

# Forum Update

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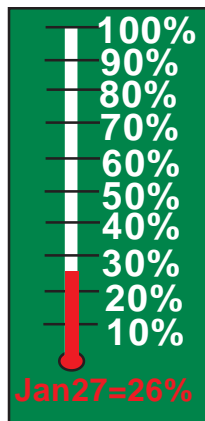
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## Happy New Year!!!

**Ramie Ford, Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks**



I hope everyone is off to a great 2010! Budget woes continue throughout the State and our country which requires us to operate a bit differently. With that said, a valuable resource is your MRPA membership. Take advantage of the knowledge and experience across the State. Also, communicate with your district representative on topics you would like information on and implement a "learning session" within your district. These local sessions typically have little to no cost but can lend an abundance of knowledge to help you in your respective job. Additionally, you should let your district representatives know of any continuing education classes you would like to see offered at the annual state convention in Natchez. Every year someone asks why we don't offer a certain class. The answer is we don't know of the interest in that topic. Your association wants to help you. We want to provide services that benefit you. Of course this requires communication and I assure you we are ready to listen.

## Making and Breaking New Year's Resolutions

One of the time-honored customs at this time of year is to make... and sometimes break, New Year's resolutions. Some of the more popular resolutions involve plans to improve health, spend more time with loved ones, develop a new interest or, especially in these times, save money. As you think about resolutions like these and how to not break them, don't forget to take advantage of the resources right in your own backyard at your local or state park.

Are you looking to improve your health and get in better shape? There's no better place to exercise than the great outdoors! Take a walk or a jog on hundreds of miles of trails. For a more complete workout, some departments have fitness trails which combine a walk in the park with an array of exercise stations. As the weather warms, a round of golf can be great exercise as well. You can also join one of the many softball, soccer, or sand volleyball leagues or grab your friends and head to a Frisbee disc golf course for some fun.

Have you been meaning to spend more time with loved ones? There are countless activities to enjoy together. Fishing and camping are wonderful ways to create the kinds of memories that bond families together. The kids will love to spend the day at the playground, or the splash pools in the summer, and visit the friendly animals at the two public zoos in the state. Most park and recreation departments also offer picnicking at reservable shelters or at any of the open picnic sites throughout their parks.

If you're looking for a new interest or hobby, consider the wide variety of nature-related programming, often lead by Naturalists that are both educational and entertaining.

If your resolution is to save money, then these activities make even more sense as they are low- or no-cost and can help stretch your entertainment dollar.

These are just a few of the many opportunities we provide our citizens across this great state. Consider finding news ways in 2010 to promote the value of your facilities and services. Have a great 2010. This could be the year we help our citizens keep those resolutions!

# LWCF Funding Update

You may recall that in December the NRPA public policy committee approved an advocacy statement advocating for full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), with the request that 50% of the funding be directed to the Stateside Assistance Program. This position statement inadvertently left out language regarding **dedicated** funding. Through the appropriations process we have seen funding that significantly varies from year-to-year and lends itself to providing minimum amounts of funding to the Stateside program. Dedicated funding would provide a specific amount of funding for the program without being subjected to the annual appropriations process.

On January 5<sup>th</sup> the public policy committee approved a revised position statement that voices NRPA's support for permanent and dedicated funding for the LWCF State Assistance Program. The language of the two position statements is below:

## **Original Resolution Approved by PPC on Dec.**

**14:** NRPA supports the Outdoor Resources Review Group recommendation for the maximum and full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. NRPA further believes that state and local parks play a vital role in outdoor recreation, the conservation of natural resources, and healthy lifestyles; and that at least 50% of the funding should support the stateside program.

## **NEW Resolution Approved by PPC on Jan. 5:**

**The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) supports the Outdoor Resources Review Group recommendation for permanent and dedicated funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at the maximum amount authorized by law. NRPA further believes that state and local parks play a vital role in outdoor recreation, the conservation of natural resources, tourism and economic development and in preventive health care; and that 50% of the total funding dedicated to the LWCF should be allocated to the LWCF State Assistance Program.**

NRPA staff is engaged with leaders in Congress and the Administration in efforts to provide the most support possible to state and local parks through the LWCF program. We will keep you posted as new information becomes available.

# Stepping Up

*Adam Shilling*

*National Youth Sports Coaches Association*

Earlier this year Stephen Rawls, Athletic Coordinator for Ocean Springs, was forced to revoke a coach's NYSCA membership because of a dispute over the coach's son's age. After learning that the coach's son was assigned to the wrong age division, Rawls politely asked him to step down as coach of that team and offered him a position as an assistant coach for his son's new team.

"It was a very minor problem but he took it very personally and began to attack our director's job," Rawls said. "He pulled his son out of our athletics program and threatened to pull him out of our after-school program even though we tried to explain to him that he wasn't punishing us by doing that, he was punishing his son." League officials agreed that this behavior was unacceptable and constituted grounds for NYSCA membership revocation. Having never dealt with this situation before, Rawls contacted NAYS headquarters for assistance on how to proceed to revoke the coach's membership. Because the incident occurred so early in the season, NYSCA even reimbursed the league for the coach's membership dues.

The process was done discreetly and professionally, and this issue ultimately blew over in the community. "Once a coach's NYSCA membership is revoked, our league administrator handles all matters privately with the coach involved," Ishie said. "All coaches are aware of what could happen to their NYSCA membership if they violate our league standards. When a coach's status is revoked, we do not publicize the coach's removal, nor do we solicit reactions from parents and coaches, or the community. If questions are asked we simply refer individuals to the policies and standards governing our program."

In the end, meeting the standards of the program is what it all comes down to. Training volunteers before the season begins – and holding them accountable for their actions throughout – is a major step in the right direction to meeting the needs of the young athletes.

Volunteer coaches typically go through their seasons without ever really knowing how well they are performing their jobs. That's no longer the case, thanks to the unveiling of the Coach Rating System by the National Alliance for Youth Sports earlier this year.

While the system allows administrators to track how each coach is fulfilling his or her responsibilities, one of the most attractive features is that it also provides the coaches themselves with a chance to receive honest feedback from parents – all done anonymously.

The evaluation system consists of 14 questions that gauge how well a volunteer coach performs his or her role in the eyes of parents, administrators and officials. The system can be helpful even for those outstanding coaches that the kids love playing for and learning from, since they can use the system as a springboard to take their skills to an even higher level – and forge even stronger connections with their players.

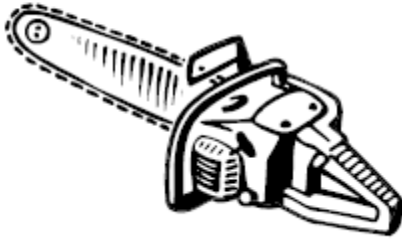
For example, a coach may review his evaluation and find that he received high marks in every category except one, so armed with that information he can focus on improving his skills in that particular area to become a more well-rounded coach. Additionally, for those coaches who receive high marks in each category that is equally valuable information, as it serves as positive reinforcement that how they are handling their responsibilities is right on track. "The rating system is a great idea as a way to provide some feedback," said Mark Perkins, program coordinator for Oconee County Parks & Recreation (Ga.). The system allows league administrators and coaches who are affiliated with NAYS to provide a digital link for

parents to evaluate coaches anonymously. The link can either be placed within an email or posted directly on a league or organization's Web site. The questions hit all the key coaching areas, such as safety, sportsmanship and how well they teach skills, among others. Coaches can log on and see how parents rated them. While the parents' answers are confidential, coaches can see their average scores in each category. Visit [www.nays.org](http://www.nays.org) to learn more.

*General  
Tractor/Power  
Equipment  
Safety Workshop*

*Wednesday  
February 17th, 2010  
Starkville, MS*

# District I



Exciting and informative safety workshop is being offered for the reasonable price of \$30/person! Topics to be covered include: Powerpoint presentation on general power tool safety, the proper way to take down a dead or damaged tree, understanding the proper way to operate a tractor and front end loader, and demonstrations on how to properly operate weed eaters and edgers. Be sure to register yourself and your staff to ensure proper safety habits are established within your facilities. RSVP is required by February 12, 2010. Contact Mathew Rye, Starkville Parks and Recreation (662-769-5494) or Alex Farned, Tupelo Parks and Recreation (662-841-6440) for registration forms and more information.

## Mississippi Recreation & Parks Association, District I

### Field Maintenance Workshop

Wednesday, March 03, 2010

It's that time of year again!  
Field maintenance - does your staff know your soil inside and out? Would you like to learn more about new and popular products available to help your team efficiently and effectively keep your grounds looking and performing their very best? Don't miss this opportunity to train your staff and earn CEU credit in the following areas: topdressing, soil PH & fertility, airifing, proper field rotation and logos/stencils. Cost is \$30/professional and \$10/student. Please pre-register by February 18, 2010, and contact Bubba Robinson at the Oxford Park Commission Activity Center at 662-232-2390.

2010 Hershey Track & Field information now available on the MRPA website (Member News). Note: Please review your duties and responsibilities form, sign, and fax it (228-868-5883) or email: [ldavis@gulfport-ms.gov](mailto:ldavis@gulfport-ms.gov) by **Friday, February 12, 2010**, with your local meet date.



### "A New Way to Play"

City of McComb  
Recreation Department

701 S. Magnolia St  
McComb, MS 39648

601-684-3056

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## MRPA Transitions Certification Files to NRPA

*Don Lewis, CPRP, Chair, MRPA Certification Board*

Beginning March 2010, MRPA will begin the transition of certificant files to NRPA. This is a mandatory NRPA program, requiring that all states transition their program by June 2010. All existing renewal certification dates will be rolled forward into NRPA's certification cycle of either March 1 or September 1. Certificants will still have no less than 24 months to earn the 2.0 CEUs required for recertification. Certificants will be merged into the NRPA database and their paper file placed into the national file system. NRPA will send new certificates and letters of welcome/explanation to each certificant. Email confirmation of this action will be sent to each certificant and to MRPA.

Due to changes in the certification criteria, as approved by the National Certification Board (NCB) no new applications will be accepted after January 1, 2008 for the Provisional Park and Recreation Professional (PPRP) or the Associate Park and Recreation Professional (APRP). Current designees will be evaluated for potential inclusion in the CPRP program. Designees that do not meet the stated criteria may retain their designation by continuing to earn CEUs and applying for renewal.

Please visit NRPA's website for additional certification information and necessary forms: [www.nrpa.org/cprpforms](http://www.nrpa.org/cprpforms). Below is a list of current MRPA certificants. If you feel that you should appear on this list, please contact the MRPA office immediately. 601-582-3361.

Wendy Bourdin, CPRP  
Art Bressler, Jr., CPRP  
Susan Burchell, CPRP  
Kristi Collins, PPRP  
David D'Aquila, CPRP  
Todd Davis, CPRP

Richard Ellis, CPRP  
James Gilbert, CPRP  
Timothy Grommersch, PPRP  
Donald Lewis, CPRP  
Gregory Lewis, CPRP  
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Kathleen Perales, CPRP  
Bubba Robinson, CPRP  
Clark Roman, CPRP  
Roger Short, CPRP  
Linda Waller, CPRP  
Z. West, CPRP