launch a new pilot program to improve healthy food offerings at park and recreation facilities, featuring visitor taste tests of new potential healthy menu items at Red Oaks Waterpark and Groveland Oaks County Park.

Based on the pilot program, partners are now developing food guidelines, marketing materials, a case study, and other resources, which will be made available to mParks members.

Active Living Through Parks
www.mParks.org/activeliving

The Active Living Through Parks video series was created in 2015 to highlight healthy outdoor activities and parks and recreation facilities throughout Michigan, thanks to a partnership with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and grant funding from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS).

MOVEMENT: mParks 2016 Conference & Trade Show Theme

Throughout 2015, the mParks Conference Committee worked diligently to plan the 2016 event, highlighting health and wellness with the theme of "Movement – Healthy Environment | Healthy Lifestyles | Healthy Communities." The 2016 Conference will feature special sessions on health and wellness, as well as fitness activities to get attendees moving all three days!

ADVOCACY

The Association works tirelessly each year to keep members informed of relevant policy issues, promote the importance of the P&R industry, and endorse actions that support parks and recreation as essential services. In 2015, mParks' advocacy efforts supported members on a variety of issues, detailed on the opposite page.

Defending the MNRTF - mParks.org/MNRTF

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) is a key source of funding for parks and recreation projects. mParks continues to defend that funding from legislators hoping to utilize Trust Fund dollars for other, unintended uses.

In 2015, mParks developed a compelling, spiral-bound book that provided key facts about the Trust Fund, 120 parks and recreation projects and their impacts on quality of life. Each page also served as a brochure, tailored for each Trust Fund grant recipient with project-specific photos and quotes regarding the community impact of the grant.

The book was provided to each member of the Trust Fund Board during the 2015 Conference & Trade Show, and customized brochures about each project were distributed to state legislators during the 2015 Legislative Lunch, and are available at **mparks.org/MNRTF.**

mParks met with the sponsors of bills which could alter the Trust Fund to articulate the importance of the Fund, to discuss the proposed bill details, and to share the Association's vision for the future of the MNRTF. The Public Policy Committee also developed a detailed MNRTF policy platform and a response to the proposed legislation.

Stay "in the know" on policy and advocacy: New in 2015, you can receive mParks Legislative Updates via email. Subscribe today at **www.mParks.org/subscribe.**

Congratulations to our two elected officials who received awards in 2015: Secretary of State Ruth Johnson (State Elected Official of the Year) and Mayor of Saline Brian Marl (Local Elected Official of the Year)!

Advocacy at the 2015 Conference & Trade Show

The convenient location of Conference 2015 provided various opportunities for advocacy and networking with public policy stakeholders in Michigan's capitol city of Lansing.

In addition to push efforts (attending legislative meetings and distributing materials about parks and recreation advocacy), mParks also invited legislators in to learn about parks and recreation, with a special Conference registration package and dedicated education sessions for local government leaders.

State representatives and senators joined mParks for a special Legislative Lunch buffet, keynote speech from Dr. John Crompton (Texas A&M University) on the economic impact of parks and recreation, and the opportunity to connect with their local P&R providers.

mParks also offered advocacy and policy sessions at Conference, equipping members with policy updates and advocacy tools to tell the story of parks and recreation to key individuals.

Come Out & Play @ the Capitol

Held during "Parks and Recreation Month" in July, "Come Out & Play @ the Capitol" launched the new mParks brand and demonstrated the value of parks and recreation for health in a highly-visible way, providing outdoor education and activities for more than 1,500 youth attendees in downtown Lansing.

A big thank you to event sponsors:

- Besco
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan
- McDonald's
- The Michigan DNR
- Michigan No Child Left Inside Coalition
- Miracle Midwest
- Penchura
- Playworld Midstates
- Schupan Recycling
- Sinclair Recreation
- all the partners who provided activities and the mParks member agencies that brought day campers to "Come Out & Play @ the Capitol"

ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES & SPECIAL INTEREST AREAS

The work of our Association would not be possible without the participation of our members, partners, and the leadership of the Board of Directors, committees, networks, and focus areas. These partners achieved the following initiatives in 2015:

Health & Wellness

In addition to the Association's health initiatives (see pages 10-11), the mParks Health & Wellness Focus Area (formerly known as the Athletics Focus Area) hosted two youth athletic programs in 2015: Punt, Pass & Kick (in collaboration with the NFL) and Pitch, Hit & Run (in collaboration with the MLB). The group also organized the State Basketball and Volleyball Tournaments and a free webinar on Basketball League Best Practices.

Metro Detroit Amateur Softball Association

mParks continued its partnership with the Metro Detroit Amateur Softball Association (MDASA), managing umpire registrations and sharing MDASA communications with members.

Professional Recognition

In 2015, the Association presented 29 awards at the annual Conference to recognize outstanding individuals, programs, designs, and marketing. The Community Service Awards honored 34 parks and recreation supporters and volunteers, and the Programming and Park Resources Focus Areas presented awards as well.

Hall of Fame

mParks recognized the following P&R pioneers in 2015 for their extraordinary contributions to the industry:

- John T. Dufour
- Malcolm "Mal" Elliott
- Linda Jane Myers
- Representative Kathy Crawford
- Portia Fields-Anderson
- Pecky D. Lewis
- William "Bill" Waterhouse
- Mary Winegar

Thank you to 2015 event sponsors and attendees, and congratulations to all honorees and their families. A special thank you goes to Jim Perry for his generous Hall of Fame donation in honor of his late wife Sally.

Foundation & Students

The mParks Foundation supports increased access to recreation and outdoor experiences, as well as professional development opportunities and recognition of parks and recreation practitioners. One major program supported by the foundation is the Hall of Fame professional recognition event.

The Student Focus Area and the Foundation also laid the foundation for the Mentorship Program in 2015. Visit **mParks.org/mentor** for details.

Parks

In addition to partnering to hosting the Chainsaw Training and partnering for the Southeast Michigan Parks System Tour, the Parks Focus Area hosted its annual MowDeo, with educational sessions, a garbage pickup relay, and a mower obstacle course.

Trails, Blueways, and Greenways

The 2015 Michigan Trails Summit was held as a pre-conference session during Conference 2015 in Lansing, complementing several other trail-related education sessions throughout the three-day event. mParks also served as partner once again in the 2015 Michigan Trails Week.

Youth & Teens

In addition to Come Out & Play @ the Capitol, mParks Youth & Teens Focus Area hosted the Michigan Youth Symposium, welcoming teen council members for a weekend of networking and education at the DNR's new Outdoor Adventure Center in Detroit.

The Association hosted mParks Day at Belle Isle on August 5, in collaboration with a host of sponsors from the Detroit area and beyond. This free event invited parks and recreation agencies to bring their day campers to Belle Isle Park in Detroit for a multitude of offerings like a climbing tower, aquarium, nature zoo, free lunch, canoeing, kayaking and more.

Details are available at **mParks.org/belleisleday**

TRAVEL & TOURISM

Mackinac Island

mParks has a rich history of providing discount travel programs to "America's summer place," Mackinac Island, and that tradition happily continued in 2015.

Over the course of three trips in October 2015, more than 1,350 travelers joined mParks for the annual Grand Experience, featuring discounted hotel rates for seniors age 50+ at the world-class historic Grand Hotel. The program was made available for agencies to bring groups and also for independent travelers to make the trip on their own. Participants enjoyed special activities including shopping trips, bingo, Grand Hotel tours, discounted bicycle rentals, golf, games and more.

In early September 2015, 103 attendees enjoyed a fun and festive weekend at the 4th annual mParks Jazzy Walk Weekend. During this relatively new annual trip, attendees are invited to immerse themselves in melodies of the Grand Hotel's Jazz Festival and join the Mackinac Bridge Walk.

mParks also offered members discounted Grand Hotel accommodations during the annual Spring Fling and Late Summer Holiday events in 2015.

Details on mParks' travel offerings are available at ***mParks.org/Travel.***

Camp Kitigin

In September 2015, mParks and partner Michigan DNR invited professionals (21 and older) for a screen-free weekend of fun at Camp Kigitin, a tradition started in 2014 at YMCA Camp Timbers in West Branch. This summer camp-style weekend featured a variety of old-fashioned, unplugged recreation activities to help participants rediscover their inner children and connect with nature. Participants had opportunities to bond and make memories over archery, campfires, paddlesports, capture the flag, rock climbing, hiking, skits, and much more.

In 2016, mParks will offer another Camp Kitigin weekend, geared toward bringing families together through activities for kids, parents, grandparents and guardians. mParks is also exploring fundraising connections for the "Fostering Futures Scholarship Fund" (a college fund which benefits Michigan foster kids) in support of Michigan Education Trust, another partner of the Michigan DNR.

Discount Ticket Program

mParks offers discounted tickets for member agencies to sell to residents through the Group Ticket Sales program, which features valuable savings on entertainment, outings, year-round professional sports, and more. Each program provides savings to residents while generating revenue for the participating department and the Association.

Participating ticket providers include the Detroit Pistons and Red Wings, the Detroit Zoo, Olympia Entertainment, and – new in 2015 – University of Michigan athletics. Learn more at **mParks.org/tickets.**

Shopping with a Purpose: mParks and Amazon Smile

When you shop at smile.amazon.com, Amazon donates to mParks with every purchase! Visit **smile.amazon.com** and select "Michigan Recreation and Park Association" as your supported organization to start making your purchases count today.

COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

Throughout 2015, mParks continued efforts to improve our technology and communications, enhancing the value of membership for Michigan's parks and recreation professionals.

The new mParks identity was launched, complete with logo, redesigned website, and "Come Out & Play" slogan and campaign, which generated greater public awareness and understanding of the Association and profession. The rebranding effort also includes resources for members to tailor and use at the local level (see page 4 for details. Visit **mParks.com/mParks** for details and resources.

Additional updates:

- Responsive pages and mobile-friendly buttons were added to the new website. Mobile-friendly buttons were also added to the weekly eBlast, making it easier for mobile users to access links to industry news, association updates and more (mParks members read a staggering average of 75 percent of emails on a mobile device!)
- The Discussion Forum added subscription capabilities and current discussions were featured weekly in the eBlast starting mid-2015.
- A communication survey was distributed so the Association could provide information when, where, and how members want it.
- The Marketing Focus Area was created and hosted several meetings in 2015 and helped coordinate the fall Social Media Training, which was a hit with attendees!
- Continual additions were made to the mParks Resource Center, available online at **mParks.org/resourcecenter.**
- A new YouTube account was created with videos to promote mParks' story and its members' stories through shareable content. Search for mParks at **youtube.com.**
- Social media accounts were evaluated and consolidated to focus on the most useful platforms, based on responses to the fall communication survey. Learn more and visit our social media pages at **mParks.org/connect.**

Looking ahead to 2016

As 2015 drew to a close, mParks began working on the following additional communication initiatives:

- Conference app will feature new functions including session notes, favorites, and Twitter integration to help attendees view and join in the conversation online with **#mParks2016.**
- New and varied advertising opportunities are now available for both members and non-members to share relevant information and reach P&R decision-makers. Advertising is available in eBlast, at **www.mParks.org**, in PROfessional Quarterly Magazine, in the annual membership directory, in the conference brochure and through other mParks channels. Visit **mParks.org/advertising.**
- To underscore the value of mParks membership, selected pages of the mParks website will soon be password-protected, including the Career Center.

Have a suggestion for mParks communications?
Drop us a line at **info@mParks.org.**

FINANCIAL REPORT

In 2015, mParks continued to maintain the fiscal stability established in 2014. A financial audit, conducted in 2015 and presented to the mParks Board of Directors, revealed a positive cash flow. As of the date this report was produced, the final 2015 numbers were not available. However, it is anticipated that the Association finished the year approximately even – no surplus BUT no deficit.

2015 Financial Snapshot (un-audited and as of 11/30/2015)

Total Income		Total Expenses	
Membership dues	$139,006	Membership expenses	$62,000
Events	$582,408	Events	$562,000
Sponsorships	$106,500	Salaries, wages and benefits	$287,000
Misc. income	$27,000	Operations	$228,000
Grants	$284,458		
TOTAL	**$1,139,372**		**$1,139,000**

Because mParks operates on an accrual system – that is, deferred revenue and accounts receivable are recorded when they occur – the balance sheet may not show a reserve, however a reconciliation of actual expenses versus income indicates positive cash flow. We're continuing the streamline the bookkeeping processes. Staff have worked hard to fully integrate the membership and financial software, creating efficient and transparent reporting. Final 2015 figures will be reviewed by the Ways and Means Committee and the Board of Directors in March 2016.

Giving Back

In 2015, mParks provided several different granting opportunities for our members. Your Association has committed to give back $727,500 to agency members through October 31, 2016. Almost **50** different agencies have received some type of funding through the following opportunities:

Green Gift	$2,500
Healthy Recreation Catalyst	$15,000
Active Living Grants	$15,000
Healthy Foods in Parks	$20,000
MI Health Endowment Fund Partners	$675,000*

*MHEF expenses and revenues are recorded in 2014, 2015, and 2016

The mParks Board continues to identify alternative sources of revenue for the Association, and challenges staff to ensure programs and events are pertinent and meeting total cost recovery. In 2016, the administrative mParks office will be moving to a smaller space (conveniently located in Lansing) which should ultimately reduce expenses by approximately $16,500 annually. Additionally, we continue to aggressively pursue grants that connect parks and recreation to the relevant issues of the day.

THANK YOU PARTNERS

Throughout the year, a variety of organizations provide support and partnership to mParks and its more than 2,200 members. Thank you to the following partners who supported and promoted Association initiatives, hosted events, purchased advertising or event sponsorships, or otherwise partnered with mParks to make a difference in Michigan through parks and recreation:

ACT Services
Bader & Sons Co.
Beckett & Raeder
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan
Canton Leisure Services
Carlisle Wortman Associates
Cedar Point
Central Michigan University
City Parks Alliance
Community Foundation – SE Michigan
Dean Transportation
Detroit Lions
Detroit Pistons
Detroit Red Wings
Detroit Zoo
DNR Outdoor Adventure Center
DTE Energy
Grand Hotel
Greater Lansing Convention & Visitors Bureau
Greater Lansing Sports Authority
Heart of the Lakes
Heavner Canoe & Kayak Rental
Hubbell, Roth & Clark, Inc.
Huron-Clinton Metroparks
iDEAL Photos
Independence Township Parks and Recreation
Ingham County Fair
Ingham County Parks
ITC Holdings
Kalamazoo River Valley Trail
The Knight Foundation
Knuckles Knorth
Landscape Structures
Lansing Parks and Recreation
Michigan Fitness Foundation
Metro Detroit Amateur Softball Association
Michigan Association of County Parks and Recreation Officials
Michigan Association of Senior Centers
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Michigan Department of Transportation
Michigan Environmental Council
Michigan Farmers Market Association
Michigan Festival and Events Association
Michigan Municipal League
Michigan No Child Left Inside Coalition
Michigan Recycling Coalition
Michigan Trails and Greenway Alliance
Michigan Senior Olympics
Michigan State Housing Development Authority
Michigan United Conservation Clubs
Miracle Midwest
Motor Cities National Heritage Area
Mousetrap Mobile
mParks Foundation
Musco Sports Lighting
National Alliance for Youth Sports
National Parks Conservation Association
National Recreation and Park Association
Natureology
Neumann/Smith Architecture
NFL Punt, Pass, and Kick
Northeast Recreation and Park Association (NERPA)
Norwalk Concrete Industries
Northwest Park and Recreation Association (NWPRA)
Oakland County Parks
Olympia Entertainment
Pilot Rock / RJ Thomas Mfg. Co
Penchura
Playworld Midstates
Polly Products
Prima Civitas Foundation
Pure Michigan Sports Authority
RC Systems
REI
Ruth Mott Foundation Applewood
Saint Creative
Schupan Recycling
Sinclair Recreation
Slick Shirts
Snider Recreation
Southern Michigan Recreation and Park Association (SMRPA)
Southwest Metropolitan Recreation Executive Group (GERMS)
Spartan Distributors
Springfield Township Parks and Recreation
Stewart Photography
Superior Saw
TMP Architecture
Toro
USTA Midwest
Vortex Midwest
Wade Trim Group
West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation
West Michigan Recreation and Park Association (WMRPA)

THE mParks LEADERSHIP TEAM

2015-16 mParks BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President
Sean Fletcher, CPRP,
Kalamazoo Parks & Recreation

President-Elect
Clay Summers,
Eaton County Parks & Recreation

Past President
Derek Smith, CPRP, SELCRA

Secretary / Treasurer
Eric Sheffer, Penchura LLC

Director at Large
Carla Scruggs, CPRP,
Saline Parks & Recreation

Director at Large
Jon LaFever, Canton Leisure Services

Presidential Appointment, Placemaking
Arnold Weinfeld, Prima Civitas

Presidential Appointment, Health & Wellness
James J. Tighe,
Michigan Fitness Foundation

2015-16 mParks COMMITTEES & CHAIRS

Committees are charged with considering, investigating, and taking action on affairs that serve the Association's mission, goals and initiatives. All members are invited to participate, and each member may join as many Committees as desired.

Governance
Clay Summers, Eaton County Parks

Governance: Constitution Sub-Committee
Linda Walter, CPRP,
Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Public Policy
Tim McCaffrey, CPRP, East Lansing Parks, Recreation, and Arts

Professional Recognition: Awards
Kyle Langlois, CPRP,
Sterling Heights Parks & Recreation

Professional Development: 2016 Conference & Trade Show
Kelly Hyer, CPRP,
West Bloomfield Parks & Recreation

Professional Development: 2017 Conference & Trade Show
Maia Turek, Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Professional Recognition: Hall of Fame
Derek Smith, CPRP, SELCRA

Ways & Means
Eric Sheffer, Penchura LLC

2015-16 mParks NETWORKS & CHAIRS

These groups of professionals are meant to facilitate information exchange about general interests within the industry. All members are invited to participate, and each member may join as many Networks as desired.

Facilities, Parks & Trails Network
Carla Scruggs, Board Director at Large

Recreation Network
Jon LaFever, Canton Leisure Services

Stakeholders Network
Derek Smith, CPRP, Past President

2015-16 mParks FOCUS AREAS & CHAIRS

Focus Areas represent specific areas of interest. All members are invited to participate, and each member may join as many Focus Areas as desired.

Adaptive (TR) Focus Area
Co-Chair: Sandy Dorey,
Oakland County Parks

Co-Chair: Terry Fields,
Oakland County Parks

Aging Focus Area
Sandy Dorey, CTRS,
Oakland County Parks

Aquatics Focus Area
Brad Chiasson, Canton Leisure Services

Directors Focus Area
Ken Elwert, CPRP,
Independence Township Parks & Recreation

Facilities Focus Area
Jason Lombardo, Canton Leisure Services

Health & Wellness Focus Area (formerly Athletics)
Chris Galatis,
Chesterfield Township Parks & Recreation

Marketing Focus Area
Meagan Kurnat,
West Bloomfield Parks & Recreation

New Professionals Focus Area
Elissa Buck, Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Parks Focus Area
Jennifer Tucker, CPRP,
West Bloomfield Parks & Recreation

Past Presidents
Stu Alderman, Grosse Pointe Neighborhood Club

Programming Focus Area
Ken Grybel, II, CPRP, SELCRA

Youth & Teens Focus Area
April Heier, CPRP,
Farmington Hills Special Services

Trails Focus Area
Kyle Lewis, Kalamazoo County Parks

mParks FOUNDATION

President
Cory Anderson, Vortex International Aquatics

Scholarship Focus Area (under mParks Foundation)
TBD

Students Focus Area (under mParks Foundation)
Lori Irwin, Ed.D, CPRP,
Central Michigan University

Student Representative (under mParks Foundation)
TBD

REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS & PRESIDENTS

Knuckles Knorth (FKA Northern Michigan Parks & Recreation Association)
Stephanie Wirtz, CPRP, Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Northeast Parks & Recreation Association
Brian Kay, CPRP,
Clinton Township Parks & Recreation

Northwest Parks & Recreation Association
Jason Spiller, CPRP,
Northville Parks & Recreation

Southern Michigan Recreation & Park Association
Emily Stevens, CPRP,
Lansing Parks & Recreation

Southwest Metropolitan Recreation Executive Group
Amy Walker, Livonia Parks & Recreation

West Michigan Recreation & Park Association
Ken Westrate, Jr.,
Wyoming Parks & Recreation

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mParks™ Michigan Recreation & Park Association
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The voice of Michigan's parks and recreation community