

Parks and Recreation

The Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB), a semi-autonomous elected body of City government, oversaw a diverse system of land and water areas. The Minneapolis Park System consisted of more than 170 park properties including local and regional parks, playgrounds, totlots, triangles, waterparks, golf courses, gardens, picnic areas, nature sanctuaries, athletic fields and a 55-mile parkway system. Together, these properties totaled nearly 6,400 acres of land and water.

Within the park system there were 49 neighborhood recreation centers; 11 supervised beaches; three outdoor swimming pools; two waterparks, 37 outdoor ice rinks; 2 year-round hockey rinks, one indoor ice skating and hockey complex; six 18-hole golf courses; two Golf Learning Centers; 396 baseball and softball diamonds; and 167 tennis courts. There were also 38 miles of walking paths, 36 miles of biking/skating paths, a winter recreation complex at Wirth Park, an athletic field complex at Fort Snelling, four dog parks and Park Board Headquarters building.

In addition, many Minneapolis cultural and historic amenities were located on park land or administered by the Park Board, such as:

- Minneapolis Sculpture Garden
- Minneapolis Institute of Arts
- Historic Fort Snelling
- Stevens House
- Godfrey House
- Longfellow House
- Grand Rounds National Scenic Highway

Recreational, environmental and other park programs and services were provided for all ages and abilities, from toddlers to senior citizens. Various divisions of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board provided planning, development, maintenance, and police protection for the city's recreational facilities.

Planning Division

In 2003, the Park Planning Division managed \$14.6 million in construction activities and completed over \$11.5 million in capital projects. Work was completed by the two Planning Sections: Project Management and Community Planning.

Perhaps the most remarkable accomplishment of 2003 was the completion of the MPRB headquarters building. After 120 years of moving its administrative offices from one rented space to another, the MPRB now has a place to call its own. The renovation of the atrium and second floor of the new building was completed in July.

The newly renovated Loring Park shelter building with its added performance-event space, the most recent element of the Loring Park master plan to be undertaken and completed, reopened in the fall and a dedication ceremony was held on October 4, 2003.

Project Management Section

Capital and Master Planning Projects included:

- *Armatage Park* – athletic field improvements design work completed in 2003 with construction planned for spring 2004;
- *Cedar Avenue Field* – playground and site improvements completed and dedicated September 20, 2003;
- *Currie Park* – playground and site improvements completed, design work in process with construction Spring 2004;
- *Hall Park* – playground and site improvements, construction begun, to be completed Spring 2004;
- *Harrison Park* – completed playground and site improvements, design process completed, construction in Spring 2004;
- *Jackson Square Park* – playground and site improvements finished, design work continuing with construction in Spring 2004;
- *Loring Park* – renovation and expansion of shelter building completed and dedicated October 4, 2004;
- *Powderhorn Park* – aluminum treatments completed;
- *Reserve Block 40* – playground and site improvements design work in process, with construction anticipated in Spring 2004;
- *Riverside Park* – 50 new trees planted;
- *Webber Park* – design work in process on playground and site improvements for construction in Spring 2004;
- *Willard Park* – playground and site improvements and installation of new wading pool completed, with dedication on June 25, 2003.

Regional Parks Improvements for 2003 were:

- *Mill Ruins Park* - design work in process on tailrace circulation and interpretive;
- *Plank Road at Mill Ruins Park* – reconstructed original wood decking and dedicated December 11, 2003. The Plank Road now forms a portion of West River Parkway, with white oak surfacing that replicates the original wood decking that once covered the main waterpower canal powering the great mills of Minneapolis’
- *Upper River* – Phase 1 *Above the Falls* master plan task force convened and design work initiated.

Trails and Shoreline Restoration efforts included:

- *Cedar Lake, Lake Nokomis, West River Parkway* – paths replaced and widened;
- *East River Parkway Trail* – completed, creating a major connection for both commuters and recreational cyclists;
- *Lake of the Isles* – completed shoreline stabilization, wetland restoration, and pathway renovation along the east shore and the Kenilworth Lagoon; retaining wall replacement at Evergreen point; wetland creation and play field improvements at southwest end; West bay and north arm design work completed for construction in Spring 2004;
- *Wirth Trail* – completed, leading to another major connection for commuters and recreational cyclists;
- *Pathway Improvements* - seven miles of deteriorating bike and pedestrian pathways were replaced at Lake Nokomis, Lake Hiawatha, and Cedar Lake, as well as paths along the West River Parkway.

Community Planning Section

To better understand trends as well as needs, Community Planning staff worked to keep the lines of communication open between park users and planning staff. To facilitate community participation in the capital improvement planning process, community planners notified citizens of opportunities to share their ideas as well as keep them informed about a project's progress through blanket mailings, mailings to committee members, website postings, news releases to local newspapers, postings on community calendars. Planning staff facilitated 26 community meetings throughout the year to create designs for designated capital improvements. Community Planning staff also actively partnered with neighborhoods and the larger community to dedicate new park facilities.

In light of 2003 funding difficulties, the Park Board directed Community Planning staff to take the lead in getting community input on the programs and services that residents valued the most. The goal of the input was to give residents opportunities to influence program service priorities and help establish strategies to meet the greatest park and recreation need utilizing Park Board, neighborhood and other resources. The top five programs and services identified in Community Town Meetings were:

1. Programs/activities for youth;
2. Wading pools;
3. Portable toilets;
4. Park safety and security;
5. Maintain and protect the natural environment, tree maintenance/ new tree plantings.

The ten most important programs and services in the printed surveys were the following programs and services:

1. Youth Sports Programs = 99%;
2. Play Area Maintenance = 99%;
3. Restroom Facilities = 97%;
4. Garbage Removal = 97%;
5. Youth Supervision at Recreation Centers = 97%;
6. Park Police Investigation = 95%;
7. Athletic Field Maintenance = 95%;
8. Lifeguards at Beaches = 95%;
9. Water Quality Maintenance = 93%;
10. Police Protection = 92%.

Assessing the needs of the community was a fundamental step in developing a Comprehensive Plan for the Park Board that will guide the future development of the park system and fulfill the expectations of those it was intended to serve. The Needs Assessment attempted to identify the system's current customers as well as current and future recreation needs. To begin the Needs Assessment, Planning staff undertook a comprehensive information gathering process by reviewing existing data, creating a demographic profile, developing current usage statistics, and researching trends. To keep up with trends and respond to citizen demands, Community Planning explored the possibility of creating both skate parks and off-road bike trails in the park system. Planning staff visited existing skate parks in other communities, identified appropriate sites within Minneapolis' park system, and engaged the community in skate park discussions. Planning staff also directed the development of a demonstration project to test the system's ability to accommodate off road cycling. Staff drafted a memorandum of agreement that addressed a range of issues (including costs, maintenance, user conflicts, and overuse) involved in conducting and evaluating a demonstration project at Theodore Wirth Park. At the conclusion of the demonstration project, the board will determine if a network of designated off-road cycling trails can be incorporated into the system.

Recreation Division

The Recreation Division was responsible for all neighborhood and community centers, playgrounds, pools, beaches, cultural arts, environmental programs, youth sports leagues, adult athletic leagues, citywide adult activities, special events and specialized services for teenage youth. The Recreation Division provided quality recreational programs and services for the residents of Minneapolis. New initiatives were developed and implemented by staff to meet new recreational needs of the city's residents, plus enhance and add to the traditional line of programs and services.

Neighborhood/Community Recreation Centers Section

Recreation Centers were the hub of activity in Minneapolis neighborhoods, providing places and spaces for individuals to meet and develop new friendships, create lasting memories, learn new skills, keep healthy and stay fit. Each of the 49 centers, open year-round, offered a variety of programs such as structured tiny-tots, theater performances, environmental classes and sports competitions, plus less structured drop-in activities, social groups and pick-up games in gymnasiums. Communities gathered during special events, generating a sense of pride and an avenue for neighbors to celebrate together. In addition, meeting rooms provided much needed space for groups and neighborhood organizations to meet.

Musical performances continued at the 5th Annual Freedom Jazz Festival at Minnehaha Park; concerts at Elliot Park, Lake Harriet, Nicollet Island and Minnehaha Park; and the Minnesota Orchestra at McRae Park. Traditional neighborhood-based festivals like penny carnivals, corn feeds and seasonal celebrations brought neighbors together throughout the year. Halloween parties held at all 49 centers drew 14,709 children. Over 60 neighborhood festivals and celebrations took place in neighborhood parks in 2003.

The Summer Playground Program offered recreation services and programs for nine weeks at 21 smaller neighborhood parks that did not have year-round facilities. The attendance at the summer playground sites averaged more than 40 children per day, per site. The Mobile Playground Program served four park sites on a rotating basis. This 'recreation center on wheels' was stocked with craft supplies, games, toys, in-line skates and sports equipment. The Mobile Playground Program changed hours from morning and afternoon to afternoon and evening in 2003 to better serve the neighborhoods. More than 30 children on average each day per site enjoyed the organized activities.

The New Year's Eve Celebration, attended by more than 4,000 people, capped the year with music, skating, hayrides, crafts, entertainment and fireworks at the Nicollet Island Pavilion.

Safety Camp's 12th year had its largest registration in fourth years with 145 children who were entering the third and fourth grade in the fall of 2003. The third Annual Volunteer Appreciation day was held in conjunction with the Freedom Jazz Festival at Minnehaha Falls on August 9, 2003. Over 2,500 volunteers and their families were invited to attend. Each year, the Recreation Division holds an annual Volunteer Recognition Banquet, for those who have demonstrated extraordinary commitment and support to the programs and services of the MPRB. In 2003 the event took place at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, which facilitated a large, elegant space for dinner, plus a comfortable auditorium setting for the awards presentation and program.

Progress continued in the Recreation Division's outdoor-lighted sign program. Folwell Park received a new sign and orders were placed for Webber and Luxton park signs for a Spring 2004 installation. 250 people attended the annual Lake Hiawatha Festival on August 6th, 2003. Wilderness Inquiry conducted canoeing lessons, while staff and volunteers supervised rock climbing and outdoor games.

Grant funding enabled the implementation of three new computer labs, complete with computer terminals, printers, scanners, digital cameras, software, internet access and trained staff at Fuller, McRae and Longfellow Parks. Construction of a computer lab at Harrison Park began in December 2003, bringing the total number of computer labs to 11 -Whittier, Longfellow, Logan, Farview, North Commons, Powderhorn, Loring, Corcoran, Folwell, Fuller, and McRae.

In October, 2003, the first Peace Games, a partnership of 12 agencies, promoted cultural learning and harmony among culturally diverse youth with cultural games, sports, arts and crafts, music, dance and food. The second annual Latino Resource Fair, a partnership of Powderhorn Park and La Oportunidad, attracted 1,000 people to the park for information, music, food and resources about the Latino population. Whittier Park organized a Tibetan Dance program and 250 people enjoyed the music, dance and food. Many other recreation centers hosted cultural activities and partnered with community agencies to celebrate the diverse customs and cultures in the city. Neighborhood grants and the Osiris Organization funded air conditioning at Longfellow Park in 2003, bringing the total number of centers with air conditioning to 11.

Partnerships and Collaborations Section

Juneteenth, an annual celebration of freedom for African Americans, took place at Theodore Wirth Park on June 14, 2003. This partnership with the Juneteenth Committee organized a parade, music, crafts, food, entertainment, resource information, and more for 50,000 people. New last year was the KMOJ Radio Family Village, which focused on family games, competitions and other fun opportunities that support and strengthen families.

Art in the Park, a decade long programming collaboration with the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) and the MPRB, brought quality arts programming to the neighborhood parks as well as encouraging neighborhood residents to visit and use the resources at the Institute. Art in the Park was comprised of four components:

1. Summer Art in the Park Workshops - held in 47 Recreation Centers during Summer 2003, provided children in grades K-6 the opportunity to learn about the Minneapolis Institute of Arts' diverse collection through hands on instruction from professional artists;
2. Staff training and Art Bins – MIA staff conducted a series of training sessions for MPRB staff, providing project ideas and an orientation to how best use the Museum as a resource. Art Bins, filled with lesson plans, step-by-step instructions and materials were available for MPRB staff to check-out from MIA for use in Recreation Centers;
3. Tickets for Special Exhibits – 300 tickets to special MIA exhibitions were reserved for distribution by MPRB staff through the Recreation Centers. Park staff also planned special field trips to the museum;
4. Cross Marketing - MIA and MPRB worked closely to market Art in the Park programs and MIA Family Days in publications produced by each agency.

In 2003, 1,500 of Minnesota's hardiest enjoyed the Winter Ice Festival, with ice fishing demonstrations, horse and wagon rides, fire pit with marshmallow roasting, and a children's medallion hunt. The event was a partnership with Lyndale Farmstead Park, East Harriet Farmstead Neighborhood Association, Minnesota Kite Society, Department of Natural Resources, Southwest Athletic Council, Linden Hills Park, Fuller Park Council, Fuller Park, M.L. King Park and Corcoran Park. The Heart of the Beast Puppet Theater sponsored the annual May Day celebration held in Powderhorn Park, with the eagerly anticipated annual May Day parade attracting 60,000 people. July 4th fireworks drew attendance of 20,000 people.

The 2003 session of "The First Tee " program saw participation by 950 youth. The Minneapolis Aquatennial Association continued its partnership with the Park Board by co-sponsoring the Festival of Neighborhoods at 16 sites in 2003, which included food and entertainment for over 7,000 people.

The City Children's Nutcracker – a collaboration of the Park Board and Ballet Arts Minnesota - celebrated its 12th anniversary in 2003. This performing arts experience attended by 100 inner-city children began in the summer with weekly classes taught with professional dance instruction, and culminated with a holiday production of The Nutcracker, presented at the Historic State Theater in downtown Minneapolis.

The Parks Museum Partnership between the MPRB and Science Museum of Minnesota provided free and reduced price admission for groups to programs and exhibits of the Museum. Over 980 youth from Minneapolis Parks were able to explore and discover exciting, hand-on exhibits in the new Science Museum. Buck Hill Super Saturdays - a downhill ski, snowboarding and snow tubing facility - partnered with the Recreation Division, providing low cost downhill ski lessons for 70 children from MPRB parks.

Community Services Section

The Community Services Section provided citywide programs in adult and youth sports, aquatic activities, instructional programs and special events. The section provides a balanced, progressive delivery of all athletics programs and helps provide programming that function better citywide.

The Newly built Leonard H. Neiman Sports Complex opened for public use in April of 2003 with baseball and softball games with 1,200 attending the Grand Opening in May, 2003. The Neiman Complex drew 102,920 people from mid April-October. The Jim Lupient Foundation dedicated a \$1 million endowment to the newly renamed Jim Lupient water park (formerly Northeast Water Park) to be used for special programming and capital outlay. In the first year, endowment funds were used to teach 12 low income children and adults how to swim, and to reward 426 youth for doing something special in their community and qualifying for the new "Aqua Star" program.

Youthline Outreach Mentorship Section

The Youthline Outreach Mentorship Program provided leadership experiences, skill building, recreation and mentoring relationships for nearly 8,000 youth at 16 parks (two sites were temporarily eliminated due to budget cuts) during the school year, and at an additional 20 parks during the summer. Youthline's Boy's Program, including a leadership day at Camp Ihduhapi, where 80 boys' participated in trust, critical thinking, problem solving, communication skill-building, and teamwork activities.

The partnership with Junior Achievement began its third year involving youth in learning about entrepreneurship. Sixteen parks (100 youth) completed the curriculum and went to Junior Achievement's main office where the youth managed the mock city assuming the roles of business owners, park superintendent, mayor, banker, judges, and police. The 13th Girls' Annual Overnight Leadership Development training took place at a local college with 130 girls participating. Outdoor Environmental Adventures (funded by The McKnight Foundation) started in January with winter activities including: a trip to Gooseberry Falls for a winter nature hike with snowshoes; ice fishing on one of the metro area lakes, and winter survival training at Warner Nature Center in Marine on St. Croix. In February the youth went to Underwater World at the Mall of America to participate in the *Marine Life and the Environment* program, learning how changes to the sea and its creatures affect the world. The summer program offered fishing, bicycling, swimming, natural history courses at Baker Park Reserve's Wilderness Settlement, kayaking, canoeing, and the annual trip to hear the wolves howl at the Wildlife Science Center in Forest Lake. More than 400 Youthline participants learned about the outdoors and the environment in these activities.

Approximately 700 youth and families enjoyed the 12th annual Black History event hosted by the Youthline Program in District 1 at Central Gym Park. The McKnight Foundation selected the Youthline Program for a formal program evaluation, with the November evaluation report indicting

that youth participated in Youthline more than 28 hours each week. Youthline began the Multicultural Tennis program at the Fort Snelling Tennis facility, offering tennis instruction year-round to 270 Youthline participants

The Girls' Program involved 12-16 year old girls in programs and activities that focused on self-esteem building, leadership and life skills development. Girls' groups in 18 parks met weekly to identify and discuss issues of concern to them, and planned and implemented activities that provided positive experiences. That Summer Program provided extended recreation program hours during the summer evenings for youth ages 12-18 for eight weeks. Activities were offered Monday through Friday from 7:00 to 10:30 p.m. at 25 parks one to three nights a week, with average participation from 12-139 youth per site per night.

Recreation Plus+ provided quality school-age care services for neighborhood families in 17 parks during the school year and 20 parks during the summer. Funding from a State of Minnesota Professional Development grant enabled Recreation Plus+ staff to attend the Minnesota School-Age Care Alliance annual conference and to receive other relevant training during the year. Another State grant provided funding to train neighborhood naturalists who worked with children at four Recreation Plus+ parks to create children's gardens. The Lupient Water Park and North Mississippi Regional Park were used as the annual site for the end of summer Recreation Plus+ picnic that attracted 500 children and staff.

Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board Park Police

In 2003, the MPRB entered into an agreement with the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) to provide School Resource (School Liaison) Officers (SRO). The SRO's covered the seven high schools, eight middle schools and two challenging K-8 schools. In order to supply these officers, one sergeant and two Park Police officers were reassigned as well as the hiring of an additional 14 officers (all who came from Minneapolis Police Department). The use of motorcycles in patrolling parks continued in 2003. A program offered by Harley Davidson motorcycles allowed police departments to lease motorcycles for \$1 per year per motorcycle. The department paid for installation of emergency equipment, graphics and routine maintenance.

The 12th Annual Safety Camp for third and fourth graders, a joint effort of the Park Police, the MPRB Recreation division, and the Minneapolis Fire and Police Departments, provided an exciting three days of hands-on safety training for over 100 Minneapolis children. The Park Police continued the bicycle rodeos started in 2003 with over 600 children attending and graduating from the Bike Safety Clinics.

In 2003 the Park Police Investigations Unit assigned out and completed 332 cases for further investigation, compared with 347 cases in 2002. Although there was a slight decrease in the number of cases assigned, the quality of the investigations improved with a 59% increase in cases closed by arrest and charging of suspects. In 2003, 189 cases were closed compared to 78 in 2002. With the addition of School Liaison Officers, a 38% increase in the number of cases entered into the CAPRS system increased from 2,926 in 2002 to 3,844 in 2003.

Administration Division

Information and Technology Services Section

The Information and Technology Services (ITS) section devoted considerable effort to planning and implementation efforts related to the relocation of the MPRB's headquarters to 2117 West River Road. Relocation efforts proceeded in several phases over several months beginning early in 2003. The relocation project included the specification and design of the cabling infrastructure at the new 2117 West River Road facility.

ITS staff developed specifications for a phone system for the new headquarters location that would provide seamless connectivity via a point-to-point T1 to the existing Southside Operations Center, allowing intercom dialing between these sites, centralized operator capabilities, as well as system redundancy. ITS Staff worked with other divisions on technology enhancements in 2003, including a new tree planting and inventory software for the Forestry Division, a bar coding inventory system upgrade for Stores, parking passes and other web enhancements for Special Services, and upgrades in architectural/engineering software for Planning.

Email addresses were added to the Park Board's website www.minneapolisparcs.org early in 2003 under the direction of the Superintendent. Over 100 email aliases are now available to the public online, including one for each department, all recreation centers, golf courses, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents and Commissioners if requested. Other new initiatives on the website included online e-commerce, utilizing a third-party software, the Park Board was able to sell parking passes and posters to support the maintenance of the MPRB fountains. In the future permits will also be available for online purchase.

Ongoing and routine program services of the ITS Section included:

- The upgrading of servers and other network equipment to meet the demands for data storage;
- Success in monitoring new and more lethal viruses through virus detection software;
- Internet Filtering and monitoring software was effectively used to minimize the risk of employees straying into inappropriate sites; and
- The Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board website continued to be an overwhelming success, sustaining nearly 2 million page views in 2003, a 25% increase over the previous year.

Human Resources Section

Human Resources assisted all divisions to meet their service delivery goals by helping to hire, train and develop highly skilled employees for the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board. The MPRB workforce was made up of more than 600 full time staff, along with over 1,000 part time or seasonal employees. The goal was to have a staff that reflects the diversity of the people who visit Minneapolis Parks. This section coordinated and monitored hires, promotions, transfers, leaves of absence and other employee transactions and ensured that injured employees received prompt and quality medical care and services through the administration of the Workers' Compensation program. Staff of this section also assisted with administration of the collective bargaining agreements, including negotiation and grievance handling. Negotiated and finalized 4 new CBA's in 2003: Park Police, Teamsters Local #320, I.U.O.E. Local #49, and AFSCME Local #9, coordinated and implemented Employee Training and finalized and implemented a comprehensive plan for Employee Safety Training. All required safety training for 2003 MPRB employees was completed. In addition, a new MPRB Safety Manual was completed and will be distributed in 2004, along with training for managers.

The 2003 Safety Expo, sponsored by the Safety Committee, was attended by more than 200 employees, which included work and personal safety demos, blood pressure screenings, health and wellness information. Employees here also managed a Retirement Incentive for employees eligible for retirement, with nearly 50 employees taking advantage of the incentive, representing more than double the number predicted.

Operations Division

Park Maintenance Section

The Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board Maintenance Division continued to provide park patrons with beautiful and accessible parks year-round. The Maintenance staff helped assure park buildings are clean and useable for programming, projects and community events. In addition, Maintenance staff assured that ball fields were playable, turf was mowed and cleaned of trash, and provided support to numerous special events throughout the year.

As part of the annual parkway-paving program run by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Maintenance Operations and Minneapolis Public Works, three sections of Minnehaha Parkway were renovated in 2003. Renovations consisted of milling out old pavement and replacing it with five inches of new pavement plus minimal curb and gutter work. Renovations were completed on the following areas:

- South side of Minnehaha Parkway, eastbound from Humboldt Avenue South to Lyndale Ave South;
- North side of Minnehaha Parkway, westbound from Lyndale Avenue South to 50th Street West;
- North side of Minnehaha Parkway, from 2nd Avenue South to Park Avenue.

Two segments of parkway roads were seal coated as part of the pavement management program between the City and the MPRB. The Park Board worked with the City to choose a special red rock that gave the parkways a pink appearance for ease of way finding and identification. For the second year in a row, an Ortonville granite rock was used on the parkways to seal coat the following areas:

- Minnehaha Parkway eastbound between Lyndale Avenue and Stevens Avenue; and
- East River Road between Franklin Avenue and Arlington Street Southeast.

Cracked and heaved sections of the perimeter sidewalk around Mueller Park were replaced and the MPRB Cement Shop repaired hazardous steps at Minnehaha Falls. Roof repair at the Southside Operations Center (3800 Bryant Avenue South) was completed with a total of 377 patches installed on the roof. Just prior to the start of the 2003/2004 winter skating season, the MPRB discovered that it could no longer purchase replacement light bulbs for the existing light fixtures that were used to illuminate the outdoor hockey rink at Lake of the Isles. The existing fixtures were 40 to 50 years old, and replacement light bulbs for these fixtures were no longer being manufactured. New, state-of-the-art light fixtures were purchased and installed that substantially reduced spill and glare light from the hockey rink

In an effort to reduce expenditures, in light of the MPRB budgetary restrictions, the Maintenance Division reduced the number of fishing piers from 11 to seven. Changes included the elimination of annual construction of hand-built piers at Cedar Lake, Lake Calhoun, Lake Harriet, Lake Nokomis and Lake Hiawatha. New floatable fishing piers were purchased for Cedar Lake, previously an annually constructed pier. Additional piers were purchased for Ryan Lake, a little known lake located near the border of the City of Minneapolis and the City of Robbinsdale.

One of the more surprising challenges for the Maintenance Division during the 2003 calendar year was the decision by the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board of Commissioners to eliminate the portable restroom program due to budgetary constraints. This decision to eliminate all tax-supported portable restrooms throughout the MPRB system resulted in over 50 portable restroom units being removed. During the 2002-2003 skating season, the Maintenance Section maintained and operated 33 ice rinks including 27 general rinks, 22 hockey rinks, and 6 broomball rinks. The combined attendance for the ice rinks over the 10 week period was 127,373.

Due to budget cuts, mowing reductions were implemented in the spring of 2003 for areas that were not actively used and trimming of trees was reduced. Due to the tight budget situation the Board

faced, many of the fountains that the MPRB operated and maintained were slated for shut off for the 2003 season. Thanks to the efforts of numerous concerned Minneapolis citizens and their private fundraising efforts, all of the fountains eventually were operated. The only exception to this was the Gateway Fountain, which remained inoperable due to a major leak. The MPRB received a donation of \$25,000 in late 2003 from the Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association to repair the Gateway Fountain, with repairs to be completed and the fountain operational in 2004.

On January 18-19, 2003 the National Speed skating Marathon was held at Lake of the Isles Skating rink. Forty to 50 internationally ranked skaters competed on the 1,000-meter track that was created for the race. The 1st annual City of Lakes Loppett Ski race was held in Winter 2003. The race was to begin at Theodore Wirth Park and end on Lake Calhoun, winding through Wirth Park and the Chain of Lakes. Warm weather and lack of snow made the use of the full course impossible, so a shortened version in the Chain of Lakes was held on February 1, 2003.