

SPOTLIGHT: PARK OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE DIVISION



We love our parks! The Fairfax County Park Authority oversees the operation and management of more than 23,000 acres of parkland, 420 parks, hundreds of pieces of equipment, 9 Rec Centers, 8 golf courses, an ice skating rink, 2 skate parks, 11 dog parks, 229 playgrounds, 720 public garden plots, 3 equestrian facilities, 452 Fairfax County Public Schools athletic fields and 263 Park Authority athletic fields, 102 of which are synthetic turf, 44 synthetic turf athletic fields, 260 athletic fields, 68 picnic shelters, 15 volleyball courts, 252 tennis and racquetball courts, 127 basketball courts, 2 waterparks, a horticultural center, and more than 338 miles of hiking and fitness trails, historic sites, nature centers, and much more. Add to this the parking lots, restrooms, signage, fencing, trash receptacles and other infrastructure and there's a lot to maintain and take care of!

The Park Operations and Maintenance Division manages maintenance of parks and facilities through a combination of staff and contractors. As the Park Authority takes on more park acreage, facilities and assets to keep pace with the growth in the County's population, the needs for maintenance keep growing. In addition, along with the long history of the Park Authority comes a legacy of facilities that require more frequent maintenance and repair. This expansion in the scope of maintenance challenges staff to stretch available resources in the face of growing maintenance needs.



Any staff member of the Park Operations and Maintenance Division can safely say that no two days are ever alike working in parks! Their duties greatly vary, from taking care of trails, inspecting parks, to taking down high-risk trees, maintaining athletic fields, amusement and building maintenance, removing snow along walkways and parking lots, supporting events, working with park cleanup volunteers, to performing repairs to playground equipment, to removing graffiti in the parks. In addition, Park Operations and Maintenance staff manages a wide range of projects, including trail projects, athletic court and field renovations, restroom and shelter improvements, bench installations, and Rec Center upgrades.

Community support plays a big role in the work of the Park Operations and Maintenance Division. Last year, hundreds of volunteers contributed more than 2,700 hours of service, many of them participating in one or more of the 61 park cleanups hosted by the Park Operations and Maintenance Division. Through the Adopt-a-Field program, many athletic group partners dedicate significant time and money to supplement the maintenance of athletic fields for the entire community. Similarly, under the Mastenbrook Grant Program, which the Park Authority Board began in 2000, community groups have contributed generously to match grants awarded by the Park Authority for improvements in parks and facilities throughout the County. In fiscal year 2023, Park Operations oversaw the grant approval process for 10 different park improvements with a total value of over \$1.3 million.

When a premier athletic tournament facility was added to Patriot Park North, Park Operations and Maintenance staff collaborated with other divisions, user groups and stakeholders to ensure the success of this \$22 million project, the first of its kind in Fairfax County. They provided crucial input on the design, yielding long-term cost savings for maintenance and replacement of key components. In addition, they developed maintenance standards geared toward high-frequency tournament play. With an emphasis on Sports Tourism in Fairfax County, Park Operations and Maintenance staff has provided outstanding event and maintenance support critical to the success of baseball and softball tournaments.



Often, staff must reprioritize when an issue arises, such as needing to repair a broken fence from storm damage. The Park Operations staff members also assist customers with questions or problems as they work in the parks. They truly are the gears that keep the Park Authority running, 365 days a year around the clock.