



## Monthly Director's Report, April 13, 2010

Parks and Recreation Director, AmandaGrace H. Green

### Past Events

The final draft of the **City of Clare Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2010-2015** was approved by City Commission during the month of March. All additional supporting documentation required by the State of Michigan was gathered, and the plan was filed with the MDNRE in order to enable the City to be eligible for grants. The last parks and recreation master plan, which was for fiscal years 2005-2010 allowed the City to receive almost \$600,000.00 in funding from the State of Michigan.

The 35<sup>th</sup> annual Irish Festival was held March 10-13, with the bulk of the festivities being held on Saturday, March 13, 2010. Parks and Recreation once again put on the **Kids Fun Run** for the 2010 festival in correlation with the existing 5K/10K for teens and adult participants. This year's Fun Run was ran at a different time and place than it has been in previous years. Previously, the run was held on east side of McEwan. In 2009, however, a young participant got scared during the race and tried to leave the race course by exiting to the west into active traffic lanes. Luckily, the child was stopped just before entering traffic, but gave a great scare to many onlookers. As a result, the race course was moved off of McEwan to Pine Street where all lanes of traffic could be closed during the race for the participants' safety. Additionally this year's race time was moved up in order to have the race in conjunction with the adult 5K/10K. This change in time and location seemed to be supported by the community, as participant attendance was at its highest count ever with 84 kids. The first 75 kids to sign in for this year's run received a free t-shirt, and all participants received a ribbon.

**Junior Fire Fighters Academy** came back once again this year to allow the area youth a "HOT" event to participate in during spring break. Participants learned fire safety and prevention through hands-on activities and informative discussions. Volunteers from the Clare Fire Department assisted participants as they tried out lots of fire equipment. The fee for the academy was \$10.00 a person, and included an award certificate, t-shirt, and lunch.

Easter celebrations for teen and youth participants in the community were held on March 30 and April 3, respectively. This year teens were invited to participate in a **Glow-In-the-Dark Easter Egg Hunt** during the evening hours of March 30<sup>th</sup> at McIreland Trails. The hunt went very well and was extremely enjoyed by those who participated, however the overall participation levels were only about 50% of what was anticipated. Hopefully attendance will increase in 2011 if the event can be schedule at a time when the local teens are not on spring break.

Unfortunately our normal pilot for the Great EGGstravaganza Easter Egg Drop was not available to fly for us this year, so **The Shamrock Park Amazing Easter Egg Hunt** was held on April 3 instead. To the great surprise of the recreation department, this year's event was a tremendous success, being attended by several hundred. Records from past years show that previous Easter events held that were not the egg drop were only attended by about 20 participants. This year's event was different from those, however, in the fact that it was an outdoor event instead of being held indoors at the library. Overall attendance at this year's event was 307, with multiple comments from parents that their children had more fun at this Easter event than they had in previous years.

#### Current Events

Based on the past and present parks and recreation master plan, extensive improvements to **Pettit Park Campground** are desired. Some of the desired improvements include water hookups at each electrical site, pavement of the roadway throughout the park, and extension of the current bathroom facility to include two unisex shower stalls and a maintenance room. Design plans for the shower facility were recently completed and the project is subsequently being put out for bid.

With the start of the New Year has come the rebirth of the **Weekly Teen Group** at the Library, in which teens ages 13-18 years old are invited each Wednesday from 3:30 to 5:30 pm to the Library to spend time playing games, socializing, and helping to plan other events for teens in the community. Currently, the group averages 10-15 members a week, with attendance varying each week to include new teens.

#### Future Events

**Clare Pride Day** is once again around the corner as a collaboration between school and community to show appreciation for the local businesses and residents who show so much support to the community throughout the year. Clare Pride Day is scheduled for April 22, 2010, and 420+ high school students are anticipated for participation in being a volunteer work force for the event to spruce up the Clare community. Local businesses are being asked to fill out Service Order sheets to let the committee know what tasks are available to have volunteers participate in completing.

Seniors **Cards and Coffee** will be kicking off on Wednesday, May 5, 2010, and will be held each Wednesday thereafter at the Pere Marquette District Library from 10:00 am-12:00 pm. This event is a free and fun way for seniors and older adults to get together with peers in the community to socialize and enjoy playing games such as euchre, cribbage, and other favorites.

The annual **Pitch, Hit, Run** competition will be held at Stamina Stadium on Saturday, May 8, 2010. The competition is free, and is for boys and girls ages 7-14. New this year, boys and girls have the opportunity to compete separately based on requirements for either baseball or softball. Ribbons will be awarded, and the winners of this competition will go on to the area competition.

Additional programs on the horizon include the following: early **Soccer Registration** beginning in mid-May; **CSI Super Sleuth** on June 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, **Water Camp** on June 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, **Ballroom Dancing and Line Dancing Lessons** in June and July, a new family friendly **Monday**

**Movie Series** outdoors at the Library; **Summer Concert Series** which will run Thursday evenings in the months of June and July, **Summer Parks Program** for nine weeks during the summer months; **Counselor in Training (CIT)** program in conjunction with the Summer Parks Program, a new **Nature Center Program** on July 6<sup>th</sup> in partnership with the local libraries; **National Night Out (Passport to Safety)** on Thursday, August 12, **Old 27 Motor Tour** in August, and summer **Tennis** lessons throughout the summer.

#### Other Projects

The City is looking into possible locations as to where the **Skate Park** could be put for the 2010 season. Currently, the suggestion has been made to put up the park in the parking lot area west of the old Car Quest building. The City does not currently own that property, however, so it is in discussion with the property owner to see if that location could be a viable possibility as a starting location. Once the little league season is wrapped up at the end of June or mid-July, the Skate Park would be relocated to Stamina Stadium.

While the city parks are not officially schedule to be open until May 1, annually, our Parks Supervisor has been successful in getting all bathroom facilities open for the season and opening the parks for the coming months. This has already proven to be supported by the local community and visitors to the area, as many parents and children have already been seen out in the parks using picnic and playground areas. Additionally, phone calls have already been received inquiring about the possibility of camping at Pettit Park on the weekend of April 16<sup>th</sup>.

The City of Clare Parks and Recreation Department has enjoyed a tremendous working relationship with faculty, staff, and students in the recreation program at CMU. The facility design class being held this spring has eagerly offered to assist the City of Clare with layout proposals for an additional **Softball Field at Brookwood**. While the project in its entirety would likely be done in various phases across multiple fiscal years, the project proposal would include the addition of a new field on the recently purchased property north of the existing Brookwood Field, necessary parking to accommodate both fields, and a permanent bathroom facility.

The desire for an **Indoor Shuffleboard League** at the Library is still being actively pursued. Unfortunately the paint previously tried was found unsuccessful, as it easily scrapped off the sealed floor. The local paint store suggested trying epoxy paint as our next step. Additionally, a grant opportunity is currently being pursued that could likely support the purchase of a movable shuffleboard court.

A committee has recently been formed to focus on the **Restoration of the Clare Depot**. Currently the committee is in the stage of initial discussions on what the goals for the restored depot would be. These preliminary goals include the depot serving as a permanent trail head for the Pere Marquette Rail Trail in Clare, offer public bathrooms, be a hub for the Chamber of Commerce to operate their office out of, have meeting rooms, be a potential location for the Clare Arts Council and Main Street, and have potential incorporation of future snowmobile staging areas, passenger trail loading and off loading, and farmers market facilities.