

**MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION  
MARCH 31 MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 31, 2021 @ 5:30 PM  
VIA ZOOM WEBINAR LINK AND PHONE NUMBER:**

**N O T I C E**

**MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION**

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ACT, CHAPTER 231, P.L. 1975**

**NOTICE** is hereby given that the Mercer County Park Commission will hold their **MARCH 2021 PUBLIC MEETING** on **Wednesday, March 31, 2021; to begin at 5:30 pm via Zoom Webinar.** To encourage full public participation of the public meeting, please use the meeting access information below. (The Meeting link and meeting information may also be accessed on our website at [www.mercercountyparks.org](http://www.mercercountyparks.org)).

**use the information provided below join the webinar:**

- **When:** Mar 31, 2021 at 05:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
- **Topic:** March 31, 2021 Mercer County Park Commission Public Meeting Zoom Webinar
- **Please click the link below to join the webinar:**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87361844002?pwd=bENXc1BUWm9yTFRmTjhPMnlJZ012Zz09>
  
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**CALL TO ORDER:**

- Commissioner Schulz called the March 31, 2021 meeting of the Mercer County Park Commission to order at 5:38 pm, via Zoom Webinar platform.

**ROLL CALL:**

- **The following Commissioners answered the Roll Call of the Secretary:**  
Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith
  
- **The following Commissioners were absent:**  
Davis, Gardner
  
- **Commissioner Schulz led the Pledge of Allegiance and the Salute to the Flag.**

**NOTICE OF MEETING:**

- IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SUNSHINE LAW (OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT CHAPTER 231, P.L. 1975), ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN THAT NOTIFICATION WAS GIVEN AS FOLLOWS: EMAILED TO THE TIMES, TRENTONIAN, AND TO THE MERCER COUNTY CLERK
- LOCAL OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE - COVID 19 [N.J.S.A 10:4-8(B)] AUTHORIZES LOCAL UNITS TO CONDUCT PUBLIC MEETINGS THROUGH USE OF STREAMING SERVICES AND OTHER ONLINE MEETING PLATFORMS.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 24, 2021 PARK COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING:**

- On Motion by Commissioner Mooij, seconded by Commissioner Caton; by voice vote, the February 24, 2021 Mercer County Park Commission Meeting Minutes were approved as presented.
- **Ayes:** Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain** None. **Absent:** Davis, Gardner.

**APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 2021 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION BILLS:**

- On Motion by Commissioner Caton, seconded by Commissioner Martinez; by voice vote, the March 2021 Mercer County Park Commission Bills were approved for payment as presented.
- **Ayes:** Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain** None. **Absent:** Davis, Gardner.

**APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 2021 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION REVENUE REPORTS:**

- On Motion by Commissioner Forrester, seconded by Commissioner Schulz, by voice vote, the February 2021 Mercer County Park Commission Revenue Reports were approved as presented.
- **Ayes:** Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain** None. **Absent:** Davis, Gardner.

**EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH**

*(Presented by Executive Director Aaron T. Watson; Nominated by Marc Vecchiolla, Director of Tennis Operations)*

**Devin Rubino** was named USTA Middle States Teaching Pro of the year in 2020. This covers most of NJ, all of PA, DE and part of West Virginia. She's been teaching private groups since the pandemic began and is currently teaching 250 players per week. Since January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, she has brought in \$32,767.00 in lesson revenue for the Park Commission.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

*(Presented by Executive Director Aaron T. Watson)*

- C-1-** The Mercer County Park Commission has announced its third year of the, ‘Eyes on Eagles’ programming to celebrate the four (4) pairs of bald eagles that are currently nesting in the Mercer County Park. Programs will be available in-person and virtually through June.
- C-2-** Mercer County’s Mercer Meadows has been selected by the New Jersey Parks and Recreation Association (NJRPA) as the winner of the Excellence Design Award in the category of Special Use/Other. Awards will be presented at the at an Award Ceremony to be held at the Summit Family Aquatic Center in Summit, NJ on Wednesday, May 19.
- C-3-** On Thursday, March 25, 2021, volunteers from the Trenton community assisted in the installation of a Strawbale garden at the Capital City Farm. The Capital City Farm is owned by The City of Trenton and was established by D&R Greenway Land Trust.

This outdoor community space, managed by the Garden State Agrihood, provides an opportunity for local residents to congregate and reclaim land for food growing in the City of Trenton. Additional support for the event came from the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, the Mercer County Park Commission, and the Alliance for Watershed Education.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

*(Presented by Deputy Director Joe Pizza)*

- **In House Staff Operations:** Park Maintenance staff has been working to prepare all Park Commission Picnic Areas for the season; Golf Course Maintenance is underway; to include aeration of all courses, tree removal and course repairs.
- **Hopewell Valley Golf Club:**
  - Competitive proposals have been advertised for Catering and Pool Maintenance services.
  - Park Commission painters have completed building interiors.
  - In-House Electricians have replaced a majority of the lighting, lighting fixtures and extensive repairs to the fire alarm system.
  - In-House Carpenters are replacing the maintenance shop roof and other various areas in need of wood replacement and upgrades.
  - A Contract for the replacement of the pedestrian bridge is on the Agenda this evening for consideration of approval.
  - Septic issues at the site are currently being addressed, with the replacement of the leach field anticipated. Construction is pending New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) approvals.
  - Internet and phone connectivity and upgrades are currently being coordinated with the Mercer County IT Department.
  - County DOT assisted in the paving of continuous cart paths in various locations.
  - Contractor, Park Commission and Contracted Consulting firm to meet to discuss Well drilling next steps.

- **Capital Projects:**
  - **Re-pavement of Trails in the Mercer County Park**-The re-pavement of trails within the Mercer County Park is underway. Trails are anticipated to be re-paved by early May.
  - **Sewer upgrade at the West Pump Station (Mercer County Park)**-The Boathouse, Marina, and the West Picnic Area have been placed on Public Sewer. This project brings the Park Commission's facilities at approximately 80% connected to public sewer.
  - **Wildlife Center Pre-Flight Cage**-Walls and siding have been constructed; with the roof to be installed next week. This project is anticipated to be substantially completed in the coming month.

## NEW BUSINESS

### RESOLUTIONS

*Commissioner Schulz, on behalf of the Commission welcomed the Park Commission's two (2) newly appointed members, Mr. Philip B. Caton and Mr. Antonio Martinez*

R-1. THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION WELCOMES AND ACKNOWLEDGES THE APPOINTMENT OF PHILIP B. CATON TO SERVE ON THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AS AUTHORIZED BY THE MERCER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

- On Motion by Commissioner Schulz; seconded by Commissioner Mooij.

- **Ayes:** Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Davis and Gardner.

R-2. THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION WELCOMES AND ACKNOWLEDGES THE APPOINTMENT OF ANTONIO MARTINEZ, ESQ. TO SERVE ON THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AS AUTHORIZED BY THE MERCER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

- On Motion by Commissioner Schulz, seconded by Commissioner Caton.

- **Ayes:** Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Davis and Gardner.

R-3. AWARD OF BID RECEIVED MARCH 4, 2021, TO MID ATLANTIC MARINE CONSTRUCTION; FOR INSTALLATION AND REMOVAL OF DOCKS AT THE MERCER COUNTY ARM AND HAMMER PARK AT WATERFRONT PARK. PERIOD: ONE (1) YEAR FROM NOTICE TO PROCEED; WITH THE OPTION TO EXTEND ONE (1) YEAR BASED ON THE INDEX RATE. TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$138,500.00 (AB2021-06)

- On Motion by Commissioner Smith; seconded by Commissioner Martinez.
  - **Ayes:** Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Davis and Gardner.
- R-4.           AWARD OF NEGOTIATED CONTRACT TO TOTAL TURF SERVICES, INC. FOR THE NEGOTIATED REBID GOLF COURSE RENOVATIONS FOR THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AT THE MERCER OAKS GOLF COURSE AND PRINCETON COUNTRY CLUB. TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$71,763.70. PERIOD: SIXTY (60) CALENDAR DAYS FROM NOTICE TO PROCEED (AB2019-28N)
- On Motion by Commissioner Schulz; seconded by Commissioner Caton.
  - **Ayes:** Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Davis and Gardner.
- R-5.           AWARD OF BID RECEIVED MARCH 23, 2021, TO CAPELA CONSTRUCTION, INC.; FOR HOPEWELL VALLEY GOLF COURSE IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION. PERIOD: SIXTY (60) CALENDAR DAYS FROM NOTICE TO PROCEED. TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$264,055.00 (AB2021-07)
- On Motion by Commissioner Schulz; seconded by Commissioner Caton.
  - **Ayes:** Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Davis and Gardner.
- R-6.           REJECTION OF BID FROM JR CUSTOM LANDSCAPING; RECEIVED MARCH 16, 2021 FOR PINE SHAVINGS FOR A PERIOD OF SIX (6) MONTHS WITH THE OPTION TO EXTEND FOR SIX (6) MONTHS; FOR THE MERCER COUNTY STABLES (AB2021-11) (
- On Motion by Commissioner Martinez; seconded by Commissioner Smith.
  - **Ayes:** Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Davis and Gardner.
- R-7.           MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A WINDOW CONTRACT WITH COMMERCIAL RECREATION SPECIALISTS FOR THE PURCHASE, DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION OF A LIGHTNING DETECTION SYSTEM TO INTEGRATE WITH EXISTING SPLASH PAD EQUIPMENT IN THE MERCER COUNTY PARK. TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$33,000.00

- On Motion by Commissioner Mooij; seconded by Commissioner Martinez.
  - **Ayes:** Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Davis and Gardner.
- R-8. MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH ENGINEERING & LAND PLANNING (AWARDED THROUGH A NON-FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS) FOR DESIGN AND PERMITTING OF THE PARKING LOT GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE INSTALLATION PROJECT AT SPRING LAKE PARK, TOWNSHIP OF HAMILTON. AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$49,860.00. PERIOD: APRIL 1, 2021 THROUGH PROJECT COMPLETION
- On Motion by Commissioner Schulz; seconded by Commissioner Caton.
  - **Ayes:** Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Davis and Gardner.
- R-9. MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH PRINCETON HYDRO, LLC (AWARDED THROUGH A NON-FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS) TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL ECOLOGICAL MONITORING SERVICES FOR PHASE THREE (3) OF THE FRESHWATER TIDAL WETLANDS RESTORATION AT ROEBLING PARK, TOWNSHIP OF HAMILTON, COUNTY OF MERCER. AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$77,200.00. PERIOD: APRIL 1, 2021 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2022
- On Motion by Commissioner Smith; seconded by Commissioner Mooij.
  - **Ayes:** Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Davis and Gardner.
- R-10. MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH REMINGTON & VERNICK ENGINEERS (AWARDED THROUGH A NON-FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS) TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATION SERVICES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A RESTROOM FACILITY AT THE ROSEDALE PARK, TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL. AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$82,500.00. PERIOD: APRIL 1, 2021 THROUGH PROJECT COMPLETION
- On Motion by Commissioner Smith; seconded by Commissioner Martinez.
  - **Ayes:** Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Davis and Gardner.

- R-11 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT WITH D&R GREENWAY LAND TRUST, INC. AND THE CITY OF TRENTON TO ESTABLISH THE ROLES OF EACH PARTNER FOR THE MANAGEMENT, MONITORING AND MAINTENANCE OF THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 301 NORTH CLINTON AVENUE, CITY OF TRENTON, COUNTY OF MERCER (BLOCK 7801, LOT 11 AND LOT 5). PERIOD: THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2021; TO AUTOMATICALLY RENEW ANNUALLY

*Commissioner Mooij asked the administration for additional background information on the partnership.*

*Executive Director Watson provided the Commission with a synopsis of the Park Commission's goals of the partnership for the Management of the Capital City Farm: To assist in the cultivation of crops in, 'red-lined' areas of the City, diversify public farming programs, and further art and culture initiatives; as well as assist the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen and the Garden State Agrihood Project in local community assistance, and community educational entrepreneurial farming opportunities.*

*Commissioner Mooij requested updates on this partnership as it progresses.*

- On Motion by Commissioner Schulz; seconded by Commissioner Martinez.
- **Ayes:** Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Davis and Gardner.

- R-12 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE ACCEPTANCE OF DONATED FUNDS AND VOLUNTEER SERVICES FROM ONE TREE PLANTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING A BUFFER OF TREES ALONG THE STONY BROOK, AT SECTIONS OF THE LAWRENCE-HOPEWELL TRAIL IN THE ROSEDALE PARK, TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL. ONE TREE PLANTED DONATION AMOUNT UP TO, BUT NOT TO EXCEED: \$25,000.00. PARK COMMISSION COST: \$0

- On Motion by Commissioner Caton; seconded by Commissioner Forrester.
- **Ayes:** Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Davis and Gardner.
- On Motion by Commissioner Schulz; seconded by Commissioner Smith, three (3) LATE STARTER New Business items were accepted on the Agenda for consideration of approval.
- **Ayes:** Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Davis and Gardner.

## LATE STARTER NEW BUSINESS AGENDA ITEMS

- LS-1** REJECTION OF PROPOSAL RECEIVED DECEMBER 22, 2020 FOR A COMPETITIVE CONTRACT TO PROVIDE CONCERT SERIES ENTERTAINMENT PROCUREMENT SERVICES FOR THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION (CC2020-06B)

*Commissioner Chair Schulz asked for background information on the rejection of the proposals for Entertainment Procurement Services.*

*Executive Director Watson provided the Commission with a synopsis of the evaluation that concluded the proposal submitted was determined irresponsible as related to the service needs required in the original Request for Proposals; and that the Park Commission will seek to re-advertise for Proposals for said services to ensure the provider recommended for award can meet all service levels indicated in the Request.*

- On Motion by Commissioner Smith; seconded by Commissioner Mooij.
- **Ayes:** Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Davis and Gardner.

- LS-2** PARTIAL AWARD OF BID RECEIVED MARCH 24, 2021 TO MULTIPLE VENDORS FOR ON-CALL NATIVE MEADOW ESTABLISHMENT AND RESTORATION SERVICES IN COUNTY PARKLAND AND OPEN SPACE PROPERTIES FOR THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION (AB2021-09). PERIOD: TWO (2) YEARS; WITH AN OPTION TO EXTEND ONE (1) YEAR BASED ON THE INDEX RATE. TOTAL AMOUNT UP TO, BUT NOT TO EXCEED: \$200,000.00  
YEAR1-UP TO, BUT NOT TO EXCEED \$100,000.00  
YEAR 2-UP TO, BUT NOT TO EXCEED \$100,000.00

- On Motion by Commissioner Schulz; seconded by Commissioner Forrester.
- **Ayes:** Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Davis and Gardner.

- LS-3** MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A GRANT AGREEMENT; IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FRIENDS OF HOWELL FARM, A 501 (C) 3 ORGANIZATION; WITH THE NEW JERSEY HISTORIC TRUST FOR FUNDING TO PERFORM A HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT FOR THE JOHN PHILLIPS HOUSE. MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION MATCH AMOUNT: \$15,646.00 (25%) [MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AMOUNT: \$14,082.00; FRIENDS OF HOWELL FARM CONTRIBUTION ON BEHALF OF THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AMOUNT: \$1,565.00]. NEW JERSEY HISTORIC TRUST AMOUNT: \$46,937.00 (75%). TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$62,583.00 (GRANT NO. 2020.0044)



- On Motion by Commissioner Caton; seconded by Commissioner Schulz.
- **Ayes:** Caton, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Davis and Gardner.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

*Presented by Executive Director Aaron T. Watson*

### **NEW INITIATIVES:**

- **Capital City Farm Art Project:**
  - The grant-funded establishment of a community art project at Capital City Farm took place the week March 22. 300+ hay bales were delivered to the farm and were used to build a series of gardens and spaces for community events. Plants for the garden are now being grown at MCCC's green house and will be transplanted later this spring.
  - Local artist, Leon Rainbow will work as the community liaison to organize performances and music programming in the new garden space.
- **Moore's Station Quarry Park Master Plan:**
  - Landscape Architecture firm Simone Collins is hosting stakeholder meetings with a variety of interest groups to hear more about potential uses of the Quarry. Based on feedback from the meetings and a public opinion survey that is also underway, a preliminary draft master plan will be prepared for discussion in May. To date, more than 520 people have responded to the online survey.
  - We are currently contacting high school principals in Mercer County to gauge interest in having students share ideas for the new park. Trenton, Ewing, Hopewell, and Robbinsville High Schools have shown interest.
- **Miry Run Ponds:**

At Dam Site 21, now known as Miry Run Ponds, engineers are preparing plans for the permitting process that is required to proceed with Phase I park improvements. We are in the process of scheduling preliminary permitting meetings with NJ DEP to discuss the scope of the project and the required permits.

### **GOLF OPERATIONS**

- All four (4) golf courses and practice facilities are now open to the public. We have seen a significant increase in membership card purchases. Over the winter we upgraded our online point of sale system and software this should improve our tee-time booking system. We look forward to another record year of play at all our courses.

### **RECREATION AND EVENTS:**

- **Juneteenth Weekend Partnership with the African-American Cultural Collaborative of Mercer County-**Weekly planning discussions are on-going regarding co-sponsorship.

- **Field Schedule:**
  - o **Saturday April 3:**  
Softball Fields 1-5 are booked by the USAAA organization.
  - o **Sunday April 4:**  
Quakerbridge Road Field is booked for Flag Football.
- **Picnic Reservations:**  
Reservations will open on-line through Community Pass on Monday, April 5. The 1<sup>st</sup> Available Rental date is April 1. There is a strong public interest to reserve our picnic areas. This will be a welcomed revenue for the Park Commission.

### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH:**

- **Swim to Row (STR):**  
Swimming and transportation have been going smoothly for the students in the Level one (1) program. Due to YUSA funds diminishing, the committee is looking to alternate sources of funding. The Level 2 program, which will be one (1) day of swimming and one (1) day of rowing, will begin the week of April 5.
- **Bike Drive:**  
An eBlast regarding the April 10 Bike Drive was distributed on Tuesday, March 9 and Thursday, March 18. Information will also be included in the April in-person activity flyer, which is currently being translated into Spanish for distribution.

### **STEWARDSHIP:**

- **Prescribed Burning:**  
On March 11<sup>th</sup> the NJ Forest Fire Service performed the second dormant season prescribed burn at Mercer Meadows. The Stewardship department has now begun the outreach to neighbors for a possible Prescribed Burn at Baldpate Mountain this spring. Prescribed fire at Baldpate will be used to prepare large forested areas for restoration by killing invasive shrub species.
- **Spotted Lanternfly Webinar:**  
Earlier this month an information Webinar hosted by the Park Commission on the Spotted Lanternfly was attended by 500 participants from across the State and beyond.

#### **Ash tree removal:**

Stewardship staff and the Tree Crew continue to work together to tackle the widespread impacts of the die-off of diseased ash trees in our parks. We are focusing on taking down dying trees that pose a hazard to park visitors and are pursuing grant funding to expand tree removal and reforestation efforts for the future.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

- **Youth Development program:**  
The Park Commission was awarded a grant from the Alliance for Watershed Education providing funding our Youth Development Program and River Days event, in partnership with The Watershed Institute, totaling \$29,000.
- **Summer Camp:**  
Summer Camp registration has been finalized in Community Pass and registration will go active on April 5<sup>th</sup> at 9am. COVID policies and camp information have been posted on our website.

**Eyes on Eagles:**

In-person Nest Viewing sessions continue to be a popular program with full enrollment by the public. We have also planned Virtual Panel Discussions via Zoom as an additional way to remotely view our bald eagle nest and learn from eagle experts. To date: In-person Nest Viewings have served 120 people, and 143 people have already registered for the Virtual Panel Discussions.

**Beaver Walks:**

Attendance at our spring Beaver Walk program has roughly doubled over previous years. All three (3) regularly scheduled walks have filled to capacity, and we have added three (3) additional programs to meet demand. The beavers have been very gracious with their appearances during these walks.

**Bike Nature Tours:**

The Environmental Education department is planning guided Bike Nature Tours utilizing the Park Commission's new bike share system. Starting this summer, patrons can bring their own bike or rent one from Verve for a guided nature experience with our Naturalists through Mercer Meadows.

**HOWELL FARM**– **“Sawmill & Tree Planting Day” Program:**

This program had an attendance of **322 visitors**, bringing the total 2021 Saturday Farm attendance to **3,206 visitors**. Visitors learned about Pleasant Valley's 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century sawmills.

– **Food Donation:**

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Howell Farm has provided **over 32,150 lbs.** of products to local food pantries for distribution to the Mercer community. March 26 marked the completion of one (1) full year of the Share the Harvest program.

**MERCER COUNTY STABLES**– **On-line lesson registration:**

On-line registration opened March 15 for April, May, and June's private and semi-private lessons. April and May are completely full; with June at over 70% full.

– **Trail Riding:**

From March through May trail rides will be offered multiple times on Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. The last day for the 2020-2021 trail riding season will be May 16, 2021.

**WILDLIFE CENTER**

- New patients through March 30, 2021 =192
- Work on the pre-release conditioning enclosure continues
- An American Beaver was admitted on March 14, 2021 with multiple bite wounds, presumably from another beaver over territory dispute. The American Beaver was successfully treated and Released on March 21, 2021 after successful treatment.

*Commissioner Mooij recognized the Park Commission's Stewardship Team and Communications team for the detailed Social Media Coverage provided to the public regarding the Prescribed Burn in Mercer Meadows.*

*Commissioner Smith asked the Administration for an update on the 2020-21 Deer Management Report.*

*Superintendent Cucchi notified the Commission that the Stewardship team is in the process of processing the data collected from last season's Deer Management program and the full report is anticipated to be presented to the Commission at the April Meeting.*

*Commissioner Smith asked the administration if there were any incidents during this year's deer management season, or if there was any recent community concerns or comments regarding same*

*Executive Director Watson and Superintendent Cucchi confirmed that there have been no incidents reported, or recently reported community concerns.*

#### **PUBLIC SESSION:**

##### **The following members of the public addressed the Commission:**

- D. Tunstall, County of Burlington
- Cy Mastropolo, Township of Hamilton
- Don Nociolo, Township of Hopewell
- Kevin Pappas, Township of Lawrence
  
- *The Mercer County Park Commission welcomes the public's participation and comments. If you wish to participate in the public comment section of our meeting you may do so via the Zoom messaging/chat feature or by the, "hand-raising" feature, where you will be prompted to speak to provide your public comment.*
  
- *The rules and guidelines for public comment may be found on the Commission's website. Please be aware that individuals are limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes during their comment. However, the Commission may, at its option, extend time for certain individuals during the public comment period.*
  
- *Each member of the public who wishes to speak during the public comment period shall give the speaker's full name, organization name (if applicable) and Municipality of Residence.*
  
- *Individuals may provide comments, or materials, by regular mail to the Mercer County Park Commission headquarters or via email to [Hmauro@mercercounty.org](mailto:Hmauro@mercercounty.org).*

#### **ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSEQUENT PUBLIC MEETING:**

The April 2021 Mercer County Park Commission Public Meeting is scheduled to take place on April 28; at a location to be determined.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

- On motion by Commissioner Schulz, seconded by Commissioner Smith, Meeting Adjournment took place at 6:48 pm

Heather Mauro

Executive Secretary  
Secretary to the Commission