



## Significant Dates in Park People History

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### November 22, 1977

Park People Incorporated, founded by Joy Teschner. She was inspired by her love for parks and a belief that there was a need for citizen input and oversight for the Milwaukee County Parks. She drew part of her plan from The Park People of Denver, and paid them \$5.00 for sharing their name. Though still a member of the appointed citizen Milwaukee County Park Commission, Joy realized that the commission was likely to be disbanded, so she set about forming The Park People, as an organization to support and advocate for the Parks. Joy also had the vision for Park Friends Groups, however, many broke away to form their own groups. Joy was given the honor of Director Emeritus.

### March 29, 1978

Federal designation as a 501(C)(3) organization received. Dave Kinnamon, a partner with Quarles & Brady, writes bylaws and articles of incorporation and serves on the board for 30 years. The bylaws state, the Corporation's purpose is to preserve, support, and enhance Milwaukee County Parks while building an effective volunteer organization  
Roger L. Boerner serves as first President.

### June 22, 1978

First annual meeting was held at Dretzka Park, from this point forward annual meetings rotate throughout Milwaukee County Parks. Officers are elected at the June annual meeting. Presidents serve for 2 years and stay on "chairman of the Board" for another 2 years thereafter.

### 1980

Lincoln Park office opened, Executive Director Nancy Cavanaugh hired at \$3.50 per hour funded by the Milwaukee Foundation.

John T. Byrnes serves as President.

### 1981

Milwaukee County Park Commission was disbanded by the County Board.

### 1982

The Park Market was introduced including benches and tree tags.

Robert M. Galecke serves as President.

### 1984

Bylaws changed to include Partner Organizations (i.e. Friends Groups); model by-laws were formatted for Friends Groups.

First Friends Group was recognized when Friends of Boerner Botanical Gardens was accepted as a Park People Partner, followed by Friends of the Domes in November.

Karen Case, soon-to-be president of the Friends of Boerner, and Nancy Cavanaugh worked out the model by-laws and partner agreement, under which Park People were to control the money with part of the Friends dues going to the Park People. One Park People director was to serve on the Friends of Boerner Board ex officio (Floyd Johnson).

Vell Moder takes over as Executive Director— hired as assistant to Nancy Cavanaugh.  
Park People raise the money to restore ROSS LODGE, a facility for overnight stays by groups of teenagers.



Regular annual park clean-ups each spring --- regular Newsletter by Wade Mosby, retired journalist.

Quentin V. Zillig serves as President.

### **1985**

Agreement with AFSCME 48, AFL-CIO signed, permitting volunteer activity in parks.

When Friends of Boerner receive a grant from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, they become financially independent. The Park People handle only the insurance for all the Friends groups.

### **1986**

Park People begin long association and restoration of TRIMBORN FARM. First by holding children's art exhibition, then by annual 'Harvest of Arts and Crafts' in September. This grew into a very successful, juried exhibition that raised money for the work at Trimborn, as well as for the Park People coffers. Joan Trimborn Bluhm was the guiding light behind this effort.

Wade Mosby serves as President.

### **1987**

Diane Buck committed to park history and works with Matthew Groshek, board member, on a brochure, Milwaukee County Parks: A Short History.

League of Women Voters under the guidance of John Abelt, study 19 major park systems seeking information on land use, programming, governance and budgeting to help TPP learn from other parks.

### **1988**

Robert Mikula serves as President, Bob was a former Parks Department Director for Milwaukee County, and prior thereto served several roles in Parks including County Landscape Architect.

### **1990**

Mary Kamps serves as President.

### **1991**

Park People send Board member M. Harvey to help start a Friends group at Riverside Park, the future Urban Ecology Center, with a start-up donation of \$1,000.

### **1992**

Margarete Harvey is hired part time to raise money for the gardens on the top deck of the O'Donnell Park parking structure by selling named bricks. A crew of 50 + volunteers help to man a booth for the sale of bricks and PP memberships at public events (summer) and in public buildings (winter).

Robert Cowan serves as President. Retired in 1994 and later given honor of Directors Emeritus

Nancy Cavanaugh retires. Cites as accomplishments: Preserving and advocating for parks; Restoring and promoting the educational potential of Trimborn Farms; Fund-raising funds for O'Donnell Park; Encouraging and negotiating for volunteer activity, such as Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful, Sack-It-To-Me Annual Clean up (now turned over to the City); Renovating Ross Overnight Lodge in Whitnall Park.

### **1993**

Kathy Arciszewski is hired to organize the educational program at Trimborn Farm. Nancy Kavanaugh retires, and Vell Moder becomes Executive Director.



## 1994

Margarete Harvey serves as President.

100 year anniversary for Lake Park is a huge celebration. Park People collect signatures against the sale of park land as proposed by County Executive.. Lake Park Friends formed.

Park People hold regular quarterly meetings with 4 partner groups to exchange information on programs, funding and sometime invite each other's members to events (Friends of Boerner, Friends of the Domes, Wehr Nature Center, Riverside Nature Center)

## 1995

Park People prevent the water lily pond at Humboldt Park from being filled in like the sunken garden at the Mitchell Park Domes. The pond was dredged, the water lilies overwintered, and new landscaping installed with funds raised by a "Walk for Waterlilies" at Humboldt Park. Lois Rehberg, granddaughter of the original designer of the pond, is present for the opening.

Weed Out! Weed Out got its start in 1995 when The Park People President Margarete Harvey met dedicated amateur naturalist Dr. Ken Solis, who had surveyed 25 area parks to publish an educational brochure about invasive plants and trees. Ken asked The Park People to help him convince the County Parks Department that aggressive non-native, invasive plants and trees were rapidly overrunning and degrading natural areas in our parks. In October 1995, Ken became the Chair of our newly-created Environmental Committee and immediately created our Weed Out program. The Park People established an agreement with AFSCME Local 882 to allow our volunteer "Weed Out Warriors" to take the maintenance of high-quality natural areas in the parks into their own hands.

First Park People Antique Show is a financial success.

Park People president, Margarete Harvey, serves on the Committee for the 21st century, appointed by County Exec Tom Ament, where she points out the value of volunteers and the risks in privatization of parks.

TPP discovers the Milwaukee County Parks Department is establishing its own Parks Foundation to the dismay of the Park People since it will be in direct competition with the Park People. The foundation's mission will be to Enhance the Milwaukee County Park System. The foundation was created to help raise money for projects that exceed the parks department's financial constraints.

## 1996

First WEED-OUT in 4 Milwaukee County Parks: Lake Park, Jacobus Park, Kletsch Park and Whitnall Park (volunteers not welcome at Boerner Botanical Gardens).

Funding for the first three years was received from a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Urban Forestry grant as part of a new effort to preserve urban forests. Since then, major funds for this initiative have been received from The Jane Bradley Pettit Foundation, Masterlock, Milwaukee Park Enhancement Fund, REI and others. Donors have also stepped forward with gloves, loppers and printed materials.

Park People leases Trimborn Farm from the County and rents the farm house.

Diane Buck serves as President.

Parks Department starts their own Milwaukee County Parks Foundation to raise funds for the parks with their own 501(c)3 status, with Dave O'Neil, development manager to set it up and a 15 member board of directors. Independent of the Parks Department but Tom Ament, Sue Baldwin and Shelia Aldrich to be ex officio board members. Not to be a membership organization, so as not to compete with the Friends Group.

TPP rallies community to be educated on pending removal of City Deed restrictions which would



impact Parks. There were 31 parks that were part of a group parks handed over from City to County in 1936 and 1937. City deed restrictions imposed at that time required that the parks must remain parks forever and could not be transferred to other parties. TPP maintain despite the best interests of the county official, removal of the restriction sets a dangerous precedent, making it easier for future county officials who might be facing tougher economic times to give into the temptation of liquidating some of the county's most valuable assets in order to pay the bills.

Board works on a policy to have segregated funds for money raised for the park system or specific parks to add an administrative fee and discusses what the fee should be and agrees this would only apply to future funds raised and to set up an Operating Fund. Also commits to more transparent presentation of the financial statements.

## 1997

Office moved to O'Donnell Park.

WEED-OUT® in 6 parks.

Received state Historical Society of Wisconsin Preservation Certificate for "restoration work at the pre-Civil War Trimborn Farm Park", Trimborn Farms project then moved over to Historical Society. The Trimborn Farms project was a major source of funds for The Park People.

After 14 years as Executive Director Vell Moder retires at an emotional party held at Wehr Nature Center.

New Friends Group – Friends of Lake Park.

Funded by a grant from the Wisconsin Humanities Council, the Park People implemented a project to research the history of Milwaukee County parks and examine current issues and challenges surrounding the parks today. Oral history interviews were conducted with past policy makers and those connected with county government. Interviewees included:

- Bill O'Donnell, county board member from 1948 to 1976 and Milwaukee County executive from 1976 to 1985;
- Bob Mikula, landscape architect and director of Milwaukee County parks until his retirement in 1986;
- Kurt Bauer, director of the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) from 1961 to 1997;
- Avery Wittenberger, Milwaukee Journal reporter for 35 years;
- David Schultz, former Milwaukee County executive;
- Don Turek, executive director of the War Memorial from 1957 to 1996;
- Norman Gill, longtime head of the Citizen Governmental Research Bureau (now the Public Policy Forum);
- Don Weber, county board member from 1960 to 1966 and assistant to County Executives John Doyne and Bill O'Donnell;
- George Donovan, former member of the Park Commission;
- Fred Tabak, county board supervisor; and
- Joy Teschner, founder of the Park People and former member of the Milwaukee County Park Commission, the Ozaukee County Board, and the Mequon City Council.

### *Strategic Plan Adopts:*

- Vision: We believe that parks are vital for everyone's quality of life
- Mission: Citizen stewardship of Milwaukee County Parks
- Goals and Objectives:
  - To preserve open green space and original vision and integrity of park system to serve present and future generations
  - By monitoring public park policies



- By establishing and communication selected positions on issues concerning Milwaukee County Parks
- By documenting park history and disseminating the heritage of the parks
- To support, as advocates for the parks, adequate funding and greater public awareness and appreciation
- By supporting projects, programs and educational activities
- By raising and managing funds
- To enhance park lands, though improvements including new facilities and vegetation and beautification
- By understanding specific capital improvements, as well as facilities and vegetation maintenance programs
- By encouraging appropriate use of parks
- By helping to create and coordinate park support groups
- To build an effective citizen support group
- By recruiting members
- By keeping members informed
- By encouraging volunteerism
- By improving Park People's image and visibility in the community
- All of the above goals and objectives will be achieved by working cooperatively with and in support of the County Legislature, the County Administration, the Parks Department and the Parks Foundation to the extent that their work is consistent with the basic mission of The Park People.

#### *Oral History Recaps*

- Joy Teschner– Founder of TPP. Had attended a national park organization meeting and heard about Denver's friends of the Parks group called The Park People. She liked the idea and the name and the Denver group let her use the name for a five dollar fee. She established "The Park People" in 1977 while still on the Park Commission which lasted awhile longer but "they didn't do anything. They didn't have significant really." Teschner envisioned TPP as a group of citizens from around the county who were concerned with parks and natural areas. The group could use the force of numbers to have influence with government. Teschner wanted to set up an umbrella group in individual parks. However, after setting these groups up, many of the groups broke away from TPP to be their own group. "This was not my idea of what I wanted them to do but everybody else wanted it so that is what has happened."
- William O'Donnell– Former County Supervisor and County Executive: "The park system has become more political with the dismantling of the Park Commission which is more realistic and more in step with the rest of the county's system."
- Robert Mikula– Parks General Manager: "When the Park Commission existed, it was the prime-stop gap between the politicians and the Park Department, and the Commission spoke for the parks. He hoped TPP "would be the voice of the people for parks, yet it has not authority or power." He further stated he does not think the era of a powerful and effective park advocates in the Park Commission will ever return.
- Dave Schultz– Former Parks Director. Schultz saw TPP and various friends of the parks as being useful adjuncts to the park system. These groups could be used to raise money and carry out functions which he did not want public employees to perform, however, he realized there were issues with volunteers and Unions.

#### **1998**

Judith Lindquist takes over as Executive Director

Park People Volunteer of the Year Award initiated. Margarete Harvey first recipient.

The Park People Provided nearly 20,000 volunteer hours and raised more than \$300,000 to benefit the parks in 1998. Besides initiating the popular Weed-Outs with more than 1,000



volunteers pulling invasive plants, the Park People provide the impetus for the formation of other partner groups including Lake Park Friends, Riverside Environmental Center and Friends of Wehr Nature Center. Advocates against lakefront development for Great Lakes Development.

Jan Grosenick serves as President.

On May 14, 1998, the Park People of Milwaukee County, with the financial support of the Wisconsin Humanities Council and the cooperation of the League of Women Voters, sponsored a symposium on Milwaukee County Parks. Held at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) Golda Meir Library, the forum featured many prominent policy makers who participated in a panel discussion moderated by Stephen Percy, director of UWM's Center for Urban Initiatives and Research.<sup>1</sup> It was Percy's 1995 report on Milwaukee's parks, especially as it related to issues surrounding the community's commitment to Milwaukee County's parks, that had originally sparked the interest of Diane Buck, president of the Park People.

Volunteer of the Year Margarete Harvey

## 1999

Preserve our Parks (POP) started, primarily as a litigation organization. POP was founded in 1999 by a group of Milwaukeeans concerned about the future of our public parks, green spaces and the lakefront. Some board members from The Park People moved over to POP (note, TPP now has a policy that board members and staff need to choose).

Susan Slocum takes over as Executive Director.

Board tension arose as concerns over direction now that POP was formed, and how that might impact the mission of The Park People. This change also impacted donations to The Park People. Foundations such as the Godfrey Foundation step up along with assistance from the Non-Profit Management Center including support from Joan Blume and Pat Wisniski and Lynn Gratis.

Volunteer of the Year Nancy Cavanaugh.

## 2000

Office moved to War Memorial Center.

Volunteers of the Year Diane Cowan and Anne Linskens.

The growth in friends groups comes at a time when the county parks operating budget has dwindled to less than half its 1980 level. By luring residents back to the parks, advocates hope to create a volunteer corps to take on some projects the county can't afford and spread support for greater park funding, according to Park People Executive Director Susan Slocum. The Park People's new push stems from a re-evaluation of its own mission and realization as early as 2000 "that there needed to be an overall change in the parks." The question became what can we do to return citizens to the parks, to make these the living rooms of our neighborhoods again," Slocum said.

Lafayette McKinney serves as President.

In a move to enhance the visibility of The Park People and also preserve funds for Parks instead of operating costs, TPP starts the Milwaukee Environmental Consortium (MEC) with other environmental organizations. MEC is a group of organizations passionate about the environment, run cooperatively by the member groups who each have a vote on all matters. MEC fosters collaboration through shared resources, incubates new initiatives, and activates diverse champions for a clean and healthy environment in Greater Milwaukee. MEC provides office space and services as well as the communal benefit of sharing, learning and collaborative opportunities. MEC fosters the development of new groups by helping them get started under the MEC umbrella, receiving the full benefits of being a non-profit organization. Members



include individuals, informal groups and non-profit organizations with missions focused on the environment and sustainability. The goal is to support the people and the work of Greater Milwaukee's environmental community. The Greater Milwaukee Foundation and also the Non-Profit Management Center were instrumental in facilitating this change.

The Park People planned a symposium to bring the public, current policymakers, and government officials together to examine the status of the parks today. Symposium panelists included:

- County Executive Thomas Ament;
- Dennis Wedall, budget director of the Milwaukee County Parks;
- Paul Hathaway, associate director of the Milwaukee County Parks;
- David Meissner, director of the Public Policy Forum;
- Karen Ordians, chair of the county Board of Supervisors;
- Margaret Harvey, chair of the Park People and landscape architect;
- Dan Diliberti, county supervisor and member of the Parks, Environment, and Education committee;
- Penny Podell, county supervisor and also a Parks, Environment and Education committee member;
- Phil Evenson, director of SEWRPC; and
- Jim McGuigan, county supervisor.

## 2001

Park People Stewardship and Teschner Awards started.

Milwaukee County Supervisor Jim McGuigan was named the recipient of the 2001 Teschner Award for Outstanding Public Service by The Park People. McGuigan was chosen for the award based on his commitment to Milwaukee County Parks and specifically for his involvement in the development of the county's newest park, Kohl Park.

Park People raise funds to restore the colonnade, walkways and landscaping at the memorial for Dr. Schneider, the donor of Doctors Park, including historical benches.

Volunteer of the Year Dr. Ken Solis for his work on Weed-Out!

## 2002

Suggests that creation of an independent parks district. modeled after other districts around the country is needed noting county tax dollars earmarked for parks has shrunk from 24% in 1983 to 9% in 2001.

Non Profit Management Center assists with a Board Reorganization.

John Vandlik serves as President. John gives countless volunteer hours to promote a fiscally independent Park District.

TPP starts two new annual awards including Teschner Award for Outstanding Public Service to recognize public officials and the Steward of Year Award recognizing persons who enhanced parks.

Fiscal Policies for Friends Group formation written and adopted thanks to Executive Director Susan Slocum, Board Members John Vandlik and Dave Kinnamon.

Volunteer of the Year Darryl Heron.

Trimbourm Farms transferred to Milwaukee Historical Society. The project was consuming 50% of staff time however, this also meant TPP needed to find a new revenue stream since it received strong revenue from the annual Arts and Crafts festival.

Revision of Bylaws with goal to have a smaller and more engaged Board of Directors, Previously had over 40, now Bylaws state between 18-24. Revisions also created an Advisory Council

allowing long time members to resign from Board but maintain an official connection.

Park Friends Group committee formed with goal to encourage formation of Friends Groups and serve as formal liaison to neighborhood park groups as well as groom board members.

TPP consolidates expenditures into one budget, previously Weed Out, Trimbourn and other projects were kept as separate budgets with independent expenditures and revenues.

Adopted a Public Park Policies position paper which were policies that Board of TPP endorsed with respect to the County's management of the park system. Having Public Park Policies positions defined ahead of time, allowed TPP to react and advocate for TPP interests in a more responsive and timely manner with the media and with County Government officials which also helped to raise the public profile of TPP.

## 2003

Website launched; theparkpeople-milwaukee.org has changed to Parkpeoplemke.org

Betty Czarapata, the former director of the Weed-Out! Program passes. Betty devoted much of her life to helping keep invasive plants from taking over Milwaukee-area parks. She authored 'Invasive Plants of the Upper Midwest'.

Office moved to Milwaukee Environmental Consortium on Farwell Avenue.

Advocates (along with POP) for sales tax to support parks.

Advocates against a hospice being built on a parkway.

Susan Slocum, executive director of the Park People, testifies that volunteers from her group do not supplant park laborers, but do remove invasive plant species, such as garlic mustard and burdock, from the parks -- an important chore that would otherwise go undone. Susan's testimony was in response to the president of AFSCME Local 282, representing county parks workers, who pledged to ban all volunteers from performing any work in county parks.

Susan Slocum becomes President of Milwaukee Environmental Consortium.

## 2004

Friends Group Initiative started. Park People hires Melanie Houston as Friends Group Coordinator. Melanie assists in the start-up and coordination of 18 Friends Groups over the next two years.

Advocates (along with POP) against docking Navy Cruiser at Veteran's Park.

Jim Price serves as President.

First Annual Friends Group Gathering reported 36 Friends Groups to date. Melanie Houston instrumental in forming many of these organizations.

Friends of Bradford Beach form with goal to "bring back" Bradford Beach. Deb Lukovich instrumental, later becomes Park People President.

TPP surveys 3,800 members and volunteers from its lists of engagement and receives 411 responses. Objects of the survey are to:

- Test various program interests/membership benefits by category
- Test membership price points
- Measure satisfaction with current park conditions
- Test willingness to pay increases taxes dedicated to park support
- Test interest in local park support groups

## 2005

Friends of Hoyt Park form and mobilize to launch a \$5.5 million fund-raising campaign to speed





construction of a new community swimming pool in Hoyt Park.

Advocates (along with POP) for a Park District.

Wins best emerging origination award from Non-Profit Organization.

Melanie Houston serves as interim Executive Director.

## 2006

Jim Goulee takes over as Executive Director. Goulee brings a wealth of experience having served 33 years with the Milwaukee County parks system, the last nine in charge of the southern region.

The Park People continues to take a stand on the need for a Park District. A new report conservatively estimates the cost of more than a decade of deferred parks maintenance at nearly \$150 million.

The Park People sounds the alarm that the county park system is in crisis. With a 64% drop in the tax levy for parks since 1986, with two-thirds of its full-time work force lost over the same period and with bathrooms, pools and other park facilities in disrepair, the 15,000-acre system is at a turning point. New ways must be found or this emerald necklace will sink into irreversible decay, with dire implications for neighborhoods, the tax base and the region's quality of life.

Milwaukee County Parks Foundation dissolves.

## 2007

Milwaukee County Parks Advisory Commission created to help address parks funding decrease. An Advisory Referendum to support creation of a .5%-1% sales tax for Parks and Culture was recommended. This was supported by the County Board, various union organizations, The Park People, Preserve our Parks and the Quality of Life Alliance. This was brought about by legislation to support parks recreation and culture.

Public Parks Alliance, Inc. set up as a 501(c)(4) advocacy organization to receive non-deductible contributions to lobby for legislation and support candidates for public office.

Bylaws revisions made that include allowing for electronic voting.

Advocates (along with POP) for sales tax to support the park system.

Deb Lukovich serves as President.

Volunteer of Year awarded to Lisa Hoerhner.

## 2008

Television actress Jane Kaczmarek, a well-known TV mom from her years on "Malcolm in the Middle" is celebrity guest at The Park People Gala. She says her appearance was a result of an interview she gave in which she noted that one of her favorite childhood memories was playing at Jackson Park near the south side home where she grew up. The gala was billed as an eco-friendly event, and there were numerous green touches. The invitations were printed on plastic made from recycled soda bottles. Dinner included many locally grown foods, and the cocktail hour featured samplings of organic vodkas that are made locally by Rehorst. Among those at the event were Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett and Parks Director Sue Black.

Friends of The Monarch Trail starts up. The Trail begins just west of the Milwaukee County Parks Department headquarters on Watertown Plank Road.

Raffle held and sponsored by The Park People to raise funds for the parks with a goal of \$250,000 including a donation from Harley Davidson for a Heritage Softail Classic and other prizes including a county "passport" for free admission to county golf courses, pools and other attractions; a bicycle; and free dinners for 10 at Lake Park Bistro and Coast restaurants.



Hosted forum for the candidates for Milwaukee County executive, including philanthropist Chris Abele and state Representative Jeff Stone (R-Greendale).

Launch of The Park People Wall Calendar underwritten by the Reiman Foundation

Will Ross Foundation grant received.

Started PayPal account.

Coles Family Foundation grant received.

Constance P. Godfrey Foundation grant received.

Directors and Officers Insurance noted as a must-have for board members and policies secured.

Brian Russart hired by MCPD as Natural Areas Manager & works closely with Weed-Out!

Volunteer of the Year Dave Kinnamon, long term board member and Treasurer.

Discussions between MCPD and TPP on donations and restricted fund policy, discussion included whether a fee should be instituted by TPP or a discount membership card provided to TPP members.

It was noted that The Park People has distributed over \$2.5 million to the parks to date.

\$5,000 received from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation Kopmeier Family Fund.

## 2009

Listening sessions held and gather over 150 statements on what TPP can and should focus on emphasize energizing and supporting Friends Groups.

Strategic Plan adopted 2008-2012.

Document retention policy adopted.

Concerns expressed on newly adopted Strategic Plan not mentioning advocacy, stating that TPP was originated as an advocacy organization in 1977. by Joy Teschner in response to the dismantling of Milwaukee County Parks Commission .

Application for Fiscal Sponsorship from Friends of Estabrook Park.

Treasurer Jim Ciurlik, CPA, provides accounting guidance and financial oversight to TPP fiscal policies. More transparency to board members with monthly profit and loss statements, budget of actual to year to date, and summary of donations accounts managed by TPP for MCPD.

Staffing changes made due to financial constraints, both staff members eliminated with invitation to reapply for a position as interim –Executive Director. One of the two applies and is chosen as interim Executive Director.

Administrative fee policy adopted.

Application for fiscal sponsorships from Friends of Juneau Park and Lafollette Park and ROMP accepted.

Policy adopted on securing a dedicated funding source for Milwaukee County Parks.

David Kinnamon, 30 year member of TPP Board and Treasurer passed on the records to Pete Tomasi. Recognition made of longstanding commitment by Quarles & Brady including service from Charlie Kamps.

Dan Cody serves as President.

Part-time contract accountant approved.

Strategic Plan Consultant Marsh Block hired.



Lincoln Park Friends approved for Fiscal Sponsorship.

Discussions on Parks Foundation assets, policy adopted regarding donor intent and restrictions and transparency.

Deborah Lukovich President.

Janet Tierney serves as Executive Director.

## 2010

Friends Group interest from Doctor's Park, Lindberg Park, Kosciuszko Park and Johnson's Park.

Conflict of Interest Policy Adopted.

TPP has over 500 followers on FaceBook and Twitter.

Policy adopted on administrative fee for donations.

Policy on record retention adopted.

Advocates (along with POP) against charging for parking at War Memorial.

Gold Medal Award presented to Milwaukee County Parks. Celebration event with TPP, speaker Edee Daniels.

2006 Executive Director Search – 15 applicants, 12 qualified, in-depth screenings and interviews by TPP and MCPD and job is awarded to Jim Goulee. Jim had served as interim during the job-posting process which was conducted after downsizing.

Review of Employee Handbook shows outdated information. Board votes to toss out Handbook, no update to follow other than board policies as adopted.

New Executive Director streamlines meetings by consolidating fund requests, and allowing board on a consent agenda or remove items for discussion. Provides clarity as to donor fund tracking and intent.

## 2011

The Park People, along with the Urban Ecology Center picked as the beneficiaries for the first Milwaukee Rock the Green. The Fray headlined a concert event billed as "the Midwest's Near-Zero Waste Music Festival at Veterans Park. Other bands on the bill included Ben Folds, Fitz and the Tantrums, Michelle Branch, Christina Perri and Evan Christian. According to organizers, the concert's mission is to educate and entertain "by combining a world-class concert with an interactive sustainability experience." Rock the Green also has an endowment that supports efforts stressing building sustainable communities. The festival used clean energy and other practices to ensure near-zero waste and highlighted national sustainability innovators through exhibits and interactive education.

Started archiving quarterly newsletters on website.

Interest from potential Friends Groups, many are promoted by County Supervisor Jason Haas.

- Saveland
- Doctors
- Chippewa
- Morgan Triangle
- Baran
- Clark Square
- Hollar
- Wilson
- Bender Park
- Sherman Park



- Garden Park Homes
- Juneau Park Friends
- Sheridan Park – applies for fiscal sponsorship
- Juneau Park Friends – becomes their own 501(c)(3)

Friends of Sheridan Park apply for fiscal sponsorship.

REI Grant to support WeedOut!

Grants from Will Ross Foundation, Coles Family Foundation and Constance P Godfrey Trust.

Adopts Equal Opportunity Policy.

Memorandum of Understanding signed between TPP and Milwaukee County Parks Department on Membership Perks.

First Run for the Parks cosponsored by Bay View Neighborhood Association.

Friends Group of the Year Hoyt Park.

Annual Friends Group Meeting at O'Donnell Park with Speaker Edee Daniels and photos of parks and Candidate For County Board Supervisor Forum.

## 2012

Launch of Oak Leaf Discovery Tour Passport Program.

Recognized by the Nonprofit Center of Milwaukee for an Award for Excellence in Community Organizing.

County park system receives Leopold award for restoration efforts. The award, for work in restoring the ecological quality of the 10,000-acre county park system was given by Aldo Leopold Foundation and the University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum. The award recognizes the county's natural area program, which includes joint efforts with The Park People and others on a variety of projects, including removal of invasive species from natural areas of the parks; a youth conservation program; wildlife habitat restoration; and a college internship program.

Celebrates the Milwaukee County Park's 105 anniversary with a "Family Fun Day" on at McKinley Park on the lakefront. Highlights included local historian John Gurda, who talked about the history of the parks; children's activities by the YMCA; the Klement's Racing Sausages, the Door County Sled Dogs; the McMenamin Irish; an improv comedy show; disc golf demonstrations; a bounce house and a concert by K.T. and the Universal Love Band.

Direct Supply participates in employee volunteer events.

Fiscal Sponsorship approved for Friends of Doctor's Park.

Friends Group interest expressed by:

- Zeidler Park
- Lincoln Park

REI and Wisconsin Energies grants to support Weed-Out!

Whole Foods picks TPP for Community Day Event

Wheel & Sprocket underwrites The Park People wall calendar.

PEP (Park Enhancement Plan) invitations sent out to Milwaukee businesses encouraging team building events around park projects in light of changes to union laws.

Juneau Park Friends starts their own 501(c)(3) and is no longer in need of the fiscal sponsorship from TPP.

Endowment received from Charlotte Staab estate, tree planted in her memory.



Insurance policy now covers Fiscally Sponsored Friends Groups.

TPP Advocates (along with POP) for Park District.

TPP has raised 3 million since inception for Milwaukee County Parks.

Friends Group of Year: Friends of Doctors Park.

Annual Friends Group Meeting at Greenfield Park. Speaker was Laura Albano on history of parks.

“The Park People” name trademarked.

## 2013

New County Park’s Director John Dargle.

Milwaukee County Parks Department sets up Amenity Matching Fund to match dollars with entities that donate park amenities.

American Transmission Company makes grant for Weed Out Program.

TPP starts Friends Group Liaison Program and clarifies roles of what TPP can do for Friends Groups and Milwaukee County Parks Department.

Board Member Katie Williams writes thesis on Friends Groups and presents at Annual Friends Group Meeting. Thesis entitled: Urban parks, environmental justice, and voluntarism: The distribution of Friends of the Parks groups in Milwaukee County.

Friends Group of the Year – Friends of Grant Park.

Susan Spoerk serves as President.

Annual Friends Group Meeting at Greenfield Park; Speaker discusses Thesis on Friends Groups.

## 2014

Board Governance Policy Adopted.

Board member Barb Ali writes book 101 Things to Do in Milwaukee County Parks and The Park People links her blog on Milwaukee County Parks to its website.

The Park People Acorn Fund started. This fund was created by an anonymous donor earmarking the funds 100% towards operations. The donor noted that there are 15,000 acres of parks and that TPP was an important steward of the parks and donated \$50,000 and also included TPP in her estate plan.

Joined AmazonSmile program.

TPP was approved to join the Community Shares Milwaukee Federation for workplace giving.

Sponsorship received from Kohl’s Go Green on park improvement projects. This was the fourth year of support from Kohl’s.

Received grant from Dorothy Inbush Foundation

### *Newly started Friends Groups*

- Friends of Jacobus Park– intends to apply for fiscal sponsorship
- Friends of Moody Park– did apply for fiscal sponsorship
- Friends of Noyes Pool– intends to apply for fiscal sponsorship
- Humboldt Park Watch– applied for fiscal sponsorship
- Friends of Lindberg Park
- Friends of Kern Park– interest

Fiscal Sponsorship approved for Friends of Center Street Park and Friends of Noyes Park Pool.

Five year annual grant from MillerCoors for cleanup of South Shore Beach.



Policy adopted on protesting sale of any park land. Potential sale of O'Donnell Park was of concern.

Media Policy adopted.

TPP educates community on report by Public Policy Foundation entitled Pulling Back the Curtain: Assessing the needs of major arts, cultural, recreational, and entertainment assets in Milwaukee County.

Advocates (along with POP) against the sale of O'Donnell Park.

Friends Group of the Year. Friends of Sheridan Park.

Volunteer of the Year: Chris and Amelia Kegel (Wheel & Sprocket).

Annual Friends Group Meeting at North Point Light House. Speaker discusses on 101 Things to do in Parks.

## 2015

Studied supportive Park Non-Profits throughout the country to adopt best-practices. Best practices noted from Seattle Parks Foundation, Montgomery Parks, and Fairfax, Virginia. Common theme of successful Park Support Groups includes a strong membership program driven by a perk of value.

President Elect model adopted to ensure pipeline of leadership succession.

WeedOut! Reports approximately 370 volunteers for 2015.

Trademark registrations for Park People, Friends of Milwaukee County Parks, Park People Friends of Milwaukee County Parks, Park People Oak Leaf Discovery Tour and Oak Leaf Discovery Tour.

Education provided to board on roles of Preserve our Parks and Parks Advisory Counsel and Milwaukee County Trails Council and how missions compare or contrast with TPP.

Fiscal sponsorship approved for St. Francis All Abilities Playground at Greene Park.

Trail Maps published with sponsorship from Wheel & Sprocket, used to support Oak Leaf Discovery Tour program.

*Friends Group fiscal sponsorship applications:*

- Friends of Pulaski - Cudahy
- Friends of Lincoln Park
- Friends of Morgan Park
- Friends of Wedgewood

Fiscal Sponsorship approved for Friends of Jacobus Park.

Grant from Wisconsin Energies Foundation to support Weed-Out!

Grant from Godfrey Foundation.

Advocates (along with POP) that any sales tax increase should include parks.

Advocates (along with POP) against County being able to sell parkland.

Friends Group of the Year: Friends of Estabrook Park.

Volunteer of the Year: Emily Heller, for her work on Oak Leaf Discovery Tour.

Annual Friends Group Meeting at Domes. Speaker discusses the Parks and Friends Groups and use of Social Media.



## 2016

The Park People revised the Advocacy policy recognizing the duplication of efforts with Preserve our Parks (POP) and becomes more focused on raising funds and creating and supporting Friends Groups.

Update and review all internal governance policies and post to shared Google drive for Board of Directors.

In anticipation of the 40th Anniversary, Board Member and President Susan Spoerk, starts a timeline project. Finds some information in a 25th Anniversary Booklet . Reviews past minutes, meets with past Presidents and Executive Directors to add to the original timeline and bring to date.

Adopted new mission: Our mission is to support Milwaukee County Parks by educating stakeholders about Milwaukee County parks, encouraging park improvement through Friends Groups, coordinating Weed-Out® programs and accepting and honoring donor intent of charitable contributions while balancing long term park viability.

Adopted new vision: "Treasuring our Parks"

Adopted new value statements.

Set target of membership goal of 1% of Milwaukee County Adults or 6,000. Currently at 200 and the most TPP ever had was 450.

Friends of Brown Deer Park started new Friends Group.

Kay Hernen hired as bookkeeper and to assist in succession planning for Jim Goulee. Kay works with auditor Barb Lasky to review and improve operations including moving to an accrual basis for accounting to be GAAP compliant.

Milwaukee County Parks budget includes three new key roles which will interface with TPP, including Trails Coordinator, Fund Development Manager and Volunteer Coordinator.

The Park People co-sponsors Chinese Lantern Festival held at Boerner Botanical Gardens, event lasts five weeks with record breaking attendance.

*Friends Group interest expressed by:*

- Cathedral Square Park

Friends Group of Year: Friends of Pulaski Park.

Volunteer of Year – John Lunz for work on TPP Board and WeedOut!

Friends Group/Annual Meeting combined at China Lights Festival. Speakers include new Friends Group Coordinator.

Board reviews and refreshes and adopts where needed internal policies. Policies date stamped with changes and centralized on a Google Drive. Policies include:

- Advocacy
- Administrative Fee
- Bank Designation
- Conflict of Interest
- Donation
- Equal Opportunity
- Media
- Leadership Succession
- Policy on Policies
- Preserve Our Parks
- Restricted Funds
- Record Retention
- Sunset Policy



## 2017

Park Perks launched to drive value to membership by providing valuable coupons to Milwaukee County Park attractions.

Annual \$1,000 grant to support board member volunteer hours from Thomson Reuters now up to \$5,000.

Kate Ciurlik serves as President.

Dave Kinnamon awarded status of Director Emeritus.

Susan Spoerk named The Park People Historian. Susan wrote the 40th Anniversary Timeline. The intent is for one version to be more inclusive and used by the Board of Directors to help guide decision making to serve the Mission of The Park People. The other version will be shorter and posted to The Park People website to educate the community on what we do and also provide information to potential donors and members to assure them TPP is worthy of investment to help support our treasured Milwaukee County Parks. Currently the long version is posted to the website allowing the community to provide updates and corrections.

Executive Director Jim Goulee retires after over a decade of dedicated service to The Park People.

New Executive Director Dawn St. George hired. Dawn has served in leadership roles at several non-profits including Wisconsin Historical Society, Old World Wisconsin, Lincoln Park Zoo and the Zoological Society of Milwaukee. Dawn received her Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and also has a Masters in Counseling Psychology and a B.S. in Elementary Education from Western Michigan.

*\*Corrections or additions to the timeline can be submitted to The Park People via phone or Contact Us page- [parkpeoplemke.org](http://parkpeoplemke.org)*