



PARK PEOPLE OF MILWAUKEE COUNTY

History & Organizational Overview

Friends of Milwaukee County Parks

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parkpeoplesmke.org
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Board Members

President

Nadine Weske
Community Volunteer

Vice President

President-Elect

John Machulak, JD
Machulak, Robertson, Sodos

Treasurer

Patricia Hintz, JD, CPA
Quarles and Brady

Past President

Kathryn Ciurlik
Essential Marketing Constellation

Amy Diliberti
Community Volunteer

Jim Ciurlik, CPA
Security First Financial

Adam Nowaczynski
Mindlance

Lucas Olivieri
Milwaukee County

Ken Solis, MD
Community Volunteer

Susan Spoerk, JD
Thomson Reuters

Executive Director

Barry Waddell

History of the Park People

Founded in 1977 by Joy Teschner, the Park People of Milwaukee County exists to support Milwaukee County Parks with the belief that there was a need for citizen input and involvement for Milwaukee County Parks. Formed as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization, the Park People work to ensure parks remain treasured, as public parks enrich our lives and communities.

The Park People's programs and initiatives are designed to engage citizens, businesses, and corporations in the revitalization of our storied park system through volunteer activities, various funding strategies, and public/private initiatives. Through the organization's work, a truly viable and vibrant park system is supported in offering quality recreation experiences for every Milwaukee County resident.

Starting in 1984, the Park People began supporting newly-formed friends groups for individual parks by acting as the fiscal sponsor and nonprofit umbrella organization. Through the Park People, each friends group can apply for grants, have a dedicated bank account, and maintain an insurance policy for any special events. By 1995, the Weed Out program was created and led by Dr. Ken Solis to organize volunteers with the goal of maintaining high quality natural areas in Milwaukee County Parks.

In 1999, several board members of the Park People formed a new, advocacy-focused organization; Preserve Our Parks. With the formation of POP, the Park People begin to steer their efforts away from any advocacy issue and focus on maintaining volunteer and engagement efforts in the parks system.

Today, the Park People have one employee – a part-time Executive Director – and a Board of Directors of ten volunteers, who work to enrich Milwaukee County Parks through the Weed Out program, trails-focused special events, and by growing the number of friends groups throughout the system.

Mission, Vision, & Values

Mission: The Park People of Milwaukee County supports the Milwaukee County Parks by promoting the value of educating stakeholders about Milwaukee County parks, encouraging park improvement through friends groups, coordinating Weed Out programs, and accepting charitable contributions, while balancing long-term park viability.

Vision: Park People's vision is a treasured park system. We believe that through our work, we can ensure a truly vibrant, viable system of parks that offer quality recreation experiences for all citizens. Our successes lay the foundation of a treasured park system.

Values: Park People adhere to these core values:

- We consider the park system is one of our community's most precious resources
- We believe in maintaining and protecting the natural beauty of our park system
- We strive to improve community awareness, appreciation, and engagement in the park system
- We maintain a lean operating budget and responsibly manage our resources to ensure fiscal strength

Programs & Outcomes

We support Milwaukee County Parks by:

1. Educating the community on issues concerning Milwaukee County Parks
 - Increasing public interest in – and appreciation of – parks, open space, and recreational facilities offered by Milwaukee County Parks
2. Offering Parks Perks program to increase awareness of, engagement in, and use of parks
Encouraging improvement of individual parks through fiscal sponsorship of friends groups; operating as their legal entity and liaison to the Parks
 - Acting as a liaison between friends groups and Milwaukee County Parks
 - Providing mentorship and ongoing support to friends groups
3. Coordinating Weed Out activities in Milwaukee County Parks
 - Eradicating invasive species through pulling weeds
 - Preserving natural areas across the park system
4. Providing volunteer programming in parks regardless of whether there is a friends group for that park
 - Ensuring interests of donors and Milwaukee County Parks are preserved by providing oversight, transparency, and guidance on charitable donations and contributions
 - Implementing and following a standard procedure of charitable donations
 - Providing the Park Market; giving members of the community to donate a bench or tree in honor or memory of a loved one

Friends Groups

The Park People has assisted several friends groups in incorporating as their own, independent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization. Milwaukee County Parks friends groups that are independent from the Park People include:

- Friends of Back Bay Park
- Friends of Boerner Botanical Gardens
- Friends of Cathedral Square Park
- Friends of the Domes
- Friends of Hales Corners Park & Pool
- Friends of Hoyt Park & Pool
- Juneau Park Friends
- Friends of Kletzsch Park
- Lake Park Friends
- Friends of Mill Pond & Oak Creek Watercourse
- North Point Lighthouse Friends
- Rose Park Friends
- Friends of Wehr Nature Center

The Park People act as a fiscal sponsor for all other friends groups and work to grow the number of parks with a friends group. The Park People currently serve Friends of:

- Friends of Brown Deer Park
- Friends of Center Street Park
- Friends of Cooper Park
- Friends of Doctors Park
- Friends of Estabrook Park
- Friends of Grant Park
- Friends of Humboldt Park
- Friends of Jacobus Park
- Friends of Johnsons Park
- Friends of Lafollette Park
- Friends of Lincoln Park
- Friends of Milwaukee BMX Trails
- Friends of Milwaukee's Trails
- Friends of Mitchell Airport Park
- Friends of Monarch Trail
- Friends of Morgan Triangle Park
- Friends of Pulaski Park – Cudahy
- Residents for Off-Leash Milwaukee Parks (ROMP)
- Friends of Sheridan Park
- Friends of Smith Park
- Friends of Tiefenthaler Park
- Friends of Walker Square Park
- Friends of Wedgewood Park