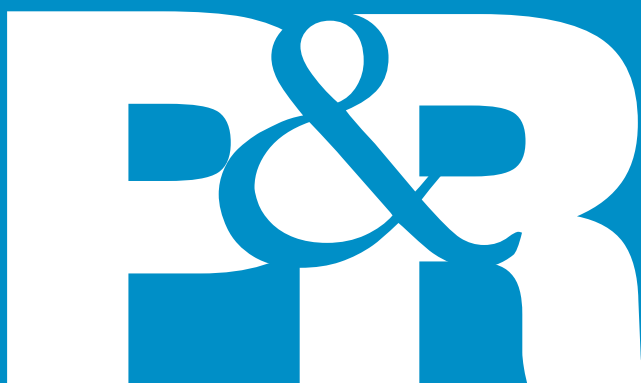


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## PARKS AND RECREATION

The magazine of the Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association



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## FROM THE EDITOR

Looking back on that moment in 2003, it was a crazy idea.

My sister, a friend and I listened to one of our Chicago buddies talk about a sprint distance triathlon taking place in the city in August. She had signed up, and she encouraged us to do the same. I had a two-year-old and a four-year-old, and I had been looking for a reason to jump back on the fitness wagon after motherhood had pushed me off.



We were in for a half-mile swim in Lake Michigan, a 15-mile bike ride along Lake Shore Drive and a 3-mile lakefront run before crossing the finish line.

The least of our concerns was the swim. We grew up on the Illinois River and spent almost every summer day of our youth at the Beardstown Park District pool. We took all the park district classes and earned our Jr. Lifeguard certificates. We thought that we were strong swimmers, but as we researched the recommended training regime, we learned that the swim would be the most challenging part, and it is the part most people underestimate.

We panicked, so we found ourselves back in familiar territory at the park district pool swimming laps and following that solid black line. We calculated the distance for a half mile, and we spent hours practicing the various strokes that we thought we would use.

Triathlon day came, and I can confidently say that a half mile in the water is a lot longer than a half mile on land! We missed the black line in the park district pool, and unlike the pool, Lake Michigan had mysterious vegetation clawing at our legs. We crawled, back-stroked, side-stroked, breast-stroked and even doggie paddled for what seemed like an eternity, and as we climbed out of the water, we reflected on how thankful we were for that park district pool.

Park and recreation agencies provide valuable programs and services through aquatics. They teach people to swim, provide zero-impact exercise, give families an inexpensive form of recreation close to home and offer important work experiences for young adults. This IP&R magazine is packed with information about aquatics trends, challenges and tips from experts in the field. *Spraygrounds a Hot Trend in Aquatics* on page 12 reviews the endless possibilities of features that thrill and engage users. *Bringing Aquatics Back to Beardstown* on page 20 tells the story of how the disappointment of a pool closure was overcome by the excitement of rebuilding a state-of-the-art waterpark. And, *Meeting the Diverse Needs of a Community* on page 16, discusses the pros and cons of various design aspects of water parks and community pools.

I tip my swim cap to each of you working hard every day to provide outstanding aquatics features that enrich the lives of adults and youth alike.

Crazy ideas can result in a lot of things. For me, the crazy idea to tackle a triathlon scared me into swim training, which enabled me to reconnect with my park district pool, spend valuable time with friends and family and bring back wonderful memories from my youth.

I got to make a new memory too, and that is what life is all about.

— Bobbie Jo Hill, Interim Editor



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Peter M. Murphy, Esq., CAE, IOM  
IAPD President and CEO

# Welcoming New Voices

Odd numbered years usher in the season of park board elections and many agencies are welcoming new members to their boards. Helping these new members hit the ground running is the key to the continuity of good governance.

The first step should be to take the time to walk each new board member through the information which forms the basis of your organization. I would suggest that you first share those “need to know” documents which command your board's closest attention.

Share the **bylaws** that clarify the big picture for the board, including its main policies and organizational structure.

Explain how your **individual policies** paraphrase a law, explain a procedure, clarify a principle, or interpret a particular bylaw. They are the protocol to follow and help eliminate embarrassing situations, improper behavior and ineffective decision making. A park district usually has board related policies as well as personnel, and financial policies, and while the chief executive is responsible for personnel and all operational procedures, the board ensures that they are reviewed and adequate to meet the needs of the district.

**Job descriptions for board members and the chief executive** save the board from a multitude of misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Listing the expectations for individual board members and officers is a reminder for current and new members of their role and responsibilities. Committee descriptions define what these groups are expected to accomplish as defined by the full board and help keep the committee work on track.

Explain how **agendas** for board meetings, retreats or committee meetings help keep the board focused on issues that belong to it, rather than on operational matters. Board meeting agendas guide the board's official business when its members get together to make governance decisions.

**Meeting minutes** are proof that the agenda got accomplished. They record what occurred in your meeting. Each board member needs to read the draft and approve the contents at the next meeting. Be sure to explain the

executive session procedure and process, and how minutes that relate to it are reviewed.

Your **board manual** is the compilation of documents that new and current board members use to refresh their memory or to learn how to fit into your board culture. No law demands that you have a manual, but it is a good practice as it provides your members with easy access to your documents. Making your manual available electronically is a great option for the emerging use of tablets by board members.

“Good Board  
Members seek first  
to understand, then  
to be understood.”



### FOR A QUICK START, REVIEW:

- The agency's history
- The district's organizational chart
- The meeting minutes from the past year
- The past six months financial reports
- Last year's annual audit; and
- The board policy manual

### ON THE LAWS AFFECTING BOARD SERVICE, REVIEW INITIALLY AND ANNUALLY THEREAFTER:

- The Open Meetings Act
- The Public Officials Prohibited Activities Act
- Rules regarding Incompatibility of Office
- The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) for its impact on board communications
- Laws governing interference with public contracting; Time off for official meetings; and The Truth in Taxation Act

### PROVIDE ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- What are the board members' fiduciary responsibilities including ways they can avoid conflicts of interest or perceptions of conflicts of interest?
- What are the board members' responsibilities regarding meetings (before, during and after)?
- What are the board members' responsibilities regarding relationships with staff?
- How does the board expect members to interact with the public during meetings, agency events or in general?
- What other general expectations does the board have of how members will interact with each other?

I have found that it is helpful to use examples with the answers to each of these questions. For a new board member, it provides context for them about the agency.

Share the **Board Member Code of Ethics** which can be found on the back of their new IAPD membership card as follows.

As a member of the board, I will:

- Represent the interests of all people in the community I will not favor any particular special interests.
- Not use my service on this board for my own personal advantage or for the advantage of my friends or supporters.
- Keep privileged information confidential.
- Approach all board issues with an open mind, prepared to make the best decisions for everyone involved.
- Do nothing to violate the trust of those who elected or appointed me to the board or of those we serve.
- Focus on my efforts on the mission of the agency and not on my personal goals.
- Never exercise authority as a board member except when acting in a meeting with the full board or as I am delegated by the board.

Finally, it is important to have a conversation about the board's culture so that new board members have an understanding of the expectations that the board will have of them as well as the expectations they should have of the board. Every board has a unique culture and it is advantageous to good board governance that this culture be shared as quickly as possible.

Many times, new board members may be surprised to learn that they have no individual authority. Even though they have individual responsibilities and legal duties, unlike other boards they may be familiar with, pointing out that authority is vested in the board as a body is important to emphasize when rolling out the welcome mat.

A well thought out and effective onboarding process will make for a smooth transaction for your district. For more ideas on this and other good governance topics, visit the IAPD website at [ilparks.org](http://ilparks.org).

**Don't miss the opportunity to expose new and seasoned board members to IAPD's content rich Commissioner Boot Camps. They are offered regionally at the following times and locations:**

**Wednesday, May 29, 2019**

#### **IAPD Boot Camp #1 Deerfield Park District**

Patty Turner Center  
375 Elm St., Deerfield, IL 60015  
5:30 pm Registration/Light Refreshments  
6 pm-9 pm Boot Camp

**Thursday, May 30, 2019**

#### **IAPD Boot Camp #2 Hoffman Estates Park District**

Bridges of Poplar Creek Country Club  
1400 Poplar Creek Dr., Hoffman Estates, IL 60169  
5:30 pm Registration/Light Refreshments  
6 pm-9 pm Boot Camp

**Tuesday, June 4, 2019**

#### **IAPD Boot Camp #3 Lockport Township Park District**

Dellwood Park Community Center  
1811 S. Lawrence Ave., Lockport, IL 60441  
5:30 pm Registration/Light Refreshments  
6 pm-9 pm Boot Camp

**Wednesday, June 5, 2019**

#### **IAPD Boot Camp #4 Wheaton Park District**

Arrowhead Golf Club  
26W151 Butterfield Rd., Wheaton, IL 60189  
5:30 pm Registration/Light Refreshments  
6 pm-9 pm Boot Camp

**Thursday, June 6, 2019**

#### **IAPD Boot Camp #5 Oregon Park District**

Nash Recreation Center  
304 S. Fifth St., Oregon, IL 61061  
5:30 pm Registration/Light Refreshments  
6 pm-9 pm Boot Camp

**Saturday, June 8, 2019**

#### **IAPD Boot Camp #6 Washington Park District**

Recreational Facility  
105 S. Spruce St., Washington, IL 61571  
8:30 am Registration/Light Refreshments  
9 am-12 pm Boot Camp



By Debbie Trueblood, CAE  
IPRA Executive Director

# Dear Summer Staff, Welcome to Our Professional Community

In our next issue, I will share some updates with you from IPRA's 75 Conversations Tour, meeting with student recreation clubs, retirees, and members at small and large agencies. If you would like to be included in the tour, please contact Jean Kane at [jean@ilipra.org](mailto:jean@ilipra.org) to schedule a time to meet. But today, this issue is dedicated to your summer staff. Please share it with them as part of their orientation.

Professionals, do you remember the first day you came to work in the field of parks and recreation? Based on the numerous stories I've heard, it sounds like many of you reading this first came to park and rec as your first job, maybe a summer job, when you were in high school. Put yourself in their shoes and think back to your first day. As a teen summer worker, do you think they understand the long-term career path available to them to join our professional community through one of Illinois' colleges and universities? **How is it that our industry of parks and recreation is the largest employer of teens in the state, yet our colleges and universities tell us that often times parks and recreation is a "discovery major" that students transition to after coming to school with a different plan in mind? Let's close the gap on that.** Let's take a moment to ensure that we share with our summer staff that each of them has the potential to do what they love, serve their community, and be a part of the park and rec community year-round. I am offering this article for you to share with your summer staff as part of their orientation experience, to educate them about the opportunities available in a career in parks and recreation.

Summer Staff, welcome to the field of parks and recreation! There may be many reasons why you chose to spend your summer at your local park and recreation agency; maybe your friends are working there too, maybe you enjoy being out in the sun, maybe you love working with kids, or getting your hands dirty working outside. Whatever the reasons, we're so glad you're here with us! On behalf of the professionals across Illinois who call parks

and recreation their career of choice, we would just like to take a quick minute to invite you to join us. Maybe you have your career plan all worked out, and you know exactly what you want to do down the road, or maybe you're still seeking the right fit, you'd be surprised how many people find themselves working at a park district, forest preserve, special recreation association, municipal department or other park and recreation agency at some point in their careers.

In Illinois alone, we have several four-year degree granting institutions for parks and recreation majors. According to NRPA, the following schools are accredited: Chicago State University, Eastern Illinois University, Illinois State University, University of St. Francis, and Western Illinois University. Additionally, there are other recreation degree programs at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. And Moraine Valley Community College has a program for Recreation and Sports Management. So, for students interested in pursuing a college education in a major which will prepare them for a career in our field, there are many local options all over our state.

For the people who may be learning about us for the first time, it is the mission of the Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA) to provide and promote exceptional standards of education, networking, and resources for all professionals in the Illinois park, recreation, and conservation communities. Most of our members work in public parks and recreation at park districts, forest preserves, municipal departments, and special recreation associations. Our job is to serve professionals in parks and recreation in Illinois by providing educational opportunities and other resources to help them to do their jobs better. If you decide that the fun you're having this summer as a seasonal employee at your local park and recreation agency is something you want to pursue as a career, there are many different kinds of professional positions within our field to choose from. Park and recreation positions include

Recreation Programmers, Athletic Supervisors, Inclusion Coordinators (to ensure people with disabilities have fulfilling opportunities for recreation), Park Specialists, Facility and Event Managers, Fitness Center Managers, Park Police, Museum Managers, Aquatic Managers, etc. As well as those kinds of positions which are common both at park and recreation agencies, as well as outside companies, such as positions in finance, marketing, customer service, IT, administration, and human resources. To view a list of jobs and internships in our field which are currently available to get a sense of what you might be doing in a career in parks and recreation, take a look at our statewide job board at <http://jobs.ilipra.org/>. As I write this in late March, there are currently internships available for the summer at Niles Park District, Oak Brook Park District, Mundelein Park & Recreation District, Roselle Park District, City of Pontiac Parks and Recreation, Gurnee Park District, Village of Hawthorn Woods, Des Plaines Park District, Munster Parks and Recreation, St. Charles Park District, and Glencoe Park District. These positions will likely be filled by the start of summer. But it is a good indicator of the internship opportunities for students.

If you are a summer seasonal employee who might be interested in a career in parks and recreation, you might seek out the agency's summer intern who might be able to give you some real-world stories about what their classroom experience is like. Or you can reach out to the full-time employees at the agency to hear about their careers.

For more information about the kind of career opportunities which may be available to you in our field, I welcome you to view our "Day in the Life of" video series at <https://www.youtube.com/user/IPRAAssoc1815/videos>. These videos feature different positions in our field and you can view each one to get a sense of what that job would be like for you.

Our professional community is a place where all people from all backgrounds are welcome. We have a wide diversity of interests from people who run high ropes courses and seek out opportunities in Outdoor Education to those who prefer a more indoor career doing fundraising to support our important programs serving kids, seniors, families, and people with disabilities. Some of our colleagues love sports and participate as athletes themselves while others may prefer to spend their recreation time traveling or pursuing fine arts. There is no single "right way" to be a parks and recreation professional.

Welcome to the field. Our hope for you as you enjoy your summer, is that while you are having fun, and that you value the work you are doing as part of service to the community.

## Upcoming Events

June 12 or June 20

### Webinar: Public Speaking Like a Pro

This month's webinar, Public Speaking Like a Pro, is presented by Debbie Trueblood of the Illinois Park & Recreation Association, and she will cover tips for public speaking like a pro to help you prepare, engage your audience, make a persuasive argument, and educate your attendees.

### IPRF Summer Events

**Chicago Dogs:** June 30, 2019

**Joliet Slammers:** July 20, 2019

**Kane County Cougars:** August 4, 2019

Sponsored by the Illinois Park and Recreation Foundation (IPRF), these events are for groups or individuals interested in catching a game and supporting the IPRF. Organize a group trip for your agency, offer the event in your seasonal brochure for community

members to purchase individually, or simply bring your family!

### November 10-13, 2019 Professional Development School (PDS)

Eagle Ridge Resort Professional Development School (PDS) is the longest standing educational and networking opportunity offered by the Illinois Park & Recreation Association. Professional Development School provides park and recreation professionals the opportunity to experience high quality education in a small, student-focused atmosphere. PDS is committed to providing park and recreation professionals the skills, knowledge base and networking opportunities needed for personal development and career advancement so as to sustain and better the agency and community they serve.

**For details and registration, please visit the IPRA event calendar at [ilipra.org](http://ilipra.org)**



**APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE**

## 2019-20 LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: JUNE 21**

**LOCATION: NIU-NAPERVILLE**

**FEE: IPRA MEMBER \$450 / NON MEMBER \$900**

**Details at [ilipra.org](http://ilipra.org)**



Jason Anselment  
Legal/Legislative Counsel

## Don't Miss Valuable Training Opportunity at IAPD Boot Camps

New park commissioners are taking office throughout the state this month, and this may be the first time many have held public office.

Although serving as a park commissioner is typically very rewarding because of the positive impact park districts have on a community, the position also comes with great responsibility. An important part of fulfilling the role of park commissioner is to understand and adhere to numerous laws that impact the office, the board, and the day-to-day operations of the district.

The best place for new commissioners to obtain an overview of their legal duties and responsibilities during their first few months in office is the IAPD Boot Camps that are being held regionally in May and June. While the Boot Camps are a valuable training course for new commissioners, they also offer an excellent opportunity for seasoned commissioners and executive directors to review their roles and responsibilities as well.

### Understand Public Meeting Rules While Satisfying Training Requirements

Although some new commissioners have previously served on non-profit or other boards, it is important to understand that public bodies are governed by an entirely separate set of laws. For example, one key difference between private, non-profit boards and public bodies is that the latter must comply with the Open Meetings Act.

The Open Meetings Act governs the activities of every single meeting and contains specific rules ranging from whether an action can be taken at a meeting to the number of commissioners that can participate in a discussion outside of a public meeting. There are limits on when a board can go into closed session and specific requirements for agenda and meeting minutes just to name a few of the rules covered by the Act.

In fact, the Open Meetings Act is such an important law that every newly elected board member is required by the law to complete a one-time training course within 90 days of taking

their oath of office. The IAPD Boot Camp presents an opportunity for new commissioners to satisfy this requirement by attending a live, interactive course. While only brand new commissioners are required to take the one-time training for elected officials, history has shown that seasoned commissioners benefit greatly from the Boot Camp refresher course on these requirements as well.

The only other option for new commissioners to satisfy the one-time training requirement is to attend an online training course that is administered by the Illinois Attorney General's Public Access Counselor (PAC). However, the Boot Camp has the major benefit of being interactive and allows participants to ask questions of the presenter. Those who choose to attend the IAPD Boot Camp will also receive a copy of the same Attorney General training materials that are part of the online training.

### Have Questions? IAPD Boot Camps Have the Answers

There are many laws that govern the activities and conduct of park commissioners. These laws raise a number of important legal questions for park commissioners to consider such as:

- Can I be convicted for violating gift bans and other ethics laws?
- What are the criminal penalties for violating the Open Meetings Act?
- What are the rules governing conflicts of interest?
- What is the role of a commissioner in the budget, appropriation and tax levy process?
- What are my other legal duties and responsibilities as a park commissioner?

Get the answers to each of these questions and many more at the IAPD Boot Camps. See page 7 for the times, dates and locations. Learn what to expect in your role as a commissioner and obtain other essential information all in one evening or morning.

## Penalties for Ethics Violations Reinforce Need for Training

Ethics laws are another important set of rules that are critical to understand from the outset of public service. Because violations of these laws carry significant penalties, board members must be mindful of these rules at all times.

Most new commissioners are likely familiar with the broad principle of a “conflict of interest,” but park commissioners must also be aware of laws that specifically impact public officials. For example, the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act sets the minimum requirements for a district's own ethics ordinance, prohibits more than a dozen different activities, and contains bans on the acceptance of gifts from specific sources.

The Public Officer Prohibited Activities Act is another important law that sets forth rules regarding prohibited interests in district contracts while numerous criminal statutes also govern conduct related to public contracts and competitive bidding.

All of these laws will be covered at the IAPD Boot Camps along with specific rules that govern commissioner conduct under the Park District Code. The course will help provide new commissioners with the guideposts they need to avoid pitfalls during their public service.

## Overview of Financial Procedures & Other Responsibilities

In addition to open meetings rules and ethics laws, numerous financial procedures that impact a park district's operations are also part of the Boot Camp curriculum. For example, experienced professionals will discuss the details of the budget and appropriation ordinance, the tax levy process, audit and financial reporting requirements and other basic financial information such as an overview of park district funds, which will provide a foundation of knowledge for commissioners to build upon during the upcoming year.

## IAPD is Your Source for Leadership and Board Development Tools

The topics above are just three that will be discussed at the IAPD Boot Camps. Being a good park commissioner requires an understanding of all laws and rules that govern park districts and locally elected officials. The IAPD Boot Camps offer a valuable opportunity for new commissioners to become familiar with these laws. Seasoned commissioners and executive directors will find this training to be an excellent refresher course as well.

Take advantage of this opportunity and other IAPD resources to help you be the best park commissioner you can be!

## CPI Rate for 2019 Extensions is 1.9%

IAPD has begun receiving inquiries regarding what Consumer Price Index (CPI) “cost of living” or inflation percentage to use in computing the 2019 extensions (taxes payable in 2020) under PTELL.

Section 18-185 of the Property Tax Code defines CPI as “the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for all items published by the United States Department of Labor.” This index is sometimes referred to as CPI-U. Section 18-185 defines “extension limitation” as “the lesser of 5% or the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index during the 12-month calendar year preceding the levy year” (emphasis added).

For 2019 extensions (taxes payable in 2020), the CPI to be used for computing the extension limitation is 1.9%. The CPI is measured from December 2017 to December 2018. The U.S. City Average CPI for December 2017 was 246.524 and 251.233 for December 2018. The CPI change is calculated by subtracting the 2017 CPI of 246.524 from the 2018 CPI of 251.233. That amount, 4.709, is then divided by the 2017 CPI of 246.524, which results in 1.9% CPI.

Information on PTELL may be accessed through the Illinois Department of Revenue's website at [www.tax.illinois.gov](http://www.tax.illinois.gov) under the “Property Tax” link and the “Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL)” link under the “General Information” heading.

| Year | December CPI-U | % Change From Previous December | % Use for PTELL | Comments       | Levy Year | Year Taxes Paid |
|------|----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------|-----------------|
| 1991 | 137.900        |                                 |                 |                |           |                 |
| 1992 | 141.900        | 2.9%                            | 2.9%            |                | 1993      | 1994            |
| 1993 | 145.800        | 2.7%                            | 2.7%            | (5 % for Cook) | 1994      | 1995            |
| 1994 | 149.700        | 2.7%                            | 2.7%            |                | 1995      | 1996            |
| 1995 | 153.500        | 2.5%                            | 2.5%            |                | 1996      | 1997            |
| 1996 | 158.960        | 3.6%                            | 3.6%            |                | 1997      | 1998            |
| 1997 | 161.300        | 1.5%                            | 1.5%            |                | 1998      | 1999            |
| 1998 | 163.900        | 1.6%                            | 1.6%            |                | 1999      | 2000            |
| 1999 | 168.300        | 2.7%                            | 2.7%            |                | 2000      | 2001            |
| 2000 | 174.000        | 3.4%                            | 3.4%            |                | 2001      | 2002            |
| 2001 | 176.700        | 1.6%                            | 1.6%            |                | 2002      | 2003            |
| 2002 | 180.900        | 2.4%                            | 2.4%            |                | 2003      | 2004            |
| 2003 | 184.300        | 1.9%                            | 1.9%            |                | 2004      | 2005            |
| 2004 | 190.300        | 3.3%                            | 3.3%            |                | 2005      | 2006            |
| 2005 | 196.800        | 3.4%                            | 3.4%            |                | 2006      | 2007            |
| 2006 | 201.800        | 2.5%                            | 2.5%            |                | 2007      | 2008            |
| 2007 | 210.036        | 4.08%                           | 4.1%            |                | 2008      | 2009            |
| 2008 | 210.228        | 0.1%                            | 0.1%            |                | 2009      | 2010            |
| 2009 | 215.949        | 2.7%                            | 2.7%            |                | 2010      | 2011            |
| 2010 | 219.179        | 1.5%                            | 1.5%            |                | 2011      | 2012            |
| 2011 | 225.672        | 3.0%                            | 3.0%            |                | 2012      | 2013            |
| 2012 | 229.601        | 1.7%                            | 1.7%            |                | 2013      | 2014            |
| 2013 | 233.049        | 1.5%                            | 1.5%            |                | 2014      | 2015            |
| 2014 | 234.812        | 0.8%                            | 0.8%            |                | 2015      | 2016            |
| 2015 | 236.525        | 0.7%                            | 0.7%            |                | 2016      | 2017            |
| 2016 | 241.432        | 2.1%                            | 2.1%            |                | 2017      | 2018            |
| 2017 | 246.524        | 2.1%                            | 2.1%            |                | 2018      | 2019            |
| 2018 | 251.233        | 1.9%                            | 1.9%            |                | 2019      | 2020            |



# Spraygrounds

a hot trend in

# Aquatics

By Rich Klarck, *Principal-in-Charge, Aquatic Engineering Practice, WT Group*

## WHAT FEATURE SHOULD I ADD TO MY AQUATIC FACILITY?

The idea of adding new attractions and play features to the aquatic experience is not new. Illinois park districts have been and are continually trying to add features to their existing aquatic centers to provide an expanded aquatic experience which will attract more visitors of all age groups. This may include features such as climbing walls, drop slides, water slides and replacing existing play features in the zero-depth area of a pool. However, the number one amenity that park districts are looking to add continues to be a sprayground.



Spraygrounds typically do not require the high level of staffing and depending on the type of sprayground design, can require minimal maintenance.

Spraygrounds come in all shapes and forms. From a simple rectangular pad with a combination of basic ground based and above grade spray features to free-form pads with integral concrete color or safety surface and themed water features with large multi-level play structures. The possibilities are endless. Spraygrounds provide the aquatic experience that families are looking for without the high operating costs of traditional pools. Spraygrounds typically do not require the high level of staffing and, depending on the type of sprayground design, can require minimal maintenance.

Spraygrounds typically target children 2 to 12 years of age. However, they can be designed to cater to a wider range of age groups by enticing teens and adults with high flow features and dumping water. They provide an amenity that is a safe and a fun interactive feature for young children, which is typically lacking in the traditional family aquatic center. When you get the little ones wanting to come to your facility, they will usually bring the entire family with them. Spraygrounds do not have any standing water, which is an Illinois Department of Public Health requirement. This allows parents to relax while their kids play safely, needing little supervision.

There are three types of systems available to choose from when designing a sprayground. They include: flow-thru systems, which utilize potable city water that drains directly to waste; recirculating filter system which incorporate a storage reservoir and filters the water like a traditional pool; and flow thru and reuse system, which utilize potable city water which is collected and repurposed for irrigation.

## FLOW-THROUGH SYSTEMS

### PROS

- Does not require an Illinois Department of Public Health permit, which eliminates the need to hire a prequalified aquatic engineering design firm.
- Can be designed by the play feature manufacturer.
- Does not require the use of chemicals for disinfection and pH control.
- Does not require showers and toilet facilities per Illinois Department of Public Health code.
- Less maintenance.
- Less expensive to build.

### CONS

- Typically limited to low flow features to reduce water usage, limiting the age group that will use it.
- Not environmentally friendly.

## RECIRCULATING FILTER SYSTEMS

### PROS

- Environmentally friendly.
- Ability to have large expansive splash pads.
- Ability to have a mixture of low flow and high flow with dumping water to provide attractions for a wide range of age groups.
- Ability to incorporate multi-level play structures.

### CONS

- Higher staffing needs.
- Higher operational costs.
- More expensive to build.
- Requires shower and toilet facilities per Illinois Department of Public Health code.
- Requires an Illinois Department of Public Health permit, which requires the need to hire a prequalified aquatic engineering design firm.

## FLOW-THROUGH AND REUSE SYSTEMS

### PROS

- Environmentally friendly.
- Does not require an Illinois Department of Public Health permit, which eliminates the need to hire a prequalified aquatic design firm.
- Does not require the use of chemicals for disinfection and pH control.
- Does not require showers and toilet facilities per Illinois Department of Public Health code.
- Less maintenance.
- Less expensive to build.

### CONS

- Typically limited to low flow features to reduce water usage, limiting the age group that will use it.
- More expensive than a Flow-Through system.

Play feature sequencing is a very desirable component to incorporate in spraygrounds. The play features are activated by pressing an activation bollard or ground based switch, which turns on the features through a controller. The features then run for a predetermined length of time and alternating flow to different features at different times. This option provides a dynamic play environment and keeps the kids interested for a longer period of time. Additionally, it saves on energy and on water usage in flow-through and flow-through reuse systems.

The addition of shade structures in and around spraygrounds is also a growing trend. Providing shade is key to assure that patrons enjoy themselves – protecting them from too much exposure from the sun and heat and allowing them to stay longer at the facility. Shade structures also make the sprayground more attractive. Shade structures are available in a wide range of colors and styles and can make your facility more aesthetically appealing by adding bursts of color in a variety of geometrical shapes.

The introduction of free-form spraygrounds using integral colored concrete is another trend that is catching on at park districts. Colors can evoke feelings of happiness and energy and make the facility more inviting. The sprayground stands out and beckons children to come and play. Introducing colors into a sprayground can add \$10,000 to \$40,000.



## STAND-ALONE SPRAYGROUNDS

Park districts are not only adding spraygrounds to their existing aquatic facilities, but they have been and still are adding them as stand-alone features in their parks. Stand-alone spraygrounds in parks have typically been designed with low flow features utilizing a flow-through system. However, current trends are changing and large spraygrounds incorporating numerous play features and multi-level play structures are popping up throughout Illinois. These spraygrounds provide a local destination for kids to beat the heat during the hot summer months and offer a wide range of features for all age groups. However, these types of Spraygrounds require recirculating filter systems.

One of the challenges that park districts are now facing is that stand alone spraygrounds utilizing recirculating filter systems are required by the Illinois Department of Public Health to provide showers and toilet facilities for the patrons. This is not a new requirement and has always been required by the Health Department, but in the past variances have been requested and many times granted by the Health Department. The current stance by the Illinois Department of Public Health is that variances will no longer be granted for Spraygrounds utilizing recirculating filter systems. This presents an additional financial burden for park districts wanting to add a large high flow stand-alone sprayground to a park. The additional project costs could be in the range of \$100,000 to \$150,000, depending on the size of the sprayground.

Spraygrounds have been around in various forms for well over 50 years, but their influence in the aquatics industry continues to spread. Their undeniable thrill and interactive nature have made them an attractive addition to existing aquatic facilities and as stand-alone features in parks. This trend will continue for years to come and will likely continue to evolve.



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# MEETING THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF A COMMUNITY

By Thomas LaLonde, AIA / Williams Architects

With spring in full bloom, it is time to think about how to get away from the heat on those sizzling summer days. What better way than a dip in the cool and refreshing community pool!

Williams Architects/Aquatics has been designing community pools since the mid 1980s. If you've visited a pool in the Chicago suburbs, there is a good chance we've had some involvement in its planning along the way.



Every facility we have designed is unique in its own way and often develops its own “personality”.

We like to begin each project by getting a thorough understanding of the client's needs and goals. Every facility we have designed is unique in its own way and often develops its own “personality”. Citizens become very attached to their community pools which results in nostalgic reflections on the fun times they had there, growing up. They often want the same experiences for their children and eventually their grandchildren.

Programmatically we design aquatic facilities around four primary categories: competition, exercise, recreation, and therapy. It's important up front to understand these distinctions and find a solution that provides the best balance of aquatic features, while keeping the project within the client's budgetary goals. This often leads to sharing how water is programmed. Shared water is generally necessary to keep the cost within the client's budget, as it is more cost effective to build and operate. This approach requires good scheduling of how the water is being programmed.

We design our facilities to have as many user experiences as practical – 7 to 10 “touches” preferably. We've learned that this keeps patrons at the pool for longer periods of time and has them returning on a more regular basis.

As an example, at both the Palatine Park District's Birchwood Pool and St. Charles Park District's Swanson Pool, 50-meter competitive swim was a must. These are large bodies of water that have an abundance of relatively deeper water (over 3'-6" deep), that presents a challenge for leisure swimming, especially for smaller children. Our solution in these cases was to introduce a step-in area with relatively shallow water that softened the transition into the deeper water. This effectively enhances the overall recreational use of the pool and makes it easier to access by young and old alike. At Birchwood, we strategically placed the shallow step in area just outside the bathhouse where patrons first access the pools. This area steps into 2-foot deep water and includes benches and bubblers as added features. We've learned that by widening the stairs, many patrons will sit and watch their children from this area. This serves two purposes in creating a safer approach to the water for young children and making access very convenient. The entire center section of the Birchwood pool is only 3-foot deep, again strengthening the overlap of the competitive need with leisure use. At Swanson Pool, we included a lily pad walk across the 8-lane competition pool. The pads can be removed when the pool is being used for swim meets.



In Bartlett, the facility's master plan from the mid 1990's anticipated a second phase. It took 18 years to plan and build phase 2 and by that time the trends had changed dramatically. Instead of a second zero entry pool as originally planned, the district opted for a lazy river with additional slides, a large spray ground and an accessible island with a deep-water pool that includes a zip line and a drop slide.

**Zero entry** pools have been popular since the late 1980s. The concept is a bather can walk from the deck directly into the pool without stepping down, similar to a beach. The water gradually increases in depth to eventually get to 4 feet to 5 feet deep. This has always been popular as many bathers rarely venture into water over 3 feet deep. Parents love to lounge in the shallow water and watch their toddlers play in relative safety. Over the past 5 to 10 years we have learned that many bathers prefer to step into the pool, thus getting to deeper water more quickly. We have learned that expanding on the width of the steps creates an inviting place for patrons to sit, taking in the activity around them. We've even successfully introduced steps at deep water pools, making it much easier for swimmers to leave the water.

**Water slides** add a whole new dimension and greatly increase the appeal of any facility. There are a variety of slide experiences from individual body slides to inner tube rides, drop slides and group ride slides. Traditionally, slides have exited the rider in a body of water. However, more recently we have been installing slides that end with a "run out trough" that is a horizontal section of the slide that gradually slows and stops the riders without entering a

pool. These can be a lot of fun and save on the cost of adding a dedicated body of water for each slide. They are also great for retrofits, where it may be cost prohibitive to add a pool.

**Lazy rivers** became popular in the early 1990s and have remained one of the most popular amenities ever since. What isn't to like about drifting along with a gentle current without having to lift a finger! We are also adding current channels to many of our facilities. We sometimes jokingly refer to them as "the poor man's lazy river" because they are much shorter in length and can be built at a fraction of the cost of a lazy river. They are typically attached to the side of a leisure pool and have a continuous current channel around a center section with benches and bubblers for hanging out with your friends. They may not be a lazy river, but they pack a lot of fun into a relatively small area.

While we continue to incorporate tot pools in some facilities, spray grounds have passed them by in popularity. Aside from packing in a lot of fun in a relatively small area, spray grounds do not require certified guards and therefore can reduce staff costs.

**Spraygrounds** and tot pools must be enclosed with a minimum 42-inch high barrier. This can be problematic for parents with children at different ages who want to be in different pools. One facility we successfully designed without the interior separations was the Forest Preserve District of Cook County's Cermak Pool. The client's program specifically wanted a facility designed for children 12 years and under. We put our thinking caps on and developed a

solution that allowed for a spray play area, an activity pool with multiple interactive water play features and a “mini lazy river” all within the same enclosure. The result is a facility chocked full of fun. Children can move freely amongst all the amenities without worry about internal barriers. We were able to accomplish this by keeping all the bodies of water at 30-inches and shallower, which is the State limit for wading pools.

**Diving boards** fell out of favor for a period of time due to the high number of injuries. With improved safety features they have made a resurgence and we are installing them in many of our current facilities.

Clients are not requesting sand areas in the newer facilities. While sand can be very popular, especially with younger children, it regularly creates maintenance headaches. Some form of sand play used to be a given in every design. Now, even on renovations, clients are asking us to replace sand areas with other amenities, many times a spray play area.

Of course, food service, shade, shade (and more shade!) along with assorted opportunities to lounge are all components that improve the ambiance and add to the overall user experience. We are now regularly introducing rental cabanas for groups to have a “private” place to

gather and shade over water to give parents a place to have their children protected from the sun while playing in the water.

And finally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention a few items we do behind the scenes to enhance user experience.

**Water quality** is a key factor in user comfort and enjoyment. Where we can, we specify regenerative media filters. Although these are more expensive than sand filters, they produce a higher quality water. They are smaller in size than the sand filters and therefore do not need as large a space to house them. This results in less cost for the building, offsetting the higher cost of the filter. To enhance disinfection, many of our clients are opting to install an Ultra Violet system which ensures additional bacteria is destroyed prior to entering the pool.

For easier operations and monitoring of the systems and water quality, we are specifying an Integrated Aquatic Environments HALO system controller which integrates the entire filtration system. The HALO controller is fully customizable and can be designed to meet the control needs for a specific facility.

Stay cool this summer and create those lasting memories at your neighborhood pool!



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B R I N G I N G

AQUA

BACK TO BEARDSTOWN

**JASON BROCKSCHMIDT**, PARK DIRECTOR,  
BEARDSTOWN PARK DISTRICT



For Beardstown, the opening of its new waterpark has been an arduous yet rewarding experience.

The loss of Beardstown's public pool in 2011 was a major setback. Having a safe place to swim has always been an important cornerstone of the community. In 1954, the Beardstown Park District was formed mostly for the purpose of building a swimming pool in response to the drownings of young people in the Illinois River and its back waters. Now, the opening of the Sudbrink Waterpark in 2018 serves a new generation of youth for aquatics in the community of Beardstown.



From the moment the old pool officially shut down, the Beardstown Park District sprang into action, joining with the community of Beardstown to put together a plan to bring aquatics back. Motivated and focused, research began on how to build a new pool to serve the public. For three years, former Park Director Steve Megginson, the board and citizens of Beardstown worked together to secure funding.

In 2014, the park district received a Park and Recreational Facility Construction (PARC) Grant for \$2.5 million to begin the construction of the new pool. The district matched 10%, and \$250,000 was raised by the community in order to receive the grant. The district immediately began to make plans for the new pool, utilizing a committee of community members who worked with Graham and Hyde Architects, Inc. and the pool design company Counsilman Hunsaker.

In March of 2015, all work came to a halt when PARC grants were suspended due to the budget impasse and funding was withheld from recipients. Beardstown Park District Director Jason Brockschmidt said planning stopped immediately on the pool.

"For over a year-and-a-half, we waited and basically moved on to other park projects until September of 2016 when the state released the funds to IDNR for our PARC grant," Brockschmidt said.

Due to the delay, the price tag on the project rose from \$2.8 million to almost \$3.25 million. Once again, the community stepped up and, along with a large contribution from former Beardstown resident Woody Sudbrink, the target goal was met. Sudbrink's generosity led to the naming of the facility as "Sudbrink Waterpark." Ground was officially broken in July of 2017 and work swiftly began to bring aquatics back to Beardstown.

In May of 2018, the grand opening of the waterpark brought with it excitement from the community. Visitors were quick to realize the new amenities provided by the waterpark and, not surprisingly, high attendance was attributed to a large flux of toddlers and youth coupled with the heat of a typical Illinois hot summer.

The largest difference from the old pool, aside from features like new slides, splash tubes, a rock-climbing wall, a vortex pool, basketball hoop, and a zip line, is that the pool has a zero-depth entry leading to a large area for those who can't swim yet. The old pool was 3-and-a-half feet deep at its shallowest, and featured a baby pool that was 1 foot deep. The new design allows more accessibility for every member of the community.

Upon the opening of the new pool, both water aerobics and swim lessons became incredibly popular.

The opening of the pool also led to an increase in staff, providing 20-25 more new jobs than in previous years. Autumn Lynn Hobrock, a lifeguard at Sudbrink Waterpark, said the opportunity to work at the new facility has been not only beneficial in providing her with an income, but also has prepared her for a career in nursing. Being a certified lifeguard also means being certified in CPR, First Aid, and AED operation. It's also provided Hobrock an opportunity to learn how to work well with coworkers and operate as part of a team, making the waterpark not only a place to swim, but also as a place to grow.

For Hobrock, the impact of the waterpark on the community is particularly strong with the younger crowd.

"As a lifeguard at the new waterpark and an alumni swimmer of the previous pool, I cannot tell you how much of a positive impact this is for the community, as it gives a new place for kids to be safe and have fun at the same time," Hobrock said. "For youth, attending the old waterpark several days each summer acted as a make shift daycare. Instead of sitting at home or wandering aimlessly around town, the regular everyday kids would head to the pool. This still happens today."

Not only does it serve the local community, the waterpark also has visitors from surrounding areas, and

even the occasional traveler stops in to cool off, like a family from New York who dropped by to take a break from the road.

As Sudbrink Waterpark prepares for the start of its second season, the staff has learned much from the first year of operation. One of the areas that has evolved is policy. The park district spent the first year learning how far the patrons of the pool would push the various rules and safety considerations at the waterpark and, this year, the district will have a much more consistent policy of rules to ensure safety and fun for all customers.

As for advice for other park districts that want to explore an upgrade in aquatics, Brockschmidt suggests making sure to have a sound plan for the funding of the project including the possibility of cost overruns. He stresses involving the community in the planning of features and uses for the waterpark since the public will be using it. Additionally, park districts should be cognizant of the future costs of maintaining and running the pool when designing a waterpark. Partner with a good architect or pool design company and contractor and stay on top of the details and work of the contractor as the park is being built.

The variety of benefits a waterpark brings to the community includes not only fun, but jobs, spending, great opportunities for young adults, and the ability to teach children to swim.



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*—Oakbrook Terrace  
Park District*

## PEOPLE & PLACES



### Elk Grove Park District Announces New Executive Director

The Park Board of Commissioners of the Elk Grove Park District is pleased to announce **Ben Curcio** has accepted the position as the new executive director of the Elk Grove Park District. His tenure as executive director will start March 1, 2019. Ben has over 23 years of

park district experience, the last seven years as the director of parks and planning at Elk Grove. He graduated from Eastern Illinois University majoring in recreation administration and received his Master's Degree in Public Administration from Roosevelt University. Before arriving at the Elk Grove Park District, Ben worked at Regional Sports Center as their general manager, Field House Management and Development Corporation as their director of operations, and Barrington Park District as their superintendent of parks and facilities.



### Fox Valley Special Recreation Association Executive Director Retires

After 26 years as the leader of the Fox Valley Special Recreation Association (FVSRA), Executive Director **Carolyn Nagle** retired April 30. Nagle joined FVSRA in April of 1992 when the agency included only four park districts and a full-time staff of ten. Under Nagle's

leadership, FVSRA has expanded the original districts (Fox Valley, St. Charles, Geneva, and Batavia) to now include Oswegoland and Sugar Grove Park Districts and the Village of South Elgin Parks and Recreation Department. Today Nagle oversees a full-time staff of 18 and over 290 part-time staff, providing over 500 programs and serving over 1,600 children and adults with disabilities on a year-round basis.

Under Nagle's leadership, FVSRA was recognized as an Illinois Distinguished Accredited Agency. She oversaw the creation of the Three Day Break (Adult Day Service) and guided the teams to develop the collaboration between FVSRA and the Association for Individual Development to create the five STARS Adult Day Program sites.



### Butterfield Park District announces new Superintendent of Recreation

**Anne M. Popek** has been named the new superintendent of recreation for Butterfield Park District.

Her most recent position was Facilities Supervisor of The Hub at the Elmhurst Park District, as well as some aspects of the Abbey Senior Center. She was also responsible for working with affiliate groups: Elmhurst Baseball, Elmhurst Eagles Football, Elmhurst Boys Lacrosse Club, American Youth Soccer Organization, and Team Elmhurst Soccer Club.

Anne is a proud graduate of Eastern Illinois University's Parks and Recreation Administration program and she has also completed her first year of the IPRA Professional Development Program.



### Tom Busby, Executive Director of Elk Grove Park District, Retires

**Tom Busby** retired in March 2019 as the executive director of the Elk Grove Park District. He served as executive director since 2014. Prior to that, he was the director of finance at the Elk Grove Park District for 10 years, where each

year he won the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. He leaves behind a legacy of over 30 years of public service to the Elk Grove Park District and numerous governmental districts throughout Illinois. During his time as the executive director, Tom was a true leader behind the scenes or front and center serving the residents of Elk Grove Village.

# WebXtra

## FVPD Lifeguard Receives International Award



Visit [https://www.ilparks.org/page/web\\_xtras](https://www.ilparks.org/page/web_xtras) to learn more about a Fox Valley Park District lifeguard who received a prestigious award. Be sure to check out more Web Xtras, along with the latest People & Places news, all on ILparks.org!

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### In Memoriam

*Illinois Parks & Recreation* extends our condolences to the family of **Rick Drazner**, who passed away on Friday, April 5.

Rick served as a Buffalo Grove Park District Commissioner and was a dedicated community volunteer who served as the board's president, as well as a member of the local Rotary Club, chamber of commerce and Congregation Beth Judea. Rick completed IAPD's Master Board Member Program in 2014 and also led Buffalo Grove Park District to receive the IAPD's Youth License Plate Award in 2017.

Drazner's tenure was eventful, with the park district completing projects such as the Buffalo Grove Fitness Center, the Golf Dome, the Community Arts Center, the redevelopment of Willow Stream Park and the Buddy Baseball Field.

Drazner is survived by his wife, Melissa, and two children.

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