



JOURNAL OF THE NEVADA RECREATION & PARK SOCIETY

# Nevada

Winter 2012

Recreation & Park

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# For the Benefit of All

Welcome to the most recent edition of *Recreation & Parks*, Journal of the Nevada Recreation & Park Society.

During the last year, we have made a strong commitment to do more for members by having weekly news articles, a monthly newsletter and, finally, an NRPS magazine. We are trying to do more for our members by providing more communication and information to help make a stronger parks and recreation profession here in Nevada.

This past November, I had the opportunity to attend the NRPA National Congress in Atlanta. One of the quotes that I obtained from the conference was from Theodore Roosevelt. He said, **"Every man owes part of his time and money to the business or industry to which he is engaged. No man has a moral right to withhold his support from an organization that is trying to improve conditions within his sphere."** More than 100 years ago, Teddy Roosevelt was right. Organizations like the Nevada Recreation & Park Society help improve the working conditions for parks and recreation professionals throughout the state of Nevada. We do that by providing more training, more education, more networking and advocacy on all of the good things that we do and the hard work that we do for many people in our communities.

If professional involvement was just for helping improve NRPS, it would be a good-enough reason to participate in your Society. But, in a larger sense,

NRPS and organizations like it, including NRPA, are part of a movement. From the beginning of the Playground Association of America more than a century ago, the importance of public parks and recreation in the lives of Americans has become clearer. While we understand the benefits that parks and recreation provide, it is still part of our mission to help educate those who may not understand all of the benefits that parks and recreation has — not only to the individual but to the community as a whole. It gives a sense of community and a sense of purpose to its citizens, as well as the opportunity for the citizens to enjoy positive opportunities.

I hope you will take a look at our magazine and see some of the great work that people are doing here in Nevada to help make their communities a better place in which to live. Parks and recreation is a great profession to be part of. These are trying times, and much more work is ahead for us. I hope you will be able to see all the benefits that we are trying to provide for parks and recreation and will become an active member in NRPS or become more active in helping make parks and recreation a better place for Nevada.

Look for our next magazine to be coming out in summer 2012. We will be hosting the NRPS Annual Conference, April 17-19, here in Henderson, Nevada. You will also be seeing our conference brochure in a few months.

Thank you very much, and I hope you enjoy this magazine.



President Dirk Richwine

## Got Certification?

As park and recreation professionals, it is our responsibility to provide a safe play environment. One way to do this is to be a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI). This certification is offered through the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The CPSI initiative trains and informs professionals and the public on playground safety. We find it is our responsibility as park and recreation professionals to ensure the experience of playing on a playground is as free of hazards as possible.

The Nevada Recreation & Park Society (NRPS) will again host the CPSI course and exam in 2012. The course

and exam, known as one of the nation's premier training programs offered through NRPA, will be held at the Black Mountain Recreation

Center in Henderson, Nevada. The course will be on April 18 and 19, and the exam will be on April 20. For more registration information and course/exam fees, please contact Felicia Rivera-Baker at 702.267.4140 or e-mail [felicia.rivera-baker@cityofhenderson.com](mailto:felicia.rivera-baker@cityofhenderson.com).



# Raise Your Sail – 2012 State Conference

It is the start of a brand-new year. Many of us like to make resolutions to eat healthier, exercise more and quit some bad habits. I would challenge you to include a professional goal of learning a new skill. NRPS is here to support that goal by offering many learning opportunities at this year's state conference, which will be held April 18-20 in Henderson at the Black Mountain Recreation Center.

The theme chosen for this year's conference is "Raise Your Sail." This is based on a Chinese proverb, that says, "Raise your sail one foot, and you get 10 feet of wind." With the economic times being uncertain, we all need to be prepared for whatever direction our careers may take. Attending an educational session or making a connection with a fellow parks and recreation professional may lead us to new opportunities that we never thought possible.

The conference committees are planning a conference to benefit their fellow NRPS members and associates. Once again, we will be offering the Certified Playground Safety Inspector course and exam. We are hoping to attract people from various parts of the world and industries.

On Wednesday, the conference will officially kick off with Aaron "Wheelz" Fotheringham, and on Thursday, the conference will begin with the General Session speaker, Barbara Heller.

There will be many sessions to choose from at this year's conference. If you are seeking continuing educational units (CEUs), there will be plenty of opportunities to earn them — and at a bargain price. This

year, we are offering a Certified Parks and Recreational Professional (CPRP) prep course post-conference (Friday morning) for those who need assistance for studying for this prestigious certification.

Vendors will be on hand on Thursday, April 19, to highlight their products and services. Back by popular demand will be a raffle for a flatscreen TV. All you will need to do is visit each booth and have your map marked. We will also recognize the contribution of the vendors to our Society and conference at the Exhibitors Luncheon.

The highly coveted Dundee fly rod will be raffled off at the awards ceremony. Tickets will be available before and during the conference for \$5. There will also be other great items given away, so be sure to ask about them when you check in at the registration booth.

The official end of the conference will be on Thursday evening (April 19). Excellence in parks, recreational programs and people will be honored at the Awards and Installation Banquet. Do not wait to nominate a project or person, as the deadline is fast approaching.

Conference information will be updated and available on our website (NRPS.org). It is never too late to assist with the conference. If you are interested, please contact me at [Jayne.Mazurkiewicz@cityofhenderson.com](mailto:Jayne.Mazurkiewicz@cityofhenderson.com). So ready your sails, and we will see you all in April.

Jayne Mazurkiewicz



## About Barbara Heller

Barbara Heller is president of Heller and Heller Consulting, Inc., a management consulting firm specializing in state and local government, primarily in the parks and recreation industry. She is involved in strategic planning, master planning, service quality assessments, operational/organizational reviews and facilitation of public input processes and staff training with clients all over the United States. She started the company in 2010. Previous to her ownership of Heller and Heller, she was a principal consultant with PROS Consulting, LLC and was with that firm from 2007 to 2010.

Previously, Heller spent more than 30 years working at the local government level with a variety of park systems. Most recently, she was the executive director of the Naperville Park District in Naperville, Illinois, and prior to that position, she was the executive director of the Elk Grove, Illinois Park District for nine and a half years.

Heller has held other positions with municipal government organizations in Arlington, Texas; Montgomery County, Maryland; and Prince William County, Virginia. All of her experience has been with park systems.

Her education background includes a master's degree in public administration from American University in Washington, D.C., and a bachelor's degree from Pennsylvania State University.

She has been a speaker at many conferences and schools during the last 15 years, including the NRPA Congress, many state park and recreation conferences and numerous NRPA schools. Her areas of expertise include leadership, strategic planning, organizational change, service quality, the use of quality tools and lean practices, operational systems, team-based approaches to work, creating dynamic work environments and sustainable practices.

# NRPS STATE AWARDS/ BOARD ELECTIONS INFORMATION

## Program Excellence

All Nevada recreation programs and parks that have been developed within the last five years are eligible. Please feel free to forward this e-mail to Nevada recreation and parks colleagues who may not be part of the NRPS e-mail constituency. Visit the NRPS website for award categories, [www.NRPS.org](http://www.NRPS.org).

## Elmer Anderson Award

Outstanding park developments within the state of Nevada accomplished by federal, state, county, city, community, non-profit/civic organizations, religious groups, business and commercial agencies will be considered for an award of excellence.

For additional information, e-mail Kathy Burkhardt at [kburkhardt@lasvegasnevada.gov](mailto:kburkhardt@lasvegasnevada.gov) or Pandora Bahlman at [pandora\\_bahlman@ivgid.org](mailto:pandora_bahlman@ivgid.org).

**Program Excellence and Elmer Anderson Applications are due by March 2, 2012.**

## Professional Awards

Nominate your fellow NRPS members who are dedicated and demonstrate passion for the parks and recreation profession. Please visit the NRPS website for further details. Submission deadline date is Thursday, March 30, 2012.

- NRPS New Professional
- Dundee Award
- NRPS Citation Award
- Honorary NRPS member Award
- NRPS Fellowship Award
- Jean Turnbaugh Award

## NRPS Miracle and Great Western Park & Playground Scholarship

Please visit the NRPS website for further details. Submission deadline date is Thursday, March 16, 2012.

## NRPS Elections

NRPS is searching for qualified and excited professionals who will lead NRPS into the next chapter of the parks and recreation profession. **Please visit the website for further details. [www.NRPS.org](http://www.NRPS.org).** Nominations are due, Monday, **February 13, 2012**. Elections will begin Friday, **February 17**, and will end Friday, **March 2, 2012**.



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# NRPS News



## Washoe County

### ***Grant Funds Helping County Improve Playgrounds***

by Bob Harmon, Public Information Officer, Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space

A federal grant is helping Washoe County's Department of Regional Parks and Open Space improve safety by installing a rubberized tile surface around the play equipment at three park playgrounds. In addition to greater safety, the new tiles will increase accessibility for users of all abilities while reducing operating and maintenance costs.

Playgrounds receiving the new surface tiles are located in Lazy 5 Regional Park, South Valleys Regional Park and Arrowcreek Park.

The cost of the project is \$414,000. Half of the funding is provided by a federal Land and Water Conservation Fund grant, and the other half is provided through residential construction tax funds and in-kind services provided by Washoe County. The project was awarded to Garden Shop Nursery Landscaping Division following a competitive bidding process.



*Photo by Bob Harmon, Public Information Officer,  
Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space*

Garden Shop Nursery workers install new rubberized tiles at Arrowcreek Park in south Reno. The new surfacing will help make the playground safer, cleaner and more accessible to all users.

## Reno

### ***City of Reno Hosts Inaugural Wounded Soldier Sports Camp***

The City of Reno Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department, with the generous support of the Nevada Military

Support Alliance and local adaptive sports programs, hosted a Military Sports Camp for disabled veterans and injured service members September 14-18. The camp was a multiday event with activities such as whitewater rafting, scuba diving, rock climbing, wheelchair rugby, adaptive cycling and more. Various area facilities, such as the Reno Whitewater Park, Sparks Marina and the Evelyn Mount Northeast Community Center, hosted the activity programs.

Participants came from northern and southern Nevada and Seattle, Washington, and all branches of service were represented. Events such as this take place at sites throughout the United States, offering disabled veterans and injured service members the opportunity to integrate as participants and mentors in their local communities. This is the first event of its kind in the Truckee Meadows. The City of Reno Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department, with support from sponsors, provided transportation, lodging, adaptive equipment, meals and individualized instruction in adaptive/Paralympic sports at no cost to the participants.

## Las Vegas

### ***Kids Get a Kick out of Stupack Soccer Academy***

Staff members at the Stupak Community Center decided it was time to try something new yet familiar for the kids in the Meadows Village neighborhood, and the Stupak Soccer Academy was born. With Sherry Alexander taking the lead, we received a scholarship from the US Soccer Foundation and Nestlé Pure Water and were given 300 soccer balls, bottled water, snacks and shirts. Albertsons supplied team uniforms and banners, while All Points Media has agreed to fund next year's program.

Charging just \$10 and using Academy-style scheduling, staff members held three practice sessions and started play on Monday, September 19. Practice is held on Thursdays from 4-5:30 p.m., and games are played on Mondays starting at 5 p.m. Forty students in kindergarten through sixth-grade signed up for co-ed play. Members of the Stupak teen programs volunteer as coaches, referees and administrative personnel. They are responsible for checking parents and players in, coaching the teams and officiating the games. In turn, the teens are not only having fun and having a positive impact on their community, but they're also learning valuable leadership skills and acting as role models for the kindergarten through sixth-grade players.

The Academy-style format that we use allows a single staff person (Sherry) to run the program with the help of the teen volunteers. We can accommodate up to 80 kids by playing 4v4 in the gym on half-court. Players are divided into four teams and play two 10-minute





halves. They are then “reshuffled” and, with new teammates and a new coach, play a second game. This style helps the kids learn how to deal with winning, losing, different coaching styles, playing with friends, playing against friends, and working with others that they may not normally team up with.

Sherry was also able to obtain donations and grant funding for several teens to become certified referees. Since she is a licensed youth referee instructor, she will train the teens, and then we will pay for their certification and outfit them with all of their referee supplies (bag, uniform, whistle, flags, socks and watch) using the

aforementioned donations and grant funding. Teens who pass the course will then be able to officiate Academy games on Monday evenings. Sherry took it one step further and contacted a local youth soccer league, which plans to hire our teens to referee its games on Saturdays.

The Stupak Soccer Academy is truly a win-win situation. Not only are 40-plus kindergarten through sixth-graders learning soccer basics, but our teens are gaining valuable experience on many levels, and, once certified, they will be able to obtain weekend employment officiating youth soccer games in the Las Vegas valley.

# Volunteers Make a Difference

On a cold Saturday morning in early November, a group of more than 30 Boy Scouts and parents from Reno-area Troop 443 donned coats and gloves and volunteered their time to make trail improvements at Washoe County’s Sun Valley Regional Park.

Located in the foothills above Reno, Sun Valley Regional Park is a great place for hiking because of its unique rock formations and its spectacular views over the Truckee Meadows. This is one of the county’s newest regional parks. The trail system was in need of additional directional signs and was starting to get overrun with weeds.

To help out, Eagle Scout candidate Grant Colby coordinated a volunteer effort to clear weeds and place rocks to better outline the trail. The volunteers also installed a series of new trail signs and two doggie-bag dispensers.

Colby’s project was supported by generous donations of materials and supplies from the Spanish Spring and Northtowne Home Depots. A hot lunch on this cold early November day was donated by Little Caesars Pizza of Spanish Springs.

Eagle Scout candidates have worked on hundreds of volunteer projects in public parks over the years. The Saturday after Grant Colby’s volunteer project in Sun Valley, another Eagle Scout candidate installed a much-needed battery-powered sprinkler system in Eagle Meadow at Galena Creek Regional Park, while a third undertook much-needed fence repairs at the pasture in Rancho San Rafael Regional Park.

“All of us at Washoe County appreciate the great service these Scouts are giving to the residents of this community,” Regional Parks and Open Space Director Doug Doolittle said. “It is always very encouraging to see the development of a new generation of dedicated leaders and community volunteers.”

Community volunteers have become increasingly important to the efforts by Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space to keep parks open, clean and safe in the face of a dramatic reduction of traditional resources. Their efforts are helping to get the job done.

“I’m constantly being told how impressed people are with the condition of our parks



Scouts from Boy Scout Troop 443 volunteered to help on an Eagle Scout project to improve the Sun Rock Trail at Sun Valley Regional Park on November 5, 2011.

even with the extreme amount of department cutbacks,” Doolittle said. “Credit goes to a dedicated, hard-working staff supported by an unprecedented outpouring of volunteers.”

Washoe County Horticulturist Bill Carlos heartily agrees. His duties include the popular Wilbur May Arboretum, acres of public gardens that require a great deal of specialized care. Every year, volunteers contribute thousands of hours planting, pruning, weeding, cleaning and helping in the office.

“Even though times are hard, our visitors continue to enjoy a beautiful experience in high quality, well-maintained gardens,” Carlos said. “We simply couldn’t do that without our volunteers.”

# SUCCESSION PLANNING – LEADING TO CHANGE OR CHANGING TO LEAD?

by Teresa Penbrooke, CPRP, MAOM

In the next five to 10 years, the parks and recreation industry is going to see a tremendous change in staffing levels and availability of qualified personnel. Estimates and demographics indicate that roughly 30 percent to 50 percent of our seasoned professionals are nearing traditional retirement age. This mass exodus of experience and institutional knowledge will present unforeseen challenges for our field. There needs to be a strong focus on planning for professional leadership and organizational strength for agencies, and that type of planning is called “succession planning.”

Part of the challenge is, of course, related to the economic recession in the United States. Many older professionals who may have retired in the last few years have held off on retiring as they saw the economy affect the levels of their retirement savings. As either the economy starts to improve or these still-working but eligible workers just get older, there will be a large increase in the annual number of retirees. In addition, for many agencies, budget woes are impacting the ability to fill positions, with mandated hiring freezes or reorganizations to help reduce staffing costs. In addition, most universities are seeing a reduced number of undergraduates in their parks and recreation majors, which is, in turn, producing fewer qualified professionals at the entry level. The good news for younger parks and recreation professionals is that soon there will probably be a wide variety of positions opening up, but are they ready to assume those positions? Senior management of agencies have a choice — do they want to be reactive to these challenges or proactive in their planning to have a well trained and ready workforce?

Three basic questions to ask when contemplating succession planning are:

- How do you develop leaders in your agency?
- How do you prepare for succession planning for key leadership positions in your agency?
- How do you handle poor performers?

The big question many agency leaders ask is, “So, how do we create a succession plan and what should it include?” The broad overview of what to address involves:

- Leadership identification
- Employee development

- Leadership training
- Knowledge transfer and legacy creation
- Possible reorganization
- Creation and communication of **THE PLAN**

## Recognizing the Diversity of Employees

The first thing to recognize is that every organization has a unique population of employees. There is not a “one-size-fits-all” succession plan that works for every agency. Often, retiring employees are in leadership positions or possess institutional knowledge critical to organizational sustainability, but this is not always the case. To create a plan, you need to be aware of the age demographics of the employee workforce, their qualifications and their plan for their inevitable departure. Agency demographics change depending on agency lifecycle, community profile and maturity.

## Change Can Be Scary

Employees are humans (yes, it’s true...), and, as such, they are made up of a mix of folks who may be “risk-adverse” (they don’t like change and will try to avoid it) or “risk-takers” (they don’t mind change and look forward to it). It is important to recognize which employees have which characteristics, and that will help both in the planning and communication stages. It is necessary to develop a culture to support innovation ... through recruitment, appraisal and recognition. One way to help avoid negative impacts of the changes is to involve employees in the process to create alignment with the plan. It helps to remember that really good employees like working for a forward-thinking agency.

## Developing Leaders

Fortunately, although gaining experience often takes time in a variety of situations, leadership is a craft for which you can continuously learn and adapt to become better. Some ways to develop better leaders include:

- **Having Personal and Agency Support for Continuing Education** — Unfortunately, many parks and recreation professionals feel that, if their agency won’t pay for their continuing education (conferences, webinars, online learning, etc.), they won’t pursue it. In many other professions, there is a personal responsibility for continuing education — as an investment in long-term personal growth. While it is important for agencies to support their employees in their career growth for both personal and agency benefit, it is also important for individuals to invest in their own growth throughout their careers — especially if they want to move ahead and be successful
- **Mentoring or Executive Coaching** — This can be provided at minimal cost by agencies through mentoring programs or joining groups such as civic organizations or Toastmasters®. Some state





professional associations offer free mentor programs for their members. Executive coaching can help too, especially if an individual recognizes that he or she has specific limitations on some of the necessary strengths that he or she needs to develop.

- **Job Rotations** — Having employees periodically gain experience in other areas helps ready them for more responsibility and also helps if there are sudden gaps in personnel. Senior leaders need to include periodic delegation of their own responsibilities and duties to those who are ready so that when the time comes for them to move up, they have some of that experience.
- **Feedback on the Job** — This can be handled through well handled performance appraisals, 360-degree appraisals and “Just-in-time feedback” in between scheduled appraisals

There should be an ongoing focus on building on strengths, not weaknesses; developing a culture of personal accountability; and supporting continuous habits of reading everything that you can.

### Recognizing the Need for Development of Core Competencies for Agency Leaders

Most parks and recreation staff members start their careers as programmers in a certain type of activity or technicians or front-line personnel in maintenance or customer service. As they move up the ranks, it is important in any field that staff members gain experience in not only supervision but also the five major areas of executive competencies. Many university undergraduate parks and recreation programs do not spend significant time on preparation for all of these areas. They generally include:

- **Communication** — Leaders must be able to foster good internal and external relationships, create and implement marketing and communication strategies, communicate the agency’s vision and mission, and foster and formalize collaborations and partnership planning.

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- **Financial Analysis** — Leaders must be able to prepare and manage budgets for areas of responsibility, conduct cost-recovery analyses relative to their agency's specific mission, and procure and manage traditional and alternative funding mechanisms. There are many newer and effective methodologies and tools such as the "Pyramid Methodology" and the "Services Assessment Matrix" related to funding and identification of core service provision that are not yet taught in undergraduate programs, so these can only be learned through continuing education setting or on the job.
- **Human Resources** — Beyond basic recruitment, hiring, supervision and documentation for staff members, leaders need to understand and have skills in dealing with personnel issues (those darn humans again ...), performance measurement, evaluation and specialties such as dealing with unions and independent contractors. One key bit of experience needed is understanding and using the concept of "managing up" — that the higher you go in leadership, the more time you spend managing those folks above you (council, legislators, the public, etc.), rather than supervising those who work for you. Good leaders have to do this very well.
- **Operations** — Good leaders have at least a basic overview of all aspects of running an organization and the divisions that report to them, including administration, programming, conservation and maintenance. This includes an awareness of new trends and best practices used by other agencies and other related disciplines.
- **Planning** — In reality, planning should be part of the job descriptions of all employees at all levels, but, as leaders emerge, they need to gain the bigger picture and the overall context of the interactions of each and all divisions and areas of the organization. This includes community needs assessment, capital planning, assets and programs management, plans for various aspects of the agency, performance measurement and evaluation. New tools for planning have emerged with growing technologies in recent years — most specifically, the inclusion of geographic information systems (GIS) for agency inventories, along with the management of needs for resources through the use of the Composite-Values Methodology (CVM) for Level Service Analysis.

Not all parks and recreation agencies choose to become accredited, but it is interesting to note that in 2009, the Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) revised its standards for accreditation to include a standard for Succession Planning (Standard 4.6.3), stating:

*"Agencies should formulate a succession plan to ensure the continued effective performance of the organization by making provisions for the development and replacement of key people over time."*

## Recognizing That Not Everyone Will "Retire"

Another shift that is happening is that many long-time professionals, once they qualify for retirement or leave their full-time positions at their organization for other reasons, are choosing to continue to work, at least part time, as consultants or independent adjunct contracted staff members. This is causing some challenges related to continued professional development through parks and recreation associations, as they don't often have ways to classify these retirees or consultants as "professionals" (since they are no longer employed fulltime by agencies), but they still offer years of experience and commitment to the field. It should be recognized that many agencies are shifting to utilizing these contracted experienced staff, as they offer a lower cost (no full-time benefits package) and strong experience in the field but require different handling than "traditional" full-time or part-time employees. How will your agency handle this shift?

## Writing the Succession Plan

So how does an agency take all of this information and formulate it into a plan? Many agencies have pieces of this work addressed in various different ways but not pulled together into a cohesive written plan. To pull the plan together, each section requires some work, but the basic outline for a five- to 10-year Succession Plan can be as follows:

- Introduction
- History of the Agency
- Agency Demographics
- Upcoming Anticipated Retirements and Changes
- Leadership Development Support Opportunities
- Recruitment and Training Strategies
- Plans for Organizational Change and Adaptation
- Strategic Implementation Steps

It typically works best if someone (this can be an individual, a team or a consultant, depending on staff workloads and capabilities) is assigned the role as the lead person charged with working with staff members and Human Resources (if a separate department for your agency) to gather the information for each of the sections and then writing it up into a formal document. The process should be announced to all staff members to promote involvement at all levels of the organization and broad information-gathering, and to encourage a culture of openness. There are some areas that require finesse, sensitivity to personnel issues and maybe an objective third party to garner consensus on the best strategies for future development. Once the plan is outlined, it should be shared with all staff members. Adoption of the plan by your governing bodies and communication should be part of the process, not only to foster awareness but also to create adherence and buy in to the plan so it is successful over time.

*Teresa Penbrooke is the CEO and founder of GreenPlay, LLC, a national management consulting and planning firm for parks, recreation, open space and related agencies. She is also a faculty member and co-founder for GP RED, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that provides research, education and development for health, recreation and land-management agencies. She can be reached at [teresap@greenplayllc.com](mailto:teresap@greenplayllc.com).*





# To Play or Not to Play...

*Reflections of a Young Recreation Professional on a Business Article Written by Jenna Schnuer in the November Issue of Southwest Airlines' Spirit Magazine*

by Chris Gwin

While traveling on an airline trip, in my boredom, I stumbled upon an article in the airline's magazine entitled "Working Hard or Hardly Working." I was intrigued not only by the title but also by the picture of a man who looked like an executive playing with some bright primary-colored blocks. It turned out that the article discussed the role between play and work and used some eccentric examples of some very successful businesspeople, such as Bryan Cole, national field marketing manager for Clif Bar, who, when "overwhelmed by his job's to-do list grabs a guitar from a coworker and sets to strumming. 'We're all multitasking and trying to do so many things at once. I reach a point where I almost turn off because I've got so many things on my brain. I'll stop and say, 'OK, I just need to take five minutes to myself here and get back to only focusing on one of the tasks at hand.'" The guitar brings me to a place of focus." Another cool example comes from a software company in Durham, North Carolina, whose company mascot is a 40-foot-long brontosaurus statue. A group of software developers, after spending months working a new product release, relieved their stress by gathering everyone outside and decapitating their company mascot. Joseph Mancusi, president of the Center for Organizational Excellence, stated, "That's the thing with playing on the job: You never know what it might entail. Sometimes it's just a quick joke, while other times it can be organized, structured things that bring people together to break the monotony of work and relieve stress. Like executing a statue, for instance."

We as professionals in recreation are often-times told, in response of what we do for living, "So you get to play all day?!" My quick reactionary response is, "No, we help others play." In a field that focuses on the benefit of others, it is hard to take time and concentrate on ourselves or our work team. A lot of us

face stress around every corner of a recreation center or every phone call at our desk. I know many of us feel overworked, underappreciated, undervalued and (let's face it) mostly last in the scheme of things. It is crucial for not only our own personal health but also for the morale around work and the people in our homes that we are able to deal or handle our stress adequately and appropriately.

Anyone that has had Recreation 101 would have the answers on ways to relieve our stress. Should we not be practicing our own principles of study? The majority of us work for the public sector, and there is a thought that doing something for us during work time can cast a stigma upon our organization, ourselves and/or our team. I believe that most people employed by your entities as wellness specialists or the like would say that "taking five" to play is beneficial to your organization and yourself. Ed Dunkelblau, director of the Institute for Emotionally Intelligent Learning, says, "Our whole society is focused on goal-directed behavior. What do we hope to achieve? How are we going to achieve it? And how are we going to know it's been achieved? Play in and of itself is a non-goal-directed behavior. With play, it's not a function of getting somewhere as much as placing yourself in an environment and seeing where the play takes you. My bias is that most great achievements and inventions and discoveries have not been achieved by goal-directed behavior as much as play-enacted. To suggest that one is more important than the other is not to see the big picture."

Play can also serve as a way to get to know each other outside of our working relationships. It can help in bringing employees who don't normally work closely with each other together so that ideas can be shared during play. It also can help a manager understand a personality of an employee by his or her actions

at play. Is he or she dedicated to winning at all costs? Does he or she work well in a team? Is he or she cooperative? It can help in showing leadership styles or abilities of employees. It can also build camaraderie among employees and boost workplace morale.

The balancing act between work and play can sometimes be skewed by intrapersonal and interpersonal values. The balance can be achieved; however, organizational psychologist Mitchell Marks cautions, "If leadership says playing and having fun and laughing are part of our corporate culture, then people do get it. If it's a situation where one part of the organization is always goofing off and playing but others are pretty buttoned down, that could create 'Us-and-Them' dynamics." An organization that adopts this playing mentality must ensure that the organization is producing excellent products and customer service to keep the business playful but not silly and immature.

Bringing in new people into the playing working environment presents its own challenges. The interview should expose potential new employees to the environment during the interviewing process to see how they react to the situations around them. For example, those who focus on the activities during the interview may loosen up too much, thereby showing that they may be too playful to fit into the job role, whereas some may get tense due to the surrounding environment and show that the distractions are too much for them to concentrate in the working environment.

Next time you are having trouble focusing at your job or need a quick break, "take five" and play. Whether you sit down and play with blocks, doodle on some paper or bounce a ball around the office, just remember how much fun it is to do nothing important.

# Clark County Parks and Recreation's Snow Shoe Camp

by Rich Mueller



When you think of Las Vegas, you typically don't think about recreational opportunities involving snow. The Spring Mountains in this area reach altitudes of almost 12,000 feet, which allows them to become a winter wonderland during the colder months. Clark County Parks and Recreation's Snow Shoe Camp started as an opportunity to add new programming to a fast-growing interest in adventure recreation for the Las Vegas Valley. Meetup groups are growing to more than 3,000 members, and adventure-based magazines are listing the city as one of the top 10 best cities to live in for adventure recreation opportunities. So, the question was not: "Should a winter adventure based activity be created?" but "How?"

Camp Lee Canyon is located at roughly 30 minutes outside of the city and is typically utilized as a year-round reservation facility. During the summertime, the Parks and Recreation Department runs two resident camp programs focusing on adventure recreation and earth sciences, but in the wintertime, the department utilizes a rare and unusual substance that makes this camp unique to the area: snow.

The resident camp is the best opportunity to offer a "camping vacation" feel with a guided adventure program. The program was marketed to families, and participants are required to bring their own food and bedding. Having the participants provide their own supplies helps keep the cost down and further creates the "campground adventure" feel.

Participants pay a fee of \$15 per person, which offsets any supply costs and allows for some revenue to be generated. Staff members' jobs, outside of leading hikes, are to be camp hosts and to make sure participants are comfortable. There are some other programmed activities, such as a family movie and a snowman-building competition, but the rest of the camp is unprogrammed and very relaxed. This non-programmed time allows participants to visit with other families, read books, play board games or just enjoy some hot cocoa by the wood-burning fireplace. Think about when you are on vacation at a ski resort or a campsite, you go to these places to relax, not to follow a strict schedule. The camp itself is the selling point, whereas the activities are like excursions on a cruise — you sign up for what you want to do.

The only edible comforts supplied are hot cocoa, tea, coffee and breakfast bars for the hikes. Sunday morning does include a pan-

cake breakfast which is both easy to facilitate and inexpensive to provide.

The first time this format was facilitated, reviews on evaluations highlighted how the organization of the event made the adventure fun and relaxing. Now approaching its third year, the program has developed a waiting list with a large repeat-customer base. Depending on the numbers for this upcoming season, there may be a need for an additional program.

With the current state of the economy, folks are looking for inexpensive mini-vacation ideas that are fun for the whole family. Adventure recreation activities are growing in interest, and even a couple of hours in the wilderness provides its participants a sense of serenity and replenishment. With cost mostly being an initial equipment startup, these types of activities can be facilitated on almost any budget. So, the next question should be: "What natural landscapes can I highlight in my area?"

## LOOK WHO'S RETIRING!

from Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space



"Ninja Pruner"



"Captain Fun"

Join us for a celebration  
in honor of

**STEVE CLARK**  
**DOUG DOOLITTLE**  
**DOUG MULLENS**  
**LYNDA NELSON**



"Dougle-Buns"



"Fluore Scent"





# Nevada Recreation & Park Society Conference Registration Form

**April 18-20, 2012 Henderson/Las Vegas, Nevada**

**Black Mountain Recreation Center • 599 Greenway Road, Henderson, Nevada 89015 • 702.267.4077**

**RETURN COMPLETED REGISTRATION FORM & FULL PAYMENT TO:  
P.O. Box 97264 Las Vegas, NV 89193-7264 • nrps@live.com • www.NRPS.org**

Name/Title:

Agency Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Phone:

E-mail:

Agency Website:

	EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION Register by April 2, 2012		REGISTRATION Registration AFTER April 2, 2012	
	Member	Non-Member (includes membership)	Member	Non-Member (includes membership)
Full Package*	<input type="checkbox"/> \$130.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$160.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$180.00
Retiree Full Package*	<input type="checkbox"/> \$120.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$145.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$130.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$155.00
Wednesday Only**	<input type="checkbox"/> \$65.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$85.00
Thursday Only▼	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$85.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$85.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$95.00
CEU's (Continuing Education Credits)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25.00
Student Package	<input type="checkbox"/> \$65.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$85.00
Student Wednesday Only**	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$60.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$55.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$65.00
Student Thursday Only▼	<input type="checkbox"/> \$55.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$65.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$65.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75.00
Guest Full Package	<input type="checkbox"/> \$130.00		<input type="checkbox"/> \$150.00	
Guest Social Package	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50.00		<input type="checkbox"/> \$60.00	

**REGISTRATION NOTES:** \*Full Package registrations include: Educational Sessions, Exhibit Hall, Exhibitor Luncheon, Installation Reception & Awards, Welcome Party & Off Site Institutes. \*\*Wednesday Only registration includes: Off Site Institutes, Educational Sessions, and Welcome Social (not party). ▼Thursday Only registration includes: Educational Sessions, Exhibit Hall, Exhibitors Luncheon, Installation Reception and Awards. Student registration includes: Education Sessions, Exhibit Hall & Exhibitor Luncheon on Thursday. Guest Social Package includes: Welcome Party, Installation Reception, & Exhibitor Luncheon. All Non-Member Full Package & Student Package registrations include a Membership.

MEMBERSHIP RATES	
Professional Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30.00
Retired/Associate Professional Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15.00
Student Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$10.00
Commercial Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50.00

Please list special accommodations (including dietary needs):

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Please check [www.NRPS.org](http://www.NRPS.org) for Conference Social Events & Offsite Institutes Information.

Grand Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NRPS Use Only Date \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Cancellations must be in writing by April 2, 2012.

## Clark County Parks and Recreation Presents Snow Shoe & Camping Trip

*Saturday and Sunday, February 11-12  
Third Annual "Get Some Adventure" Snow Shoe Event*

Arrive at 8 a.m. Saturday and leave by 5 p.m. Sunday.  
Call 702.455.1905 for more info.

Don't have snow shoes? Don't worry about it! We will be providing shoes for the first 20 people to register. Stay the night in our heated, rustic group cabins that will remind you of summer camp. We will do hikes through the Bristlecone Trail and around the Camp Lee Canyon Facility.

The cost is \$15 per person. Families are welcome. A pancake breakfast will be provided on Sunday morning — ***participants are responsible for their own food and bedding.*** Call 702.455.1905 for more information.



Enroll online now — scan the above code with your smartphone,  
and enter in activity #3406.622.



## NRPS State Conference

### Early Bird Registration Raffle

Submit your registration early, and you could win one of three prizes:

- Conference Full Package
- Conference Full Package for a friend
- iPod-Nano

### Exhibitors Raffle

Visit every exhibitor and you will have a chance to win a FLAT-SCREEN TV!

### Exhibitors Luncheon

Thursday, April 19, 2012  
12:15-1:30 p.m.

### State Conference Opening Social

Wednesday, April 18, 2012  
6-8 p.m.  
Sierra Gold

### Administrators Luncheon

Wednesday, April 18, 2012  
11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
Historic Fifth Street School