



Northampton County closes on its 20th Park

By Becky Bartlett

EASTON - Lamont McClure congratulates the Northampton County Department of Parks and Recreation for closing on the County's 20th park and all the other projects they were able to accomplish in 2020 despite a world-wide pandemic.

The County increased its number of park properties from eighteen to twenty with the addition of Hexenkopf Preserve and the Little Martins Preserve. To date, the County has preserved 3,451 acres in parkland and open space. Ned and Linda Heindel donated 76.76 acres, which includes the Hexenkopf Rock, to the County last autumn. Hexenkopf Rock has both cultural and geological importance and was once used as a shrine by the Lenni Lenape Indians. The County recently purchased the Little Martins Preserve—a 94 acre property in Lower Mount Bethel and Washington Township. Parks & Rec plans to install parking lots and trails at both sites in the future. The County also acquired 1.4 acres at the Stockertown Trailhead and will use that land to link existing trails.

"The future of Northampton County is green," says Lamont McClure. "Land preservation not only protects open spaces for future generations, it helps prevent warehouse proliferation now."

Following the completion of a new dam, Minsi Lake reopened to the public last June. Parks & Rec employees assisted with the installation of bird boxes and habits for fish and turtles throughout the year. Lake Minsi is one of only two public lakes in Northampton County and is open for fishing (Catch and release, except for trout). Parks employees will continue to make improvements to the park in 2021 with the addition of an ADA accessible fishing pier, boat launch and pedestrian bridge.

Several reconstruction projects were completed last year including resurfacing sections of the North Bath Trail, and the addition of landscaping, fencing and other safety improvements. Work on the North Bath will continue in 2021 with a bridge replacement and repairs to other sections of the trail.

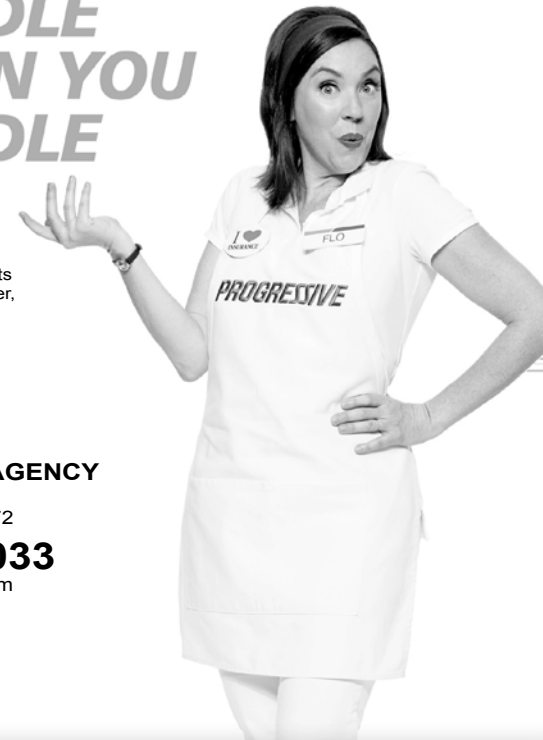
Seven Livable Landscape Grants, with a collective value of \$902,667, were distributed for Municipal parks, environmental sensitive areas and Liveable Landscapes. Projects supported include \$500,000 for improvements to the D&L Trail in North Catasauqua, streambank restoration in Lehigh Township and work on Tatamy Trail North and Creekside Park in Tatamy Borough.

"2020 was a challenging year, but the Parks and Recreation Department was able to move forward on a number of projects," says Director Bryan Cope. "We look forward to continuing to make improvements to county parks and trails in 2021."

Lamont McClure and Bryan Cope thank local volunteer organizations for their assistance in protecting watersheds and the Boy Scouts for Eagle projects installed in county parks.

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