



MONMOUTH COUNTY PARK SYSTEM GREEN HERITAGE

The Newsletter of Monmouth County's Open Space, Parks & Recreation Agency Vol. 44 No. 1 Spring 2010



The Park System has been hosting fishing contests since the 1960s. One of the earliest is shown at Shark River Park, right, 1968. Compare that to the annual Fishing Derby at Outdoor Expo in Turkey Swamp Park, 2007, above.

Monmouth County's "Best Idea" Turns 50 The More Things Change, The More They Stay The Same

In the last issue, we printed old photos that showed how county park facilities have changed over 50 years. Certain sites, like the beach at Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park for instance, saw the landscape utterly transformed. Not only were buildings relocated, docks (or what was left of them) removed, and new dunes built, but later a pavilion was added, a Skateplex was constructed and most recently, the playground was renovated—see below.

Old photos of the parks also demonstrate the opposite trend: some things haven't changed much at all in the last 50 years. People visit the parks and recreate in much the same ways now as they did in the 1960s (there are just many more people recreating). This may be due to the enduring nature of classic outdoor activities such as fishing, camping, hiking, and canoeing. And, with the possible exceptions of new technologies (cell phones with GPS, bird identification "apps," fish-finders, etc.) and improvements to equipment, these activities look pretty much the same today as they ever did. See for yourself... *Continues on p. 2*

Chair Steals The Show At Exhibit



The Raven Chair

If you like antiques and didn't visit the "Sit Thee Down—Chairs That Furnished Walnford" exhibit this past October – February, you missed a great show.

This raven chair with its two large, carved black birds and firm direction to "Sit Thee Down," was the exhibit's namesake and its dark, "Poe-esque" appeal drew the most attention.

Exhibits like these, and other unique programs and demonstrations, are a regular feature at Walnford. More info at:

www.monmouthcountyparks.com.

New Playground! Tony's Place

Last November, a seaside-themed, oceanfront, universal access playground called Tony's Place opened at Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park in Long Branch. It was named in honor of former Monmouth County Board of Recreation Commissioner and tireless advocate for children with disabilities, Tony Musella.



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If it weren't for the changes in photo quality, perhaps no one would be able to tell the difference between the old and new outdoor photos of the parks—a refreshing thought. Here is a trail at Shark River Park after receiving new fence posts in 1983, and the same trail from another angle in 2007.

COUNTY PARK ATTENDANCE, 1960-Present

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 6,000 in 1961 | 1st county park, Shark River |
| 100,000 in 1965 | 3 parks |
| 400,000 by 1969 | 7 parks |
| 800,000 by 1973 | 12 parks |
| 1.8 million in 1983 | 19 parks |
| 2.5 million by 1989..... | 24 parks |
| 3 million by 1993..... | 29 parks |
| 4 million by 1996..... | 30 parks |
| 5 million by 2007..... | 38 parks |



Holmdel Park is a nationally ranked site for cross-country running and has been hosting thousands of high school students each year since the 1970s. Compare the older photo from 1979, with the more recent one from 2009. The most noticeable change—no one wears tube socks anymore.



Can you see what is missing from this photo of canoers in 1968? Turkey Swamp Park opened in 1966 and began offering canoe rentals soon after. Canoeing remains a popular park past-time, but today life jackets are required



Today

The county's first golf course at Howell Park opened in 1972. This 1975 photo (below) shows a row of carts lined up outside. Compare that to the carts lined up outside Hominy Hill, now one of 6 County golf sites, just last year. They are very similar, except for the sun roof.



1975



1975

The Park System offers a few large outdoor events each year to showcase park features to the public. Though the venue for fall events may have changed (from Turkey Swamp Park in 1990 to Thompson Park today), being outside in the fresh air still draws a crowd to the food vendors.



Today



Today

The staff at Longstreet Farm still offer free wagon rides at special events (such as Harvest Home Festival in the fall and Sheep Shearing Days in the spring), just like they did in 1975.



1990

13 Towns To Receive 2009 County Open Space Grants

On December 22, the Board of Chosen Freeholders announced the 2009 Open Space Grant Awards to 13 Monmouth County municipalities. The class of 2009 includes three first time grant recipients, Brielle, Little Silver, and Spring Lake, and two state-designated Urban Aid communities, Asbury Park and Neptune City.

Since the inception of the Monmouth County Municipal Open Space Grant Program in 2003, 45 of the County's 53 municipalities have submitted applications for funding and 43 towns have been awarded over \$12.7 million for 90 local park acquisition and development projects.

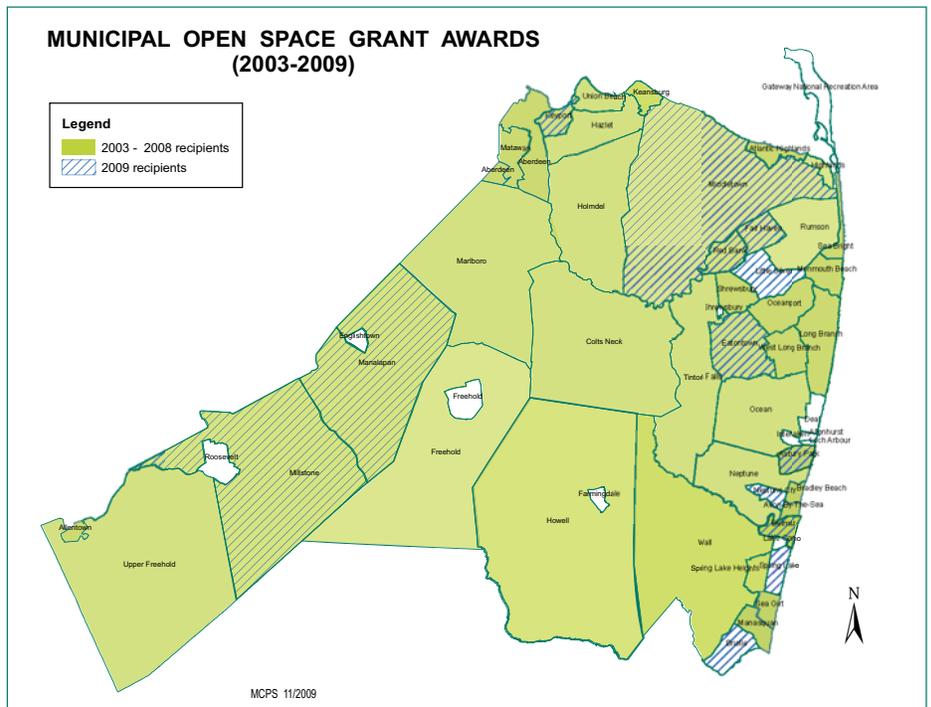
This annual competitive matching grant program is funded by the County Open Space Trust Fund. Each municipality may file one application per year and is eligible for up to \$250,000. State-designated Urban Aid Communities are responsible for a minimum of 25% of the total eligible project costs; all other municipalities are responsible for a minimum of 50% of the total eligible project costs.

2010 Applications Available in May
Applications for the 2010 round of County grants for municipal open space projects will be mailed to each Mayor, Clerk and Administrator in May. A September deadline is anticipated.

For more information on the program and copies of the current application form and Policy and Procedures Manual, visit www.monmouthcountyparks.com and click on Municipal Open Space Program on the homepage directory. If you have questions or would like a hard copy of the Manual, please contact the Program Administrator at 732-842-4000, ext. 4472.

2009 Open Space Grant Recipients

| | | |
|---------------|---|-----------|
| Asbury Park | Springwood Park and Recreation Area (Acquisition) | \$86,000 |
| Belmar | Dempsey Park (Development) | \$175,000 |
| Brielle | Brielle Park (Development) | \$250,000 |
| Eatontown | Wolcott Park (Development) | \$175,000 |
| Fair Haven | DeNormandie Waterfront Park (Acquisition) | \$250,000 |
| Keyport | Skate Park (Development) | \$52,000 |
| Little Silver | Memorial Park (Development) | \$67,000 |
| Manalapan | Braun Property (Acquisition) | \$180,000 |
| Middletown | Conifer Tract (Development) | \$250,000 |
| Millstone | Millstone Park (Acquisition) | \$250,000 |
| Neptune City | Memorial Park (Development) | \$197,000 |
| Red Bank | Count Basie Park (Development) | \$250,000 |
| Spring Lake | Marucci Park (Development) | \$175,000 |



"I am thrilled that the Borough once again will receive a County Open Space Grant to improve Memorial Park. In the past this grant program has allowed the Borough to make much needed improvements to Holmes Adams Recreational Complex which has enhanced recreational opportunities for Borough residents. Without the grant, the Borough would be unable to make these improvements."

-Tom Arnone, Mayor, Borough of Neptune City

Shared Recreation Services – A Winning Proposition

Two of this year's 13 Open Space Grant Awards will fund park improvements that reach beyond the boundaries of the just one municipality.

The purpose of the Monmouth County Municipal Open Space Grant Program is to expand park and open space opportunities for Monmouth County residents, which it achieves through funding for local park and open space acquisition and/or development projects. It's a bonus to the program, and a valuable feather in the cap of municipalities competing for grant funds, when the proposed grant projects will serve residents of multiple municipalities.

Three Towns to Share New Baseball Fields

The geo-political boundary between Atlantic Highlands and Middletown doesn't mean much to the boys and girls who participate in the Sandy Hook Little League, which serves residents of Middletown, Atlantic Highlands, and Highlands. What matters to them is having a nice home field where they can play a sport that's "as American as apple pie."

Middletown will receive \$250,000 to help build two baseball fields at the Conifer Tract near that invisible municipal boundary. The total project cost is \$1.1 million. Atlantic Highlands is contributing \$50,000 (soft costs for project engineering) and will share responsibility for on-going field maintenance. The Sandy Hook Little League, the Middletown Youth Athletic Association, and Atlantic Highlands' recreational baseball teams will all share the new fields, which are scheduled for completion by August 2010.

New Synthetic Turf for Highly-Used Football Field

What do five Red Bank Pop Warner tackle football teams, three Red Bank Pop Warner flag football teams, the Red Bank Catholic High School varsity, junior varsity, and freshman football teams, five Red Bank recreational soccer teams, and teams from the Monmouth/Ocean Soccer Association and the Eastern Monmouth Soccer League have in common? They all play on a single turf field at Count Basie Park in Red Bank.

With that level of play, no amount of maintenance can sustain a satisfactory grass surface. And, in a municipality like Red Bank with limited inventory of undeveloped land, acquiring more land to meet demand for play is not a reasonable alternative. Red Bank is receiving a \$250,000 County grant to replace the grass with a synthetic surface. The total project cost is estimated to be \$990,000; it is scheduled for August 2010 completion.

The new surface will support intensive multi-sport use year-round. Red Bank plans to add field hockey and lacrosse to the play mix and extend soccer to teams affiliated with St. James School, Red Bank Middle School, and Red Bank Charter School. Residents from Red Bank, Little Silver, Fair Haven, Shrewsbury Borough, and elsewhere in Monmouth County participate on the teams served by Count Basie Park and all will benefit from this significant expansion of recreation opportunities.

"We have over 37 teams that use the football field at Count Basie Park. With the grant monies provided by Monmouth County, the Borough will be able to install artificial turf and not only accommodate more teams, but also allow more sports to utilize the field."

– Stanley Sickles, Administrator, Borough of Red Bank



The current Count Basie Park field

Spring Flower Portraiture

by Randy McHaney, Senior Gardener

Spring appears as a transient flash, a genetic spark that begins the momentum of the gardening season. But please don't think of the spring as merely an introduction to some more important matter. Problems such as late frost, too much or not enough rain, winds and/or unnaturally high temperatures could easily derail this forward progress.

That is why this season's delicate beginnings need to go smoothly: flowers need to open, buds must leaf out. And it's not just showy twelve-inch blooms or beautiful fissured tree bark; most of the action is subtle and goes unnoticed.

Flower-Power

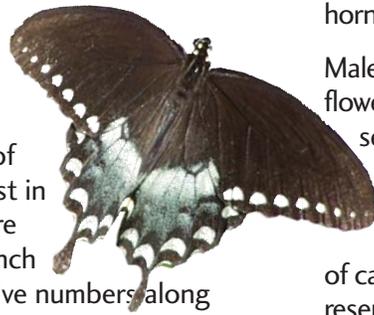
Reproduction is always an issue, since the continuation of species is paramount. Plants have a couple of ways they reproduce, which may occur simultaneously. Seed production is the most obvious. Though many plants multiply by forming thickets, such as Beech and Sassafras, for the most part the flower—with its seed producing properties—is the star of the show. Flowers are not really important for ornamental reasons (this is a value ascribed to them by humans).

Of course, flowers are very beautiful to look at, but they are in fact, just a by-product of the plant's most important function: SURVIVAL!

Spring's Oft-Forgotten Gem— The Spicebush

Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) is one of those native plants that often get lost in the shuffle of spring. In April there are small clusters of yellow flowers ($\frac{1}{5}$ inch in diameter), which appear in attractive numbers along the branches. Spicebush is a woodland plant that thrives in shady, moist settings, is seldom sold commercially, and hardly ever given more than an afterthought when designing the home landscape. By size, it could be categorized as a small tree or large bush. In the woods it can grow to 8 -10 feet, but the champions can reach 20-feet.

This is an aromatic species; the stems and bark have a pleasant spicy odor when brushed, or when the bark is crushed. Importantly, it is also a host plant. It provides larval food for the Spicebush Swallowtail Butterfly and the berries are of value to birds. You will need a male and female plant in order to guarantee berry set and berries can persist into fall if not gobbled up by birds.



Courtesy of Europe—The Hornbeam

European Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) is an attractive landscape tree native to Europe and Asia. It is extremely popular in English gardens, where it has many uses including hedges, groupings, specimens, and windbreaks. Because of its toughness and ability to grow in a variety of situations and soil types, it is often used in commercial settings around buildings and as a street tree.

When grown as a specimen, European Hornbeam's can become quite large and even stately, topping off at 60 feet after many years. The width of this plant can also be an issue since they have a rounded habit, and therefore can grow as wide as they are tall. This should be a consideration when siting your hornbeam or, choose one of the narrow upright forms.

Male and female flowers are separate but on the same tree, in the form of catkins, which resembles a cat's tail. The female catkins are usually near the tips of the branches, whereas the male catkins reside further back on the limb. A catkin contains many flowers arranged along a central stem.



Spicebush flower



Male catkins on European Hornbeam



Rue Anemone Flower

Rue Anemone—A Tough Little Plant

Rue Anemone (*Anemonella thalictroides*) is a diminutive herbaceous woodland plant native to the east coast. But despite its small size, 4-8 inches, it is relatively tough and will survive and multiply in many different locations in the garden. This is a tuberous plant; therefore, once established it can take a modest amount of drying between waterings. But for the most part it prefers a moist but well drained woodland setting.

The foliage is fern-like, bluish-green, and attractive. The flowers are 1 inch wide, white with often a hint of pink. There is also a double form which is pink. Because of the kind generosity of Dr. Betty Knorr, Deep Cut Gardens has acquired many Rue Anemones, which she propagates from her own garden in South Jersey. The last few years have shown a resurgence of interest in these woodland plants, therefore many are now available mail order and at local garden centers.



Sassafras flower

Sassafras for the Naturalistic Garden

Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*) is a common small tree in Monmouth County. For all you bark enthusiasts out there—you know who you are—the deeply ridge-and-furrowed dark brown bark is outstanding. Sassafras trees have three distinctly different leaves: lobed, mitten shaped, and entire. This characteristic is one of its identification features. The leaves are also a larval food for the Spicebush Swallowtail Butterfly.

I never suggest growing this tree on a lawn since it can be messy. It sheds lots of little branches during winter windstorms. But it can be outstanding for a naturalistic garden, if planted somewhere near the back of the property, especially with its great fall color of yellows, oranges and reds. Make sure the tree is visible from the house so you can really appreciate the fall display.

Sassafras flowers open in late April and occur in clusters at the tip of the stem, just as the leaves are starting to appear. They are slightly fragrant and in spring can be fairly

ornamental if you know what you're looking for. Birds eat the trees' small dark blue fruits that ripen in September.



Sassafras leaves



Tulip Tree flower

The Towering Tulip Tree

Tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) gets its common name from its very uniquely shaped flowers, reminiscent of a tulip. Unfortunately, the flowers are so high on these huge trees that they are seldom seen. This is definitely a tree for large open spaces, such as parks, but not in a residential setting—it just gets too big (up to 90 feet) and is also weak wooded. It is not at all unusual for this plant to drop 500-pound branches during windstorms. In the right place, this native plant is majestic and the effect of the yellow fall color is tremendous. In the wrong place, it can be downright dangerous.



Tulip Tree

A Pioneer In Wildflower Preservation: Betty Knorr, Ph.D

by Randy McHaney,
Senior Gardener

Many of our native plants are disappearing or have already disappeared due to development and other environmental factors. Over the years, Dr. Knorr has graciously donated hundreds of native New Jersey wildflowers, that she propagated in and around her home, to Deep Cut Gardens. Here, in her own words, is a description of her work:



Shooting Star
A native wildflower propagated by Dr. Knorr and donated to Deep Cut.

“Back in 1960 I started a grass-roots effort to salvage wildflowers and other native plants that are doomed to be destroyed by ‘progress’. This effort, called Project SNAP (Save Native American Plants) is now nation-wide and is carried out by many civic organizations and individuals. The goal is to rescue threatened plants and use them to create nature trails and gardens at schools, parks, and civic areas as well as home gardens.

Through SNAP millions of wildflowers and other native plants have been rescued and put to good use. If you can participate in SNAP you will be doing a great service to preserve and perpetuate our rapidly vanishing native plants.

Wildflowers are a treasured heritage that we must pass on to future generations. Many medicines are derived from plants and if a species becomes extinct the cure it may have held is gone forever... Over these many years the countless joys I’ve experienced from these plants is beyond telling. Grow wildflowers! The pleasure and satisfaction you will reap is nourishment for the soul as well as the eye.”

Luckily, people like Dr. Knorr who follow their passion have made a big difference. Her impact has not just been intellectual, she has contributed to our sensibilities. For all the practical work that Dr. Knorr has done, I thank her; but the awareness she has created is immeasurable.



Cardinal flower, foam flower and phlox.

Rose Show A Beautiful Success

Last fall, Deep Cut Gardens hosted the Jersey Shore Rose Society’s 38th Annual Rose Show. As early as 7am, the dedicated exhibitors began arriving to begin one of the most interesting facets of a rose show: preparing their roses for exhibition and judging by American Rose Society judges.



Right: This exhibitor uses Q-tips to push rose petals open to just the right position, they are removed before the rose is placed for judging.

The contest was open to amateur rose growers. They submitted 250 entries in the 36 horticultural classes, 8 entries in the 2 arrangement classes and many entries in the 6 photography classes. The exhibition was open to the public free of charge, and free tours of the rose show and the gardens were available, as well as rose-growing information and advice provided by volunteers from the Jersey Shore Rose Society.

UPCOMING EVENTS

THE GREAT SPRING PERENNIAL PLANT SWAP Saturday, April 24, 10am – 2pm

Bring 1 quart, 1 gallon or 2 gallon containers and exchange them for perennials of same size. This spring you can also exchange vegetable and herb seedlings, but no ornamental annuals please.

CELEBRATION OF THE ROSE GARDEN AND ROCKERY

Sunday, June 13, 10am – 3pm

Celebrate completion of the newly-restored rose parterre and rockery with free guided tours, demonstrations, activities for children, and more.

DAYLILY DAY AT DEEP CUT GARDENS Saturday, June 26, 10am – 2pm

Free horticultural advice, displays & garden design ideas

VOLUNTEER DROP-IN DAYS

Wednesdays & Saturdays

9am – 12 noon

April 14 – October 30, 2010

Stop in to assist in the park on these dates and times.

It's Time To...

April ✓

- Work compost and manure into beds as soon as soil is friable. If you aren't composting, check out the Home Composting Demonstration Site at Deep Cut to learn more.
- Prune roses when the buds begin to swell. Cut back blue mist shrub and red twig dogwoods almost to ground level.
- Set out supports where needed before plants get too large.
- Set out hardy annuals such as pansies, violas and alyssum. Harden off plants started indoors or under cover.



- When applying granular fertilizer, make sure it does not contact plant foliage – it will burn.
- Overseed lawn; prepare poor spots by loosening soil. If using pre-emergent weed-killer, use early this month.
- Most annual and perennial seeds can be started late this month.
- Check out Deep Cut Gardens Perennial Plant Swap on Saturday, April 24, 10am-2pm. It's fun, free and an opportunity to meet other gardeners. This spring you can exchange vegetable & herb seedlings.



May ✓

- Prune spring-flowering shrubs as soon as flowering is finished.
- Leave bulb foliage until it has died - green foliage is making food for next year's bloom.
- Chemical controls will be ineffective against grubs now; wait until Mid-July or August.
- Wait until the soil warms to transplant tomatoes and peppers.
- Transplant seedlings on a cloudy day or provide temporary shade. Pinching off flowers and buds now will encourage a stronger root system.
- Remove any finished cool weather crops to make room for warm season vegetables.
- Direct sow seeds outdoors for basil, beans and other warm-weather plants.
- Mulch plants to conserve moisture, stabilize soil temperature and reduce weeds.
- Acclimate houseplants to outdoor conditions and keep them in light shade.

June ✓

- Continue to plant warm-weather flowers, vegetables and herbs.
- Check squash vines for borers and remove any you find.
- Keep after plants that need staking, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, tall annuals, dahlias and lilies.
- Visit Deep Cut Gardens for the Grand Opening of the Rose Parterre and renovated Rockery, Sunday, June 13, 10am-3pm. Free tours, lectures and more.



NATURE CORNER



Leopard Frog

A Double Life: The Amphibians of New Jersey

Christopher Lanza, Senior Park Naturalist

Amphibians (a Greek word meaning double life) occupy the middle ground between fish and reptiles. As such, they were the first land dwelling vertebrates (animals with backbones) and paved the way for the development of our own species. They are sensitive to environmental degradation and can serve as a marker of the damage humans can cause in the environment: 11 species of amphibians are now at risk in New Jersey. This article will discuss amphibians in general with a special emphasis on native species you may see in your own neighborhood.

Amphibians Through Time

Amphibians first appear in the geologic record during the Devonian Period that began 408 million years ago. They most likely descended from a group of “lobe-finned” fish whose modified fins allowed them to move on land for brief periods of time. This was a great competitive advantage in an age when the oceans were a crowded and dangerous place to live, compared to the almost vacant land. The fossils of one very early amphibian, Hynerpeton basseti, have been found in Pennsylvania and the animal presumably lived in ancient New Jersey as well.

Biology—Defining a Double Life

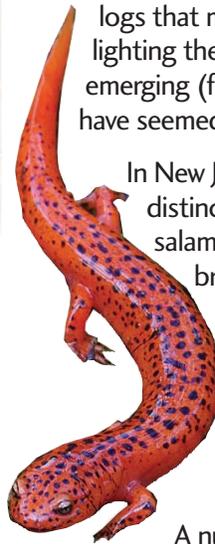
Amphibians are best defined as a class of exothermic (cold-blooded) land and water vertebrates that can breathe with lungs, gills, or through scale-less skin; and who generally lay their jelly-like eggs in water. Here, the young, who look quite different from their parents, remain until their metamorphosis into adult form. Thus, they lead a double life.

Young amphibians look very different from their parents until metamorphosis, leading to the term “double life.”

Adults may or may not live on land, but, even if they do, they tend to stick near water or areas of high humidity. Life histories are specific to each species and some variation may occur.

Salamanders: Fire Myth & Secrets

Salamanders are often confused with lizards because they share a similar body plan: four legs, a long body, and a long tail; but lizards are no more closely related to amphibians than to any other reptile. Throughout history, salamanders have been linked to myths, especially myths dealing with fire. This may partly stem from the fact that salamanders often hide in dead logs that may have been used for firewood. Upon lighting the log in a hearth, the sight of a creature emerging (fleeing, really) from the flames clearly would have seemed supernatural.



In New Jersey, salamanders are divided into two distinct groups: mole and lung-less. Mole salamanders are burrowing animals as adults and breathe with their lungs. Lung-less salamanders breathe through their moist skin and mouth. The only newt found in NJ is the red-spotted newt and it differs from other salamanders because it has three distinct life stages: an aquatic larval form, a juvenile land stage, and, finally, the aquatic adult.

A number of NJ salamanders are unfortunately either threatened or endangered due to water quality or loss of suitable habitat, and another group are listed as species of special concern. Here in Monmouth County, the Marbled Mole Salamander is a species of Special Concern. Due to their secretive nature, it is likely that the true extent of population loss may never be clear, making management all the more difficult.

All of these species, regardless of the habitat in which they spend their adulthood, must return to the water to lay their eggs. Their offspring (called tadpoles) will remain in the water from a few months up to two years depending on the species. Two of New Jersey’s treefrogs, the Southern Gray Treefrog and the

AMPHIBIANS OF MONMOUTH COUNTY

Salamanders (Newts)

Mole

- Marbled (*Special Concern*)
- Spotted
- Red-spotted Newt

Lung-less

- Northern Dusky
- Redback
- Northern Slimy
- Four-toed
- Northern Red
- Northern Two-lined

Frogs and Toads

Toads

- Eastern Spadefoot
- Fowler’s Toad (*Special Concern*)

Treefrogs and Allies

- Northern Cricket Frog
- Northern Spring Peeper
- Northern Gray Treefrog
- New Jersey Chorus
- Pine Barrens Tree Frog (*Threatened*)

True Frogs

- Bullfrog
- Carpenter (*Special Concern*)
- Green
- Wood
- Southern Leopard
- Pickerel

Frog vs. Toad—Can You Tell the Difference?

Frogs and toads seem to have developed after salamanders and first appeared in their modern form during the Jurassic period, 208 million years ago. Although more familiar than salamanders, people still question how to tell them apart. In truth, they are quite similar with many overlaps, and should be thought of as a continuum, ranging from highly aquatic to more terrestrial. However, with that thought in mind, three broad groups emerge.

• **TRUE TOADS** (*genus Bufo*) tend to have squat, chubby bodies with warty, spotty, and blotched skin. Their skin is colored to match their environment, in shades of green and brown. Their posture is more upright and they will have large (parotoid) glands behind their eyes that produce a self-defense poison. They lack teeth and the explosive jumping powers found in some frog species and move by walking or in a sequence of short hops. They are not bound to the water except for breeding purposes.

The Eastern Spadefoot toad is a special exception to this category and not a “true toad.” It has few spots, no parotoid glands, and spends most of its time underground.



the Fowler's Toad



Gray Tree Frog

• **TREE FROGS** and their Kin. Treefrogs, cricket frogs, and chorus frogs are generally small and slender frogs that may be adapted to living in trees and, if so, will have adhesive discs on their fingers and toes. They are all found near water, but not necessarily in the water, as is generally the case with true frogs.

• **TRUE FROGS.** For most people, “true frogs” are what they imagine when they hear the word “frog:” long legs, narrow waists, webbed toes, explosive jumping, and croaking. This group is normally found in the water, although some species will leave the water during certain periods.



Bullfrog

Pine Barrens Treefrog (which can be found in Monmouth County) are endangered, and two others are species of special concern.

Call of the Wild—It's a Frog, Not a Bird

Recently, a few visitors to the Manasquan Reservoir Environmental Center asked about the identity of an animal they often heard calling near their home at night. They were surprised to learn that the animal was a Northern Gray Treefrog and not a bird as they had assumed. The popular

conception is that all frogs sound the same, but every species has a unique mating call and most call only during certain months. In most cases, the callers are male frogs announcing their location, and presumably their fitness, to females of the same species and even as a challenge to other males.



The Spring Peeper is heard long before it is seen.

A Sensitive Species

Amphibians are a unique group of animals. They play an important role in the environment—controlling insect pests, providing food for larger species, and acting as “first responders” to changes because of their sensitivity.

At the same time, more and more people, adults mostly, have come to me to ask what has happened to all the frogs, noting “they were everywhere when I was a child.” The sad truth is that we are to blame for their disappearance. World-wide, according

to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), over 1,000 are at risk—more than any other species.

Even simple changes to the environment can cause problems. For example, consider the Bullfrog. Historically, this large and dominant frog species was not found in the Pine Barrens due to the highly acidic water (where Carpenter Frogs and Pine Barren Treefrogs used to thrive). Due to pollution, however, the water has become less acidic allowing Bullfrogs to move in and to replace the Carpenter and Pine Barren Treefrogs. It is very easy to overlook these wildlife habitat changes, but we do so at our own peril. At some point the pollution and habitat loss we create may displace us too.



A bullfrog swims by



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PARK SYSTEM

50TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

"Tea and Talk" with Park System Director Sunday, April 25, 2pm: \$6

50 & Looking Forward!
Join Jim Truncer, a Monmouth County Park System employee for over 40 years, to hear first-hand about the growth and future direction of your county parks at the Thompson Park Visitor Center in Lincroft. Tea & refreshments will be served. Call 732-842-4000, ext. 1 to register.

Freehold Memorial Day Parade Monday, May 31; Time TBA: FREE!

Park System Rangers/Programmers & Longstreet Farm staff to march in one of the areas largest and oldest parades! Come out, support the parks, and have some fun.

Grand Opening- Union Transportation Trail Saturday, June 5; Time TBA

Celebrate the opening of the first portion of this new trail in Upper Freehold on National Trails Day. Like the Henry Hudson Trail, the UTT is a converted railroad-right-of-way but with a natural surface.

Arbor Day Tree Planting Friday, April 30; 4pm: FREE

Take this opportunity to visit the county's first site, Shark River Park, Main Entrance, Neptune. Rangers will celebrate Arbor Day by planting a commemorative Red Oak, the state tree of NJ, followed by a short nature walk through the park.

50th Anniversary Celebration Sunday, June 13th; 4pm: \$50

Sponsored by the Friends of the Parks at the elegant and newly renovated Thompson Park Visitor Center, Lincroft. All Are Welcome! Tickets price includes wine, beer and refreshments reception with gourmet cheeses, passed hors d'oeuvres, and a commemorative etched wine glass. Featured activities: launch of the Thompson Park "Indenti-Tree" Self Guided Lawn Walk Brochure (identify more than 100 specimen trees on the former estate grounds), music, Call 732-975-9735 for tickets.

50 Miler Trail Challenge Available All Year: FREE!

Hike, bike or run 50 of the Park System's more than 120 miles of trails in 2010 and earn a commemorative T-shirt. Call for a copy of the 50 Miler Brochure or visit us online.

COME • VISIT • ENJOY

50 Nifty Things to Do in the Parks Available All Year: FREE!

Experience at least 25 of 50 park adventures recommended by Park System staff in 2010 and earn a commemorative keepsake (and be entered to win even bigger prizes). Call or visit us online for a copy of the brochure.

50th Anniversary Online Photo Challenge Available All Year: FREE!

Email us a digital copy of your best photo taken in a Monmouth County park; a new theme and winner each month. Contest rules and entry procedures available at www.monmouthcountyparks.com.

50th Anniversary Exhibit

Starting in May
Celebrating our First 50 Years:
Beech Room, Thompson Park
Visitor Center.

Call 732-842-4000 x 4312 for more info.

Visit www.monmouthcountyparks.com