



Welcome to the 2017 FRPA Conference!

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*Building on the Legacy*  
**75 years of Recreation  
 and Parks Heritage**

John McCarthy  
 Executive Director  
 Gulf Coast Heritage Association  
 Osprey, Florida




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**Learning Objectives**

- Learn the role of recreation and parks throughout the ages, with special emphasis on Florida.
- Learn how to explore the role of your own parks systems in the development of your community.
- Learn how to weave your own department's history into communications and marketing




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**park [pahrk] noun:**

*"An area of land, usually in largely a natural state, for the enjoyment of the public, having facilities for rest and recreation, often owned, set apart and managed by a city, state or nation"*



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**Parks are Essential to People**

- › Often the only common ground
- › Places where everyone is welcomed
- › Places where families can play
- › Get-away from noise and work
- › Places to interact with other people
- › Places of heritage, culture and reverence
- › Places to make your community special



*People + Parks = Prosperity*

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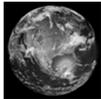
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**In the beginning...**

- › Our Earth was once just one big park
- › Native plants for landscaping
- › Lean-to shelters, chickee huts, or caves for shade
- › Numerous campgrounds with fire-pits and gardens



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## The first documented park

### *The Garden of Eden*

- ▶ First community garden
- ▶ First social gathering spot
- ▶ First clothing–optional park
- ▶ First invasive reptile observed
- ▶ First park ordinance (*hands off them apples!*)
- ▶ First park documented in print



*Humanity began in a park*

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## Parks throughout the ages...

### *Ancient Egypt had parks!*

- ▶ *"I have made fruitful the whole land with the fruit of trees and shrubs. My hand did all this so that people may sit in the shade"*  
– Ramses III 1182 BC
- ▶ *"I've protected the enclosure of the park in order to prevent the public from trampling it with their feet"*



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## Parks throughout the ages...

Ancient Assyria and Babylonia had parks!

- ▶ 900 BC – parks were established as site for royal hunting parties
- ▶ Parks also provided a setting for feasts and assemblies
- ▶ Hanging Gardens of Babylon

One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World



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### Parks throughout the ages...

*Ancient Greece & Rome had parks!*



- ▶ Greeks developed the art of town planning and included parks, gardens, theatres, gyms and baths
- ▶ All citizens were expected to participate in sports and games
- ▶ Romans took town and park planning to a whole new level



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### Parks throughout the ages...

*England used parks to increase health - 1700s*

- ▶ Created more small parks in urban areas and observed contagious disease declined (*first park outcome study?*)
- ▶ Vauxhall - a pleasure resort - admission price excluded the "rabble"
- ▶ Hyde Park and St. James Park - "upper class promenade"



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### Parks throughout the ages...

*Colonial America had parks!*

- ▶ Common greens were established in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont and New Hampshire
- ▶ New city designs included parks and open spaces
  - Philadelphia
  - Savannah
  - Washington D.C.



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### Early visions of parks...

- ▶ Artist George Catlin 1841 – called for “*nations park*” to preserve buffalo
- ▶ James Fennimore Cooper – *The last of the Mohicans*
- ▶ Henry David Thoreau – *Walden* +
- ▶ Artist Thomas Cole – founder of *Hudson River School*



Theme: American wilderness viewed as more than a challenge to overcome



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### Roots of the National Park System

- ▶ 1781 – National Military Parks (memorials)
- ▶ 1832 – Hot Springs Arkansas (federal reserve)
- ▶ (NYC Central Park 1857)
- ▶ 1864 – Yosemite Valley + Mariposa Big Tree Grove (CA)



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### Yosemite and Mariposa

- ▶ A leading advocate was Frederick Law Olmstead (Central Park)
- ▶ Initiated by State of California
- ▶ Authorized by President Abraham Lincoln in 1864 as *state managed reserve*
- ▶ “To be held for public use, resort and recreation”



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## Yellowstone



- ▶ Dedicated in 1872 by President Ulysses Grant
- ▶ *“set apart as a public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people”*
- ▶ 1881 U.S. Army Fort established to protect area – the start of “Park Rangers”



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## Yellowstone

First national park in the world



- ▶ Park creation advocated by naturalist Ferdinand V. Hayden
- ▶ Northern Pacific Railroad Company was seeking major destinations for their route through Montana.



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## John Muir



- ▶ Known as the *Father of the National Parks.*
- ▶ *Conducted field studies in the Sierra Nevada and published his findings in 1876*
- ▶ First to observe that valleys were shaped by glaciers
- ▶ Observed overgrazing and mismanagement of Yosemite by State of California.
- ▶ Inspired National park System – 1890
- ▶ Proposed National Forest System – 1895



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## National Parks

- ▶ Muir leveraged relationship with *Century Magazine* publisher Robert Underwood Johnson



- ▶ Inspired President Benjamin Harrison and Congress to adopt National Park Bill in 1890 to protect large natural areas



- ▶ Sequoia National Park
  - Mount Whitney - highest point 14,505'
  - General Sherman - one of world's biggest trees



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## Theodore Roosevelt

- ▶ The president spent three days camping in Yellowstone with John Muir - 1903



- ▶ Created 5 National Parks (Crater Lake, Wind Cave, Sully's Hill, Mesa Verde, added to Yosemite)

- ▶ Created 18 National Monuments



- ▶ Protected 100 million acres of national forests

- ▶ Signed Antiquity Act of 1906



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## National Park System

- ▶ Created in 1916 - 44 years after Yellowstone



- ▶ 1933 Consolidation of memorials and other special places as part of one National Park Service

- ▶ Creation of Civilian Conservation Corps (this prompted era of state parks)



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### The Emergence of Urban Parks



- ▶ At the same time advocates were seeking the preservation of National Parks, urban advocates were promoting city parks
- ▶ Instead of preservation of nature, re-creation of nature for people's delight
- ▶ Cause championed by many, including Frederick Law Olmstead, the same advocate who pushed for Yosemite as National Park

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### New York City's Central Park



- ▶ New York City population quadrupled from 1821-1855
- ▶ People retreated to cemeteries to get away from noise and pace of city life
- ▶ Need for park expressed by William Cullen Bryant (poet, editor of *New York Evening Post*) as early as 1844



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### Andrew Jackson Downing



- ▶ Published *The Horticulturist Magazine* (1846-1852)
- ▶ Advocated for a New York City park
- ▶ Saw need for a place for "open air driving"
- ▶ Mentor to Frederick Law Olmstead
- ▶ Died in steamship explosion in 1852



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## Central Park Development

- › Site selected was low income housing
- › Eminent domain used to acquire
- › \$5million for the original 700 acres
- › Design competition held to select Landscape Architect
- › Design contract awarded to Frederick Law Olmstead and British-born Calvert Vaux



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## Frederick Law Olmstead

- › Significant journalist
- › 1852-1857 explored the deep south (advocated against slavery)
- › Explored California
- › Travelled to Europe
- › Park design philosophy inspired by Birkenhead Park and Derby Arboretum in London
- › Awarded Central Park design contract in 1858



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## Central Park Design

- › The heart of New York City
- › Separate circulation for pedestrians, horseback and pleasure vehicles
- › 36 bridges - no two alike
- › Deliberate placement of every bench, tree, light-post, etc.



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## Can you imagine...

...New York City without Central Park?

- ▶ 843 Acres
- ▶ 21 children's parks
- ▶ 6% of Manhattan's total acreage
- ▶ 40 million visitors a year!
- ▶ Operated by park foundation (who provide 75% of \$57m budget)



Strategic management: *graffiti does not last 24 hours, litter gone by 9am, broken benches or playgrounds fixed on-the-spot*

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## City Beautiful Movement

...In response to crowded tenement housing

City design and beautification to create a *harmonious social order* and *increase quality of life*

- ▶ 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago
- ▶ 1902 National Mall in Washington D.C.
- ▶ 1920 Riverwalk in San Antonio, Texas
- ▶ 1920's Coral Gables in Dade County, Florida



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## Florida State Park Origins



- ▶ 1933 Civilian Conservation Corps established as part of federal *New Deal*

- ▶ 1935 Florida Park Service created under Florida Board of Forestry



- ▶ 1935 - Florida's first four state parks
  - Torreya State Park (Liberty County)
  - Gold Head Branch State Park (Clay County)
  - Hillsborough River State Park (Hillsborough County)
  - Myakka River State Park (Sarasota County)



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### Florida State Park Origins



Ravine at Gold Head  
Branch State Park  
1930s



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### Florida State Park Origins



Highlands Hammock  
Under construction  
1937



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### State Park Origins



Ranger Academy  
Wekiwa Spings



Lake Griffith State Park



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## Florida State Parks

- ▶ 1953 – Visitation tops 1 million
- ▶ 1969 – Board of Parks and Historic Memorials combined with Florida Outdoor Recreation Development Council to form **Division of Recreation and Parks** (*this is the first time recreation and parks connected as one entity*)
- ▶ 1971 – First prescribed fire (Falling Waters)
- ▶ 1972 – Visitation tops 10 million!
- ▶ 1993 – Friends of Florida State Parks



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## Origin of City and County Parks

*Park creation follows Florida's growth spurts*

- ▶ 1900–World War I: towns and city's establish waterfront parks, recreational amenities and band-shells
- ▶ 1920' parks included in residential subdivisions
- ▶ 1920's expansion of parks as tourist attractions
- ▶ 1930's cities use Federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) \$ to build parks and recreation centers



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## Community Park Origins



Lake Osceola 1882



"Bubs"



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### Community Park Origins



Fred Gibbons 1910  
Marathon  
workers recreation hall.



Live Oak Recreation Center  
1958

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### Community Park Origins



St. Pete Pier 1920s  
Now being  
reimagined.



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### Community Park Origins



Casino at Daytona Beach



Green Derby  
Tallahassee  
1939

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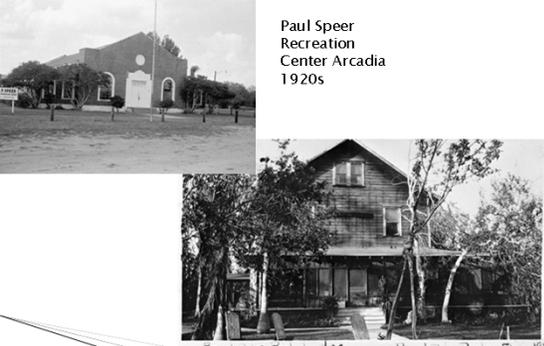
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### Community Park Origins



Paul Speer  
Recreation  
Center Arcadia  
1920s

Royal Palm Park Lodge. Royal Palm Park Fla. 1924  
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### Community Park Origins



Edna Lee and Dicksey 1927  
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### Community Park Origins



Lake Virginia 1920s  
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### Community Park Origins

1920s

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### Community Park Origins

Lummus Park Miami  
1930s

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### Community Park Origins

Bayfront Park Miami

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### Community Park Origins



Recreation centers blossomed in the 1920s and 1930s

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### Community Park Origins



City Island Recreation Center Daytona Beach

Bayfront Recreation Center - Sarasota

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### Community Park Origins

WWII 1942-45



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### Community Park Origins



WWII 1942-45



Gainesville Service Men's Club  
run by Parks and Recreation

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### Community Park Origins



WWII 1942-45



Gainesville Service Men's Club  
run by Parks and Recreation

Camp Blanding 1941

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### Community Park Origins



Crystal River Park  
1930s



Inverness Recreation Center 1930s



Vero Beach Recreation  
Center 1930s

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**Community Park Origins**  
Tallahassee Parks

Capt. William C. Lewis Park 1885

Woodville Park 1935 (Leon Cty)

1951

Leon park 1911

The Green Derby 1939

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**Community Park Origins**  
Tallahassee Parks

Named for Famous FAMU Football Coach

The Green Derby 1939

Making Valentines

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**Community Park Origins**  
Tallahassee Parks

Dade Street Recreation Center 1959

1966

Teen Center 1955

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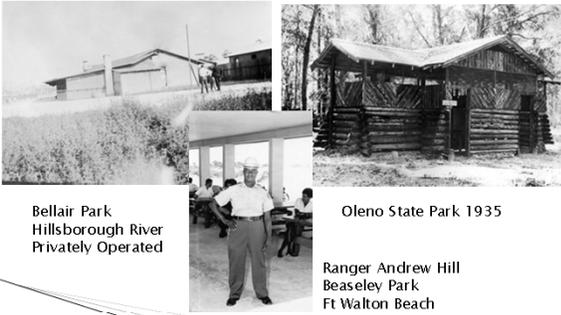
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### Community Park Origins

Segregated parks



Bellair Park  
Hillsborough River  
Privately Operated

Oleno State Park 1935

Ranger Andrew Hill  
Beaseley Park  
Ft Walton Beach

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### Community Park Origins

Park Trams



Myakka River State Park

Crandon Park Miami

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### Community Park Origins



Natural Beauty!

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## Community Park Origins

The nations first "underwater park"



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## Community Park Origins



Dreher Park West Palm Beach  
1967

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## Evolution of Local Parks

- ▶ Post World War II population explosion requires more parks
- ▶ Suburban growth and beach acquisitions prompt emergence of county parks and recreation departments
- ▶ Many county departments began as park or recreation boards, followed by establishment of professional staff and departments.



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# Florida's National Parks

Charles Rosier Royal Palm State Park 1916 "Temporary Quarters"



Royal Palm State Park became the nucleus for Everglades National Park.

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# Everglades National Park



Ralph Maxwell 1953

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# Everglades National Park



Ranger led tour 1970s

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## Themes

- ▶ As America's natural wonders were discovered – a concern about their protection and ability for all to enjoy
- ▶ Early naturalists and writers advocated for parks
- ▶ As population increased, urban planners recognized essential value of parks

*"A people without the knowledge of their past history, origins and culture is like a tree without roots"*  
**Marcus Garvey (1887-1940)**



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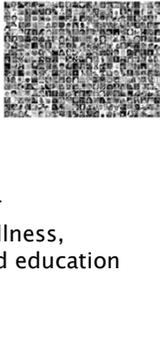
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## NRPA: Parks as Community Value

- ▶ Air Quality
- ▶ Water Quality
- ▶ Proximate Value Increase
- ▶ Sustainability Strategies
- ▶ Tourism
- ▶ Direct Revenue – earnings
- ▶ Indirect Revenue – multiplier
- ▶ Social Values: health and wellness, community cohesiveness and education



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## Our roles as stewards of the commons

- ▶ Set aside/acquire
- ▶ Maintain
- ▶ Event support
- ▶ Renovation
- ▶ Safety
- ▶ Stewardship
- ▶ Courteous and professional
- ▶ Create welcoming atmosphere



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### Our roles are essential

- ▶ History shows that the development of parks has paralleled the development of civilization
- ▶ 1000 people move to Florida each day!
- ▶ Population growth demands more parks



*"Parks and Recreation is the best antidote we have for Florida's expected growth"*

Annon E. Moose



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### If you were a doctor, what ailments could you treat with a *parkscription*?

- ▶ Boredom
- ▶ Isolation
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Diabetes
- ▶ Heart Disease
- ▶ Loneliness



*Purple pill or purple sunset?*

*What else could you write a parkscription for?*



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### Worksheet - What's your park story?

- ▶ How do you describe the value of your parks with the community?
- ▶ What is your role in changing perceptions about parks? from *"just fun"* to *"essential"*
- ▶ How can you inspire others such as staff, volunteers to understand the real value?
- ▶ If history really does repeat itself, *Florida's Future* is in your hands...



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## Learning Objectives

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## John McCarthy

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For more information about the Florida Recreation and Park Association visit [www.frpa.org](http://www.frpa.org).

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