HISTORY
of
the

BENTON COUNTY PARK & RECREATION BOARD

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CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF THE BENTON COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

The new board had the advantage of being able to build on a foundation wrought of the trial-and-error blocks of four years' experience. A great deal of credit is due retiring chairman Bruce Lampson for having done the principal spade work in that foundation. It was he who first instigated the move to get a county park and recreation board established. And for four years he devoted a great deal of his time to personally looking after the park and exploring the problems of development.

Two other pioneers of that four-year period merit special recognition, Mr. and Mrs. Clement Cejka. Had it not been for the foresight and energy of those ardent youth workers, we should not have had the present group camp area. The buildings that now furnish shelter for the camp were scheduled to be sold and moved away when the Cejka's interceded and prevailed upon the Army Engineers to leave them for the use to which they are now devoted. A favorable response from the Corps made it necessary for some group to assume responsibility for the property, for paying the electric bills, and for converting the buildings into suitable quarters for day-camp use. That responsibility was assumed by the Kennewick Campfire Council. Following up the agreement with them, Mr. and Mrs. Cejka proceeded to solicit a vast amount of voluntary labor and donated materials, with the result that the old buildings were converted into a usable youth camp.

Another value of the experience of the pioneering years was that it convinced everyone close to the situation that the county must have a master plan and a full time park superintendent trained for the work. This, then, became the first business of the newly organized board. Mr. Vibber and other members met with the County Commissbners and secured from them authorization to employ Mr. Charles DeTurk for drawing the Master Plan and to employ a trained Park and Recreation

Superintendent . Letters were sent to several available men whose names had been given us by the National Recreation Association.

The choice was made in August, the final selection for the newly-created position being Mr. John A. Clark, a graduate of Indiana University. John arrived with Mrs. Clark (Pat), ready to take up his new duties on September first. Upon getting settled in the surerintendent's residence in Columbia Park, he tackled the big job of battling mosquitoes and weeds, cleaning up debris, and otherwise bringing order out of chaos. Attention was given first to the problem of filling old wells and cellars and clearing away old weir boxes, broken concrete, wire fencing, and other debris. Much of this work was done by the county road district.

As the hunting season approached a special effort was made to stop any hunting in the park. On October 7th the Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution officially closing the area to hunting, whereupon the park superintendent posted it well with no-hunting signs. The County Sheriff's office stepped up its patrol and gave full cooperation to enforcement of the resolution, with very satisfactory results.

One important item of business at this time was to take out membership for the Board in the National Recreation Association.

The eagerly awaited master plan for the park was given its first preview at a special board meeting on October 15th. Those present on this important occasion were, in addition to all board members, Superintendent John Clark, Bernard Christensen of the Corps of Army Engineers, Messrs. Charles DeTurk and William Pond of the State Parks and Recreation office, and Mr. Wineger, Kennewick City Engineer.

Following Mr. DeTurk's detailed analysis of the proposed master plan, Mr. Wineger asked for authority to relocate the city's new filter bed in the park--then in an early stage of construction--by moving it a short distance to the west. There were strenuous objections

to this by a majority of the board members, on the ground that it would place the bed in front of the park superintendent's residence and cut off his view of the park road, thus interfering with effective park patrol. After considerable discussion the request was refused.

At the following meeting--the regular October meeting on the 19th--the first agreements were approved allocating picnic areas to civic groups to be developed for public use. The Kennewick Highlands Grange and the Kennewick Lions Club, in the order named, were the organizations first to accept this responsibility as a civic service.

Also at this meeting bids were opened on a tractor for the park. The one by the John Deere bidder was accepted, subject to approval by the county commissioners. Another item of business was the initiating of an active and continuing investigation of possibilities for entrance and exit roads at the Kennewick end of the park.

On December 1, 1954, a special meeting was called at the park superintendent's residence for final review and acceptance of the park master plan. Those present at the meeting, in addition to the park board, were Mr. Charles DeTurk, Mr. Kramer of the Kennewick Park and Recreation Department, and Messrs. Christenson and Sias of the U. S. Corps of Army Engineers. In addition to a complete set of maps, large and small, indicating planned park development, Mr. DeTurk provided a 14-page written report explaining the indicated development and offering recommendations and guidance in carrying out the plan.

After being approved by the board, the master plan was the following day presented, approved and accepted by the Board of County Commissioner's, Mr. J. T. (Tom) Bettinson, (Chairman), Mr. Frank Lampson, and Mr. Walt Jacobs. Early in February it was officially approved by the Corps of Engineers, following a presention arranged by Mr. B. C. Christiansen in Colonel Miller's office at their headquarters in Walla Walla.

The policy committee, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Sutch, had been at work during the autumn and winter developing various sets of policies to govern park use and development. At successive meetings the following were adopted: general park policy, general rules and regulations for Columbia Park, Columbia Park Policy for picnic area development, Columbia Park policy for concessions, Group Camp Area organizational chart, Columbia Park policy for nature area, mobile wagon concession policy, and Mid-Columbia fine Arts Association policy. Also bid forms and lease forms were prepared for the use of persons seeking commercial concessions in the park. Park Board members agreed that in respect to bids the usual method should be through advertising, but that in some cases negotiation might be preferable and that method should not be ruled out.

The total budget on which the board began operating in January, 1956, was $10,100.00. This was sufficient to pay the superintendent's salary and such maintenance work as he could do, but for most of the development work we were dependent on voluntary labor. During that winter and spring the following civic organizations signed agreements to develop picnic areas: Kennewick Moose Lodge, Kennewick Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Central Labor Council of Pasco and Kennewick, the Tri-City Courts of the Independent Order of Foresters, the Richland Moose Lodge, and the Seattle University Alumni. Some burning of weeds was done before Christmas, followed by much more with the opening of spring. Approximately 450 man-hours of labor were contributed to this and to the clean-up of debris, resulting in a vast improvement to the appearance of the park.

The superintendent devoted most of his time also to this kind of labor. By spring the park equipment consisted of a pick-up, a tractor with disc and blade attachments, a spring-tooth harrow, a hay mower, a hay rake, a wheel barrow, hand shovels, rakes, a sledge hammer, a

pick, and smaller tools. From the South-Sea-Islands coat of tan that John acquired before the summer was far advanced, together with the improved appearance of Columbia Park, it was evident that he was making considerable use of this equipment.

This was only part of his work, however. More and more organizations called on him to give them information about Columbia Park. He appeared before some 35 groups, with an estimated audience of 1200, to talk and show the master plan. Such presentations were greatly facilitated by the excellent exhibit board and supports which he and John Vibber designed and built. When taken down it fitted compactly into the Vibber panel truck, and it could be set up in short order in front of any audience to hold the maps and allow them to be turned back one by one as the speaker finished explaining them. Chairman Vibber devoted much time to this activity himself, and it seems likely that the Vibber drug stores must have felt the pinch of neglect from the generous amout of time which he gave to park affairs. One product of this activity was the design adopted for picnic tables. Experimenting with a standard design, Supt. John and Chairman John together developed one of the best park picnic tables to be found amywhere. After they had tested the design on a small model it was made into a blueprint for distribution to organizations donating tables. Some of these made tables for their respective picnic areas. Others donated materials and or labor, and by the end of the season Columbia Park proudly boasted 39 of them. The list of doners included the Altrusa Club, Rio Vista Club, Highlands Improvement Club, Kennewick Business and Professional Women, Tri-City Heights, Inc., Kennewick Realty Board, Highlands Grange, Odd Fellows Lodge, and Playland Concessionaire.

Early in April the park board members were shocked and saddened by the sudden death of Preston Royer from a heart attack. Mr. Royer never missed a meeting while on the park board although he had to travel from

Prosser to Kennewick and return to Prosser after the meeting was finished. Mr. Royer had rendered valiant service to the county park and recreation board in its pioneering stages, and his passing left a real void. At the request of the county park and recreation board, the service clubs in Prosser recommended Mr. Richard Gay of the Prosser Record Bulletin to fill Mr. Royer's unexpired term, and was subsequently recommended by the county park and recreation board and appointed by the Board of County Commissioners.

One of the more important steps taken during the spring was the signing on March 24th of an agreement with the Kennewick Kiwanis Foundation Incorporated covering the development of the youth day camp area in Columbia Park. This was the project initiated by Mr. and Mrs. Clement Cejka and first sponsored by the Campfire Girls. Assuming that responsibility now, the Foundation agreed to provide a development plan and to form a Managerial Council to operate the camp and program its use by all groups. They agreed to pay all charges for utilities and keep the existing building in repair. Clement Cejka signed the agreement as president of the Foundation and James N. French as secretary. Under this agreement a managerial council was formed, composed of representatives of Boy Scouts, Campfire Girls, Girls Scouts, the Kennewick City Recreation Department, the Catholic Youth Organization, and the Church of Latter Day Saints.

Another outstanding project was the agreement with Mid-Columbia Fine Arts Association under which that group was given jurisdiction over the old auto shop just east of the city's filter bed. They agreed to repair the building and to be responsible for it in return for its use as a clubhouse and workshop for exhibits and art activities of all kinds.

That type of park development promising to bring in financial returns--the concessions--was initiated with bid openings on April 14th

on proposals to operate a marine, a playland, a riding academy and pony ring. This was followed by the awarding of a concession agreement at a special meeting on April 23, by which action all three of these concessions went as a combined operation to Leo Kendrick and Paul R. Hart as the Columbia Park Amusements, Inc., represented by Mr. Paul R. Hart. The agreement became effective on May 10 for a term of ten years. Then, because the long period of high water in the Columbia caused considerable delay in the work of preparing this area for public use, the board in August moved the effective date of this agreement ahead to January 1, 1956, to extend to 1966.

Development of this concession at the extreme east end of the park called for two other pending projects, first of which was extension of the power line from the west. Efforts had been made at one time to bring in a connection from the east and avoid a pole line through th entire length of the park. But, since a permit to cross the highway was not to be had, there was no alternative. The second was the construction of a road entrance at the east end by the county road district. Capital outlay funds in the park budget were used as far as they went, with the balance being furnished by the commissioner Walt Jacob's, Road District.

At the July meeting, Board members Mrs. Howard and Mrs. Gross, whose terms expired at this time, were appointed to succeed themselves. Election of officers for the ensuing year was held, resulting in the re-election of all incumbents.

The park board was the recipient of a large stock of donated material at this time. The City of Kennewick was wrecking the buildings in one of its war-time housing projects, and 5 buildings consisting of 40 apartments were donated to the board. The only "string" attached was that they be removed and no debris be left in their place.

A second concession agreement was drawn up and approved on September

18th awarding to R. V. Dorsett of Seattle the golf driving range and the pitch and putt course near the east end of the park. Clean-up work on these was in progress throughout the autumn. The third concession was approved in October authorizing Richard Ter Hark and Loael H. Smith to build and operate a snack bar and marine service at the extreme western portion of Columbia Park adjacent to Island View. Their plans covered two buildings. One, of pumice block construction, is to operate as a public eating place. Beside it a structure of the quanset type with front wall of Roman brick is designed to sell sporting goods and marine supplies and to provide boat repair services. In spite of early winter cold these people made good progress with building operations. They hoped to have the business ready to open by spring.

On the afternoon of Sunday, November 20th, the Mid-Columbia Arts Association held an open house at their clubhouse in the park, which proved a delightful affair. Tea was served in connection with a program of songs, readings, and dance. The Association had previously sponsored a contest in landscape painting with the stipulation that landscapes be those seen in and from Columbia Park. The building on this occasion was filled with the work done under this stimulus, work of which the community could well be proud. Mrs. Alvin Cheney of Kennewick won first prize with a large oil painting.

Not least in importance among autumn events was the arrival of a little daughter in the Columbia Park home of Superintendent John and his wife Pat. As the year came to an end she was being given her first lessons in operating the park tractor--according to her daddy's report.

A review of 1955 discloses a record of impressive and encouraging cooperation. There was first of all the cooperation of public-spirited citizens of the area. Then there was the cooperation of the Board of County Commissioners of Benton County, not only in clean-up and road work, but in their general support of the Board. In this they have been

outstanding amoung county commissioners of Washington. There was to be noted a fine record of cooperation on the part of the Health Department in helping to locate wells and advising on a sanitary program, and on the part of the Sheriff's office in policing the park. Lastly, the Park Board would have been greatly handicapped without the advice and cooperation so generously given by the Corps of Army Engineers through Mr. B. C. Christiansen, in connection with concession and the tough problem of getting an eastern exit from Columbia Park.

BENTON COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

1956 Progress Report

The big gas pipeline was being laid across the bed of the river and up across Columbia Park as 1956 got under way. Fish Northwest Company, the contractors, gave the Park Board $150 when the job was finished to use in landscaping around their standpipe. Under construction also at the beginning of the year were the golf driving range near the east end of the park and the marina and snack bar at the west end, both of which were finished and operated during the summer season.

The Pre-Mix Concrete people, as in the previous year, continued to donate their excess cement, pouring it into molds for fireplaces. Salvage operations on the buildings donated by the Kennewick Housing Authority were completed in early spring and the lumber, windows, doors, and fixtures were stored in the big garage and insured. Many items for which the park would have no use had been exchanged for needed materials, mostly plumbing and electrical. By the trading process and with purchases of budgeted items, the park superintendent approached the work season with this added equipment: bench grinder, sanding machine, front-end loader, fire pump, router, skilsaw, bench drill press, and other smaller tools.

The Richland Kiwanis and Richland Lions in March were granted plots to develop. The Washington Extension Service donated 40 trees; and 100 red maples came from Mr. and Mrs. Harley Peters. All were planted by Boy Scouts of Troop No. 33. Beta Sigma Phi donated $150 for park development, and the Kennewick Ceres Garden Club gave $15 for trees. Clubs donating for picnic tables included Firefighters Local No. 1052, Kennewick Realty Board, Cloverettes, Marcus Whitman P. T. A., Richland Altrusa, Tri-City Kappa Kappa Gamma Alumnae, Kennewick Royal Neighbors, Richland Green Thumb Garden Club, the Kennewick Locust Grove Home Circle, and the Kennewick Junior Chamber. Jaycee members contributed many man-hours of labor and built picnic tables from salvaged lumber and materials bought with donated funds. Since the budget for 1956 was only $10,000, these donated funds and labor made a great difference in the development program.

The Corps of Army Engineers during the spring did considerable work in grading and draining for mosquito control. They made available for use one of their fogging machines which operated throughout the shoreline area of Wallula Lake all summer. The Park Department's machine was used for small concentrated areas to supplement work of the larger fogger. Although remarkable progress was made in mosquito control, in spite of flood conditions, it became a matter of prime concern during the summer because of the outbreak of equine encephalitis transmitted by certain mosquitoes.

May 14-20 was declared Columbia Park Week by the Chamber of Commerce of Kennewick and a stepped-up work drive was spear-headed by Jim Walker and Bob Twedt as committee chairmen. Purpose was to publicize the park and to get voluntary work crews into action. It culminated in a "cowboy breakfast" served free, followed by a work bee.

Then came the big flood--worst since 1948. Men from the Richland Kiwanis and Kennewick Jaycees turned out to help, and tables from the picnic areas and lumber from the [illegible] garage were moved to high ground near the superintendent's residence. The Superintendent was bottled up, too, as water inundated much of the main park road; but he was granted a temporary access directly to the main 410 Highway. The flood halted park work for a month and did much to discourage voluntary activities. It was fortunate therefore that money had been budgeted for a summer assistant to the superintendent.

The annual election in June reorganized the board as follows: Mrs. Marjorie Sutch of Richland, Chairman; John Vibber of Kennewick, Vice Chairman, Mrs. Margaret Thompson of Kennewick, Secretary. With the resignation of Mrs. Margaret Howard of Richland and Richard Gay of Prosser, the County Commissioners appointed two new members, Dean Hartman and C. W. Botsford, both of Richland, following Board recommendations.

Columbia Park Amusements, Inc., did not get a program established, but they subleased their riding academy concession to Merlin G. Schroeder and Marvin Paul

Ross, by whom it was successfully operated until the end of the year. Among other items of work for the season was that of the Kennewick Future Farmers of America under an agreement entered into with the Kennewick School District making a plot of some 13 acres available for their use. The boys cleaned debris from the land and burned weeds, but their struggles with quack grass prevented a crop program and left the project somewhat in question.

Park Roads and Lanes

The Benton County Commissioners gave splendid support to the park by doing a great deal of road work. The east entrance from Highway 410 was granted by the State Department of Highways, and the County hauled in fill from the entrance to the main river road. It was left without surfacing in order (1) to permit it to settle, and (2) to find out if it would be above flood level. Since a considerable section of this link was under water during the flood, it appears that it will need to be built up higher before surfacing. The County also carried out the plan of building connecting roads to the concessions in the east end.

During the autumn the Park Board worked on the problem of giving each road an identifying name. It was agreed that the term "lane" should apply to most of the cross roads. The main park road along the river, old Highway 410, was named Columbia Park Drive. This has considerable historical interest as representing the location of the first military road built by the federal government in the Pacific Northwest, the road authorized by Congress in January, 1853, to connect Fort Steilacoom on Puget Sound with old Fort Walla Walla on the Columbia. Cross roads, as confirmed by resol. of the Board of County Commissioners dated January 10, 1957, were named as follows: the entrance road in the east end from Highway 410 to the point of its intersection with Columbia Park Drive is Preston Royer Drive; the portion of the old Sonderman Road that is within the park is named Sonderman Lane; the road dividing the nature area and the Youth Day Camp and running south from Columbia Park Drive is named Nature Lane; and the road running east parallel with Highway 410 and making a loop around the children's playland area is named Recreation Loop. A happy prospect for road improvement came at the close of the year with announcement that the Army Engineers are prepared to proceed

with the building of an exit road from the east end of the park. At present cars coming from Kennewick or points across the Columbia can enter from the limited-access highway but must drive to Island View at the west end to get out. Plans of the Corps is to build an exit road as a one-way thoroughfare extending under the new Columbia River bridge and linking up with Kennewick's Hartford Street.

Review of Park Use

The Camp Kiwanis Day Camp area was used from February through October. Total attendance in 1955 was 2,284 and in 1956 it was 3,406. Groups using the camp were: Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, Kennewick Recreation Department, Boy Scouts, Church groups, some adult groups for leadership training and social gatherings. Of special note was progress made by the Kiwanis Club on construction of a comfort station.

Total park use in terms of numbers of persons is shown by these figures:

	1956	1955	Increase
General park and picnic users	22,000	10,000	12,000
Camp Kiwanis	3,406	2,284	1,122
Golf driving range	3,394		3,394
Yakima Slough Boat Basin	5,000		5,000
Riding Academy	2,042	400	1,642
Children's Playland		1,500	-1,500 decrease
		Net,	21,658

The Labor Day week-end traffic count showed an average of 1,410 per day for a three day week-end. The peak was on Monday with a total of 1,715. A summary of Saturday, 1151, Sunday, 1569, and Monday, 1715, made a grand total of 4,435.

Year's End

Action taken during the autumn and confirmed by the Commissioners gave the name Pioneer Vista Point to the plot of land deeded to the county by former Commissioner Jay Perry.

The list of civic organizations on record as committed to development of park sites were: Kennewick Kiwanis Club, Highlands Grange, Kennewick Lions Club, Kennewick Moose Lodge, Independent Order of Foresters, Kennewick Jaycees, Central Labor Council, Richland Kiwanis, and Richland Lions Club. The Mid-Columbia Fine Arts Association were struggling with difficulties but had done a great deal of work on the interior of the building approved for their use in 1955.

An inventory of material belonging to the Benton County Parks and Recreation Department at the close of 1956 showed a total value of $14,879.30.

BENTON COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

1957 Progress Report

Park Financing

The Park Board began 1957 operations with a total budget of $11,790.00. This was divided into three categories--$6,680.00 for salaries ($4680 for superintendent and $2000 for extra help), $3,280.00 for maintenance and operations, and $1,830.00 for new equipment (comfort station).

With the State Legislature in session the Board undertook to investigate possibilities for getting state financial aid. The matter was discussed with Representative Mike McCormack, and Board Chairman Mrs. Sutch and Park Superintendent John Clark made a trip to Olympia. They succeeded in having a bill introduced which would have authorized use of state money in county facilities, but it did not pass. The board, however, continued to push the idea and later sent a resolution to Governor Rosellini asking continued study of the problem by state officials on the premise that a county park serves a much larger region than the county in which it happens to be located, and that driver-license fees which go to the state parks fund come from the local areas.

Since it was clear by now that bonding offered the only hope in the foreseeable future of carrying forward the development so greatly needed in Columbia Park and other county park and recreation areas, the Board made plans to place a bonding proposition before the voters of Benton County in the general election of November, 1958. John Vibber accepted the chairmanship of the finance committee with that objective in mind and spent considerable time throughout the year in assembling data needed for the undertaking.

Planting the Tent and Trailer Area

Since revenue from overnight camping promises the biggest source of park income, the Board gave renewed study to the space in the west end of Columbia Park designated by the master plan for development as tent and trailer overnight campground. It was agreed that no matter how much money might be available, it would be folly to expect people to patronize this area when it has no shade. And, since it takes time to grow shade trees, obviously it

was important to get them planted. Although no water was available, nor was there any money in the budget which could be used to install a water system, the Board concluded to attempt a planting program anyway.

Fortunately some 4000 trees had been donated to Columbia Park and were heeled in near the Superintendent's residence. The most inviting space in the tent and trailer area was staked out, and with the help of his assistant the Superintendent was able to plant about 500 trees--maples and green ash, with a few Siberian elm. These were hand-watered throughout the season. Even though Nature cooperated by giving us more rain and less heat than usual, it required a day to a day and a half each week on the part of a maintenance man to keep this up, so it involved a considerable outlay for labor.

The Temporary Tent Camp Area

The next step was to provide temporarily for tent camping among some of the present shade trees. This required a comfort station and drinking water. With money in the budget to cover this the Superintendent was instructed to contract for construction of the building in the grove of large trees just west of Camp Kiwanis. The comfort station was completed and in use by mid-July. A much needed source of good drinking water for campers and picnickers was provided by an outside stand-pipe and fawcet. The Superintendent now began collecting fees of 75¢ a night from overnight campers. By the close of the season the revenue from this source had totaled $38.25.

East-End Egress Road

The most valuable improvement of the year in Columbia Park was the construction by the Corps of Army Engineers of a road leading out of the park at the Kennewick end. The absence of such a road--making it necessary for park visitors to drive all the way to the west end to get out of the park--had hampered full use the east end, and there was no prospect of the county being able to finance such a project. The Park Board and other Benton County residents, therefore, were most grateful that the Army Engineers were able to do the job. Starting near the east entrance, the road extends around the boat basin and

follows the inside of the dike, passes under the Columbia River bridge, then over and along the outer side of the dike to Hartford Street in down-town Kennewick. It was completed in June and used extensively throughout the summer.

Camp Kiwanis Makes a Good Record

The 1957 program carried on under auspices of the Kiwanis Foundation at Camp Kiwanis was impressive, as usual. This group is to be credited with having finished the first of the several comfort stations so urgently needed in Columbia Park. Their blueprint was used by the County in building the second one reported above. Camp improvement included installation of a flagpole, dismantling the old storage building, and the planning of a new 20' x 40' concrete block building.

The camp was in almost constant use all summer. Reports indicate that 36 organizations made use of this facility, with an estimated visitation of about 4,200 as compared with 3,406 in 1956.

Improvement in Mosquito Control

Control of mosquitoes was the best yet achieved, and on the whole very satisfactory. Early in the spring a program was carried out by the Army Engineers and the Park Superintendent to provide drainage to the river from all spots susceptible of holding stagnant water. This involved some fill, a great amount of ditching, and the opening of old culverts under Columbia Park Drive to facilitate the free flow of all accumulating waters. Nature very kindly treated the park to only moderate high water during the flood season. It did necessitate the closing of Columbia Park Drive for about two weeks, but flooding was minor compared to the year before.

The big job, as usual, consisted of fogging. Starting in June, the Corps of Army Engineers' fogging machine was operated regularly one night a week until autumn. The cost was borne by the County.

Contributions of Civic Organizations

Flood damage of 1956 had dampened the ardor of some civic groups who earlier had undertaken development in Columbia Park. However,

interest picked up slowly through 1957. More people have come now to understand that periodic flooding must be anticipated, that no structures not built of solid concrete can be placed within the flood zone, and that after the water goes down we simply clean up and go on. It is appreciated, too, that flooding is not entirely a disadvantage, that it reduces the need for irrigation, and that a plan of encouraging native grasses in picnic areas, is quite satisfactory.

During the year the following organizations contributed money or work, or both, toward the development of Columbia Park: Triple K Extension Club, Kennewick; Benton Builders 4-H Club, Kennewick; Petal Pushers Garden Club, Kennewick; Kennewick Senior Women's Club and Junior Women's Club; Today's Women's Club, Richland; Richland, Junior Women's Club; Kennewick Lions Club; Kennewick Moose Lodge No. 482; Richland Kiwanis Club; Pre-Mix Concrete, Inc., Kennewick; Mid-Columbia Fine Arts Association, Richland; Kennewick Goodwill Club; Highlands Grange, Kennewick; Richland Lions Club; Planterette Garden Club, Richland; Buttons and Bows 4-H Club, Kennewick, Richland Jaycee Ettes; Kennewick Chamber of Commerce; Kiwanis of the Columbia, Kennewick; Independent Order of Foresters; Kennewick Junior Chamber; Beta Sigma Phi, Richland; Kennewick Kiwanis Foundation. Worthy of special mention were the many hours of labor contributed by the members of Kennewick Chamber of Commerce in Building picnic tables. These enabled the Park Department to make a total of some 90 tables available for public use by the end of summer. Another noteworthy project was installation by the Kennewick Senior Women's Club of a historical marker at the Island View end of the park indicating the farthest point upstream in the Columbia reached by the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Advertising

A mimeographed brochure advertising Columbia Park was made and distributed to interested persons. Booths and displays telling about the park, including a large relief map, were shown at the Home Show in Pasco and at the Benton-Franklin County Fair, and was on exhibit for some time in Seldens' in Kennewick.

Park Board Personnel

In March the park board by-laws, which had provided for elections in June, were amended to read, "The election of officers shall be held during the

REPORT OF BENTON COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION BOARD FOR 1958

Rounding out a Decade

The calendar year of 1958 brought fruition in a rather satisfying degree to a decade of effort on the part of Benton County park workers. In 1948 park-minded citizens were exploring the shores of the McNary pool in the hope of locating one or more sites in this county suitable for park and recreation-area development. In 1958 they had the satisfaction of winning a bond election which added $485,000 to the regular budget for development work in Columbia and other county parks.

The decision to ask for a bond issue was settled in 1957, and the entire year of 1958 was geared to a program of activities to make for success. The amount was determined by estimates worked out by State Park Planner Charles DeTurk, who had made the master plan for Columbia Park. In estimating the cost of all items envisaged in the master plan, he had come up with a grand total of $1,088,373. Our finance committee, deciding that this was beyond the ability of the county to pay, cut selected items until they had scaled the total to the above figure, which covered other parks in addition to Columbia. The election result supported their judgment and opened the way for a new level of development in the decade ahead.

Some Policing Problems

The close of the previous year had brought out some policing problems, both on water areas and in Columbia Park. The need for regulating water activities was discussed at a meeting of the Clover Island Boat Club in November, at which time Lt. Commander Byron M. Wineke, Director of the Coast Guard Auxilliary of the 13th Coast Guard District, Seattle, outlined plans for policing the river in the Tri-Cities area. He pointed out that the Coast Guard has no jurisdiction over speed limits, and that such regulations are set by the U. S. Army Engineers. Enforcement, he said, should be up to state, county, and city ordinances. The group appointed the district attorneys of Franklin, Benton, and Walla Walla Counties to draft an ordinance which would be acceptable to all three counties. Benton County Commissioners enacted Ordinance No. 60 which provides for boat control.

regular November meeting, " with the further provision that present officers continue serving until that time. Purpose was to bring the service year into conformity with the fiscal year, and by installing new officers in January to give them a chance to plan ahead before confronted with pressures of the summer season.

The term of Bruce Lampson, who had served since the board was established in 1950 and pioneered the county park program, ended in June and he declined re-election. In recognition of his years of splendid service, the Chairman presented him with a certificate of merit. The vacancy was filled then by election of Mrs. Guy Travis, a pioneer of the Horse Heaven area and author of Umatilla Trail.

Dean Hartman also declined re-election, whereupon Mr. Courtney M. Kirkeeng of Kennewick was elected to membership. Officers elected in November were: Mrs. G. C. Sutch, chairman; Mr. Kirkeeng, vice chairman; Mrs. Margaret Thompson, secretary.

Park Recommended above Prosser

The September meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Travis in Horse Heaven. Preceding the meeting board members inspected a roadside area at the crest of the hill on the Paterson road above Prosser, which gives an impressive panoramic view of the Yakima valley. During the meeting it was voted to recommend to the County Commissioners that approximately an acre of this land, which is county-owned, be set aside as a vista park.

Columbia Park Concessions

That Columbia Park is continuing to grow in popularity is shown by the figures below tabulating the approximate number of users.

	1957	1956	1955
General Park and Picnic Users	71,046	22,000	12,000
Camp Kiwanis	4,200	3,406	2,284
Golf course and driving range	14,000	3,394	none
Yakima Slough Boat Basin	75,000	5,000	none
Riding Academy	4,500	2,040	400
Childrens' Playland	7,200	none	1,500
Overnight Camping	174	none	none
Total	176,120		

Developing a Comprehensive County Plan

As the year came to an end a study was under way to identify all potential park and recreation areas of the county in order to incorporate them in a comprehensive plan for a long-range program of development. Some spots under consideration, in addition to the vista point above Prosser and Pioneer Vista Point above Kennewick, were: a site in the southwest corner of the county where the Lewis and Clark party camped on their return trip in 1806; a park and recreation area at Hover; and some roadside scenic areas.

Although the water-area problem involved the park board only indirectly, that in Columbia Park was their direct responsibility. It was precipitated by the determination of a few teenagers to use Columbia Park Drive for "drag-strip" racing. Problems of speeding and park policing which had been vexing the board for more than a year came to a head when a couple of teenagers late in January, in driving east on Columbia Park Drive, plunged their car into the river and drowned. The question of closing the park at night had been submitted to the County Commissioners the previous June, at which time the Prosecutor's office gave the opinion that, since this is a county road, it would be illegal to close it. At a special meeting on January 29th a letter was authorized to be sent to the County Sheriff, with copy to the Commissioners, requesting more patrol action in the park. An open letter from "Hale Columbia" in the January 31 issue of Columbia Basin News made this suggestion: "Although the Columbia River Park road is well-marked with 25 MPH signs, it's a 'fast track' type of highway and invites speeding. ...Prominent 'slow down' and 'curve' signs should be placed at the east end of the park, marking the way to the narrow, curving, graveled exit." Such publicity, together with increased patrol, soon put a stop to the drag-strip racing.

The Playland Concession

This period marked the end of an abortive attempt to develop the area in the east end of Columbia Park designated in the master plan for use as a children's playland. On April 23, 1955, a concession agreement covering a period of ten years had been awarded to Leo Kendrick and Paul R. Hart, organized as the Columbia Park Amusements, Inc., under the terms of which these gentlemen were to develop the playland area, a marina on the lagoon, and a riding academy. Although the effective beginning date of the agreement was May 10, in consideration for the long period of high water that year, the board in August advanced the date to January 1, 1956, and thus extended the agreement to 1966.

By 1957 it became apparent that Columbia Park Amusements, for one reason or another, would not be able to fulfil the terms of the agreement, and parties to the same carried on a seriesof discussions during the autumn looking to its renegotiation. A new agreement was then signed on March 13, 1958, divorcing the riding academy from

the playland concession and advancing the time-table for specific items of development. The riding academy was then given to Russ Loar under a separate agreement. Although the annual rental of $100 was paid, Columbia Park Amusements did nothing else during 1958 to indicate that they planned to go on with their project. In planning the bond issue the park board figured enough to start development of the lagoon area--now officially named "Columbia Park Lagoon"--and relegated the children's playland to the shelf of future works.

Roadside Scenic Zones

The following resolution was passed by the Park Board in January, with Mr. Vibber reporting at the February 13 meeting that he had presented it to the Benton County Planning Commission:

> WHEREAS, roadside scenic vistas are vital resources to recreational motoring; and
> WHEREAS, recreational travel is a key income producer in our economy; and
> WHEREAS, the County Park Board has a special interest in the conservation of esthetic landscape values;
> THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That this Park Board recommend to the County Planning Commission the establishment of roadside scenic zones, in which land uses would be restricted to those allowable in residential, suburban, and agricultural zones.
> BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the following areas be considered for inclusion in such zones:
> 1. All land between the base of the Horse Heaven Hills and the Yakima River from the east boundary of section 16, 9-26, westward to a line approximately one mile east of the present city limits of Prosser, since this entire stretch of Highway 410 gives a splendid view of the Yakima River and the farming area beyond, and of Mt. Adams in the distance, and in places, of Mt. Rainier.
> 2. All land bordering the Lewis and Clark Highway from the Columbia River to a line 500 feet north of the highway right-of-way from its intersection by the Paterson-Prosser highway westward to the county line, since this stretch offers a fine panoramic view of the Columbia.

Overnight Camping

The temporary campgroung was expanded to the limit of the shade trees under which it is located, and it was used to capacity most of the time throughout the season. H. DeWayne Kreager, State Director of Commerce and Economic Development, while in the Tri-Cities in January, pointed up the need for more tourist facilities. His reference to "the importance of parks and camps that the tourist can see from the highway," called attention to the need for developing the proposed tent and trailer area in Columbia Park. This was a good talking point in the bond campaign.

Day Camping

The year saw completion of their comfort station at Camp Kiwanis, erection of a flag-pole, and approval of plans for a 20 x 40 recreation building of block construction by the Kiwanis Foundation. A state-wide camporee of 250 Girl Scouts used the campground April 25, 26, and 27, and another 100 on May 2, 3, and 4. Overnight camp-outs were scheduled in cooperation with the Kennewick School District for June 9-12 and June 16-20, with a program including classes in camping skills, nature crafts, outdoor living, hikes, and games. As usual, the camp was in use by youth groups throughout the summer.

Water Recreation

1958 also brought a great advance in water recreation. Vance Orchard, roving reporter for the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin, had written on January 19th: "Boating has a brilliant future. ... In the Lake Wallula area the sunshine days will far outnumber those of Puget Sound, and the fishing's getting better all the time here." Although he omitted mention of water-skiing, this sport showed a phenomenal rise in the number of devotees (one of the reasons water patrol was needed).

An important development in this field was the installation of a landing dock in the center of the park near the old pumping plant. With materials furnished by the Tri-City Marine Dealers' Association, the men of Kennewick Junior Chamber of Commerce turned out en-mass and constructed a dock 8 feet wide and extending 65 feet from shore.

Business of the Columbia Park Marina at Island View was considerably in excess of expectations. Anticipating need for more space, the concessionaire, Loael Smith, presented plans and ideas for a new boat display building. Such plans were approved, and the building was virtually completed by end of the year.

Miscellaneous Events

A highlight of the summer was the visit to Columbia Park on July 13th of State Representative John Bigley, as chairman of the Legislative Interim Committee on parks, was interested in the problem of finances. Impressed with the interest and contributions of local groups in developing Columbia Park, he promised to exert efforts in favor of a plan which would permit the state to supplement the financing of county park programs.

Rivaling the record of Kennewick Jaycees, the Kennewick Junior Women's Club piled up an impressive number of work hours in Columbia Park. In addition to clearing a picnic area, they contributed many hours of work to sign painting. This, added to the work of the park superintendent, made it possible to complete during the year a fine system of small directional signs in addition to a comprehensive directional layout near each entrance to Columbia Park.

The problems of Kennewick's city water system were brought to the park board again late in the year, when the City asked and was granted permission to dig another test well and to run water collector and water line through the east end of the park.

Mosquitoes and weeds came a little closer to extermination. The draining and fogging program kept mosquitoes at a satisfactory minimum. After considerable correspondence, the park superintendent finally received permission to use 2-4-D to kill noxious weeds. This offered hope of getting rid of puncture weed, which had become a serious menace along all roads.

The Dramatic Story of the Bond Issue

Work to put over the bond issue ran throughout the year at a constantly accelerated tempo until the general election in November. "Captain" of the campaign was no other than Mr. John Vibber of Kennewick, and his "First Lieutenant" was, of course, Park Superintendent John Clark. To them and their corps of good soldiers the people of Benton County will always be indebted for the success of this milestone in park history.

Early in the year a bonding attorney, Mr. Robert Blair of Spokane, was retained to guide the actions of the board with respect to the legal requirements of bonding. He continued his services through the election, and assisted then in sale of bonds.

Preliminary to the advertising campaign, Mr. Vibber arranged a luncheon meeting at the Desert Hotel in Richland on Thursday June 26th for key persons of the press. About this time the Benton County Park Development Committee was organized. The committee created "Parky," the little character in whose name much of the advertising was done. The following "fact sheet" was developed at the same time.

PARKY PRESENTS FACTS ABOUT THE BOND ISSUE

PARKY SAYS PLEASE support the $485,000 bond issue to develop our COUNTY PARKS and VISTAS. This will provide healthy recreation areas and places of beauty for our County.

PARKY OUTLINES THE AREAS TO BE DEVELOPED

(1) Columbia Park, 417 acres along the Columbia River between Kennewick and Richland. (2) Park site near Hover for picnicking, boating and swimming. (3) Horse Heaven Vista, 3 miles SouthEast of Prosser, 2 acres. (4) Vista on the Plymouth Road 2 1/2 miles South of Kennewick, 2 acres. (5) Yakima River Vista, 2 miles out of Benton City on Highway 410, 2 acres. (6) Pioneer Vista overlooking Kennewick off of Owens Road about 2 1/2 miles South of Kennewick, 5 acres.

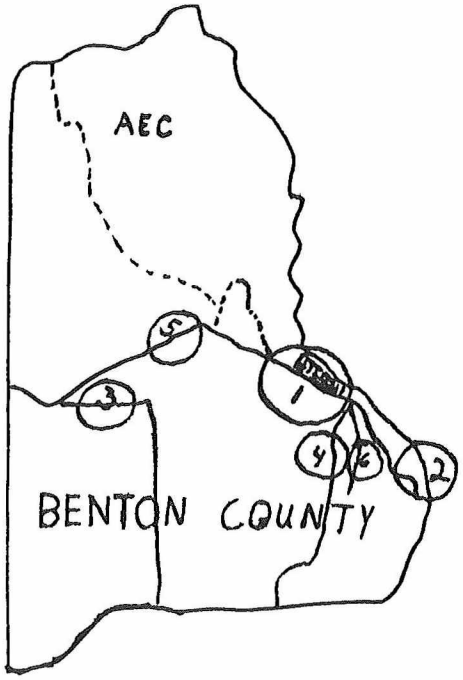
COLUMBIA PARK IS ALREADY ATTRACTING CROWDS

PARKY says, although we are not a developed park, we are attracting a large number of people to visit and enjoy Columbia Park. Estimated attendance for the general park use in 1955 was 12,000 while in 1957, for the same general use, the attendance was 71,000. Attendance at Camp Kiwanis in 1955 was 2,284, in 1957 it was 4,800. Attendance for 1958 is about 30% higher than 1957. PARKY says we have the following concessions available: PITCH AND PUTT GOLF COURSE, GOLF DRIVING RANGE, HORSEBACK RIDING ACADEMY, BOAT MARINA AND SNACK BAR. PARKY was surprised to see 92 PICNIC TABLES, 35 FIREPLACES, an OVERNIGHT CAMPGROUND, 3 COMFORT STATIONS, daytime BOAT DOCK, YOUTH DAYCAMP AREA, used by many youth groups, and the lack of any concentration of MOSQUITOS.

PARKY knows we need additional facilities to accommodate our county residents and many visitors. This BOND ISSUE will provide more of the facilities listed above plus: WATERING SYSTEM (domestic & irrigation), MORE COMFORT STATIONS, TREES, MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT, LEVELING, GRADING, SWIMMING FACILITIES, BATHHOUSE, SOFTBALL & BASEBALL DIAMONDS, TENNIS COURTS, BOAT DOCKS, WATER SKIING FACILITIES, RIP-RAP for our shoreline and other park supplies.

A REAL ASSET TO OUR COUNTY

PARKY says the park and recreation development will provide a healthful area for the entire family to go to find restful as well as active type facilities. These will be open to the public as they have been in the past. It will be an asset to help attract industry to our area as well as attracting tourists to visit us.



A SMALL COST FOR A LARGE RETURN

This 20 year general obligation BOND ISSUE will cost approximately .8 of 1 mill or 80¢ for every $1,000 assessed valuation. For the average taxpayer, this will amount to $1.20 per year - less than the cost of 2 hamburgers and 2 milkshakes.

PARKY SAYS HELP DEVELOP OUR COUNTY PARKS AND VOTE YES ON THE PARK BOND ISSUE NOVEMBER 4, 1958.

Paid for by the Benton County Park Development Committee

The line at the bottom saying, "Paid for by the Benton County Park Development Committee," was significant. Since public funds could not be spent for promotional expense a special fund made up of contributions from interested groups was collected and administered by the Development Committee. Some newspaper space was paid for. However, all papers were extremely generous in the amount of free publicity they gave to "help the cause." All radio and TV stations were equally generous with free publicity. Through the good offices of Mr. Kirkeeng two panel discussions were scheduled in which park board members and Commissioner Wes Brown were permitted to make TV presentations without cost. A staff of speakers was organized who donated a great deal of time and talent appearing before groups to ask for "yes" votes on the park bond issue. Came November 4 and election, with board members chewing nails until the returns came in. Anxiety turned to joy when the ballot count disclosed 11,246 "yes" votes to 6,481 opposed--a good margin over the 60 per cent requirement.

Statistics

By the close of the year Columbia Park had 108 picnic tables in use. Attendance estimates were as follows:

General Park Use	93,065
Camp Kiwanis	5,300
Riding academy	5,000
Golf course and range	15,000
Camping	965
Marina and Bateman Island	80,000
Total,	199,330

Board Reorganization

The November Election placed the following persons in charge of park board direction for 1959: Chairman--Courtney Kirkeeng

Vice Chairman--Mrs. G. C. Sutch

Secretary-Treasurer--John R. Vibber

The last meeting of the year was held on November 25, at which time Mr. Vibber and Mr. Kirkeeng were empowered to interview landscape architects and present a report at the first meeting in January which would enable the board to get under way with the development program covered by the bond issue.

REVIEWING THE BENTON COUNTY PARK STORY OF 1959-1960

Looking back from the threshold of 1961 members of the county park board and their host of park friends can justly exult in the accomplishments of the past biennium. The visual results are a credit to those who had the foresight and energy to plan and work for them. They reflect dedicated effort on the part of C. M. Kirkeeng, board chairman during the biennium, John Clark, park superintendent, board members and the many civic leaders and workers who gave their time and counsel and generously supported the program.

By January of 1959 for the first time there was money in the bank with which to implement the master plan for Columbia Park and to do something about other areas of the county. The bonds voted in November had been sold and the bulk of the money invested in short-term government securities. The remainder of the bond money was kept in the bank to cover current expenses in connection with capital outlay. All maintenance costs, as in the past, were borne by the county park fund made up of county revenue and park income. The 1959 budget for maintenance was $16,420, and for 1960, $18,860.

In January Mr. Cormac Thompson, Prosser architect and landscape architect, was employed to draw plans and prepare specifications on capital improvement projects. He set to work at once on the first two, an irrigation system for Columbia Park and the lagoon project at the east end. The lagoon itself required a vast amount of work in the removal of boulders from the bottom and the shaping and sanding of the beach. The project plan called for a building of three sections--a change house each for men and women and a snack bar. The last-named section was financed by Mrs. Mary Hostkoetter, to whom the contract for operating the food concession was awarded. The program included also several sun and wind shelters, built with slats on two sides and large to hold a picnic table, as well as a concrete curb to mark the upper limit of the beach. The Corps of Engineers assisted on the project by shaping a portion of the beach and in construction of a parking area. The total parking space developed in the lagoon area is sufficient for 100 cars. Kennewick Junior Chamber of Commerce installed a float with a diving board. The facility, provided with life-guard service, was opened to public use the latter part of June and attracted huge crowds from the start.

Near the end of that summer the enjoyment of the lagoon was marred by the tragic drowning of a 10-year-old boy. He had slipped from sight unnoticed, and by the time he was missed and his body recovered it was too late to revive him. The family filed a damage suit against the county, but it was never brought to trial.

A safety problem associated with use of the lagoon was that of youngsters walking down from Kennewick and across Highway 410 into the park. It was feared that someone might be killed or maimed by the high-speed traffic. A committee of persons from the park board and the Kennewick Chamber of Commerce met with the district engineer of the State Highway Department to study safety measures. The answer seemed to point to a need for fencing the highway right-of-way, plans for which were initiated by the Highway Department.

Fall development of the lagoon area saw the space above the curb planted to grass and trees. At the same time concrete floors were poured in the sun and wind shelters, and eleven charcoal brazziers were purchased and installed for use of picnickers.

A problem that had always vexed park administration was that of adequate vigilance to prevent vandalism. The county sheriff had provided excellent service in regular patrols through Columbia Park, but there was need to keep a closer watch over the east end, now especially since the lagoon buildings had been erected. To meet the need the old house in the east end was remodeled as a caretaker's cottage. This became the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bert Rinker, and Mr. Rinker went on the park payroll as a permanent employee.

The autumn work also included landscaping in other parts of Columbia Park. During the summer season the maintenance crew had little time for anything beyond fogging for mosquitoes, cleaning up after park users, and keeping the grass mowed. By mid-September they were able to spend virtually full time on new development, and progress was good. With new equipment they hauled out boulders, leveled and graded and seeded. The park superintendent purchased several hundred trees, with the understanding that they would be available as needed, and about 130 were set out during the fall of 1959. They were predominantly sycamore, with a few maples.

Getting ready for the 1960 Season

The big project for fall and winter was construction of the maintenance shop and landscaping of the headquarters area. The shop--a concrete block structure of some 1620 square feet--was equipped for the servicing of cars and machinery

and for general wood-shop work. Adjacent to it a high chain-link fence, strung with barbed wire at the top, was erected with gate to enclose equipment when not in use. The small log building serving as a park office was moved onto a permanent foundation next to the shop and remodeled. A concrete curb was put in from the superintendent's residence to the office. The area above this was landscaped and that on the river side was improved as a parking lot, with the entrance road raised, widened, and graveled. Indoor work done in the shop included the construction of 100 new picnic tables.

The next big project was the development of the tent and trailer campground at the west end of the park. The plan for this called for starting at the western edge of the temporary tent camp area, where a comfort station had been constructed in 1957, and going westward. There was extensive tree growth through the proposed area, and when the trees were pruned they proved to be a tremendous asset for shade. The plan called for a loop road winding through them, with another egress road from Columbia Park drive near the west entrance. Another comfort station was built to serve the westward extension, together with a large service building equipped with hot and cold water, shower, and laundry facilities. The extension also provided for an 11-unit trailer camp with electric outlets, in addition to more space for tent campers. The project included a large culvert to drain an old swamp.

Mosquito Control — Draining the swamp at the tent and trailer campground was part of the general program for mosquito control. With assistance from the Corps of Engineers ditches with underground tile were run to the Columbia to drain most of the spots where water tended to collect. Spraying was carried out over the entire area of Columbia Park to destroy larvae, and the fogging program was continued as needed during the summer months. Generally speaking, mosquitoes during the 1960 season were conspicuous by their absence.

Horse Heaven Vista — By February plans and specifications were ready for action on the Horse Heaven Vista Point overlooking Prosser. Concerned lest billboards or other unsightly features find their way into the unzoned slopes in the foreground of the view, the Park Board moved to delay call for bids until the zoning situation could be investigated and appropriate action taken. The County Planning Commission invited the Park Board to appoint someone to work with them on the problem. A sub-committee representing both groups drew up

proposals as a result of which the county zoning code was amended to add a zone called a roadside scenic district and to give some control over the erection of bill-boards. A roadside scenic district then was established to include the Horse Heaven Vista Point and surrounding area.

By late summer the structures had been erected--a roofed lookout of rustic type, and pillars to support an informational marker. The tablet for the marker was constructed and left in the park shop to be lettered and finished during the winter. The parking area at the vista was leveled but had grown up to weeds. This led to a decision to delay further work until winter rains moistened the area, when it could be sterilized against weeds, and then to cover it with gravel.

Camp Kiwanis Programs

As usual during the summer months Camp Kiwanis was the scene of an extensive program of day-camp activities. Some 85 groups scheduled use of the facility, with youth leaders conducting craft classes, games, outdoor education, and supervising hikes and overnight camp-outs. Work went forward on the new recreation building, and a new septic system was installed. The camp had the good fortune to receive a new bridge across the stream flowing through the area, the same built by volunteer labor of an engineer reserve unit stationed in the Tri-Cities.

Kennewick's Search for Water Ends at Last in Success

The drilling of wells along the Columbia shore line in a search for an adequate supply for Kennewick's city water system--which already made a long story--continued throughout the biennium. Carried on by the Ranny Method Western Corporation under contract with the City of Kennewick, the project was one of digging wells and pushing pipes into the gravel beneath the river to bring water--after its natural filtration--to a collector. Many test holes and four wells had been dug in a discouraging operation. But reward came with the fifth well, dug near the park lagoon, which to the delight of all concerned yielded a flow of pure water at the rate of 20 million gallons a day. The Park Board could expect now to see an end to drilling machinery, and to proceed with landscaping in the area where the operations had been going on. In return for their easement in the park, the City of Kennewick agreed to provide water free of charge in the east portion of the park for drinking and restrooms.

Tri-City Water Follies

Conspicuous progress was made during the biennium in boating and water sports. The first boat-launching ramp had been built and installed by the Columbia Park Boat Center. Then during the summer of 1959 the Corps of Engineers installed a large ramp and developed an adjacent parking area open to use of cars taking boats to the water. Water skiing in the protected basin at Island View grew steadily in popularity, although the summer of 1959 was not conducive to full activity either for skiing or boating. The peak in water recreation was the result of two sports events of 1960. As a Fourth-of-July week-end celebration the Tri-City Marine Dealers organized a water-ski tournament, which was conducted off the shores of Columbia Park

The week-end of July 14-17 brought a much heavier visitation on the occasion of a four-day sports program put on by the Tri-Cities Water Follies. A temporary concession was given for the period to a carnival company, for which the park fund received a fee of $400.00. Parking space was used to capacity. Most important feature of the affair was that it marked a step forward in Tri-Cities cooperation. Previously the event had been staged by the Pasco Water Follies Association at Sacajawea Park. This year the group reorganized to include representation from all three cities and the show was moved to Columbia Park.

The Flagpole Goes Up

Plans and specifications for a 60-foot flagpole and encircling plot finally went to the contractor in late summer, 1960. A beautiful base of stone was erected, with steps and radiating walks, and a circle of concrete curbing was installed to hold turf and shrubs. The location is north of the lagoon, near the river, a nice center of interest visible from Highway 410, and the landscaped plot is encircled by a graveled drive.

The Lagoon not to be Fenced

Early in the summer of 1960 a recommendation came from the County Commissioners that the swimming lagoon be fenced as a means of preventing tragedies like the one of the previous summer. The Park Board reluctantly agreed to install a fence and called for bids on same. However, after protests began pouring in from interested citizens a public meeting was held to discuss the problem. In view of the extensive protests, the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners moved that the fencing project be dropped.

Other Projects in Benton County

Looking to the future, the Park Board in 1960 gave considerable study to land in the old Hover area for park and recreation development. The Corps of

Engineers' master plan for use of reservoir land had reserved here some 150 acres for future park development, with abutting land on the upriver side licensed to the Kennewick Port District for industrial development. Early in 1960 the Port District petitioned for a reclassification of part of the park and recreation land to industrial. The Park Board took the position (1) that water recreation during our hot dry summers is of the utmost importance and that waterfront for this type of use should have a high priority; and (2) that this area will need to be developed to serve the future population anticipated in the environs of the industrial district. After study the Board did, however, agree to an adjustment of the boundary line in favor of the Port District, a condition being that the access road into the recreation area be left available until such time as a new access might be constructed.

Other areas which were placed on the shelf of potential future parks included three on the shoreline of the new reservoir to be created above the John Day dam. This will extend upstream to the McNary dam. One area is at Plymouth, one at Paterson, and a third at Carley on the downriver side of Crow Butte and next to the Klickitat County line. This last site is where the Lewis and Clark exploring party camped the night of April 25, 1806.

Increasing the total acreage under jurisdiction of the Benton County Park Board, action was taken by the Corps of Engineers in November that added Bateman Island to Columbia Park and gave a license to the County covering the Hover area and a small river area near Finley--an aggregate of about 825 acres.

Speaking of Figures

Popularity of Columbia Park is indicated by the following steady rise in annual visitation figures:

1955.	16,184
1956.	35,840
1957	176,120
1958	199,330
1959	206,000
1960	327,400

(A breakdown in all attendance statistics is available at the park office.)

Maintenance costs for 1959 came to a total of $14,299.07, and for 1960 the total cost was $18,586.94. The sum of all revenue from concessions was $2,673.94 in 1959 and $5,837.71 in 1960. At the close of 1960 the Park Development Fund showed a total of $227,684.47 in bond money as having been spent, and the sum of $280,019.11 in short-term investments. A total of $22,757.29 had been earned in interest.

State Association of County Park Boards

Responding to an invitation from Benton County, park personnel assembled here on January 16, 1960, from Franklin, Walla Walla, Klickitat, Spokane, and King Counties for the purpose of organizing for common goals. As a result the WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION BOARDS AND DEPARTMENTS came into being. Its objectives are to promote cooperation between county commissioners and county park boards, promote creation of park boards in other counties, promote local responsibility for local parks, exchange ideas and information, and deal with legislation concerning park and recreation matters on all levels of government. The group elected John Vibber of Kennewick as first president of the Association, and Mr. Vibber characteristically devoted a great deal of time and energy throughout the year to furthering the objectives of the group. He, with Mr. Kirkeeng, Mrs. Sutch, and Mr. Clark, went in April to a second meeting, held at Sun Valley in conjunction with the Pacific Northwest District Recreation Conference. Another state meeting was held in Kennewick on July 23rd, with Benton, Franklin, Clark, King, and Spokane Counties participating, together with M. J. Shields of the Corps of Engineers and Elmer Anderson of the State Parks and Recreation Commission.

Mr. Vibber worked diligently with the state Association of County Commissioners on the problem of finding more money for county park maintenance. At the close of the year he and others had developed what seemed to be a feasible financing plan. It would set up a state fund available to counties on a matching formula. Coupled with it was a bill to authorize park and recreation local improvement districts.

Century 21 Beautification

Early in 1959 the Benton County Park Board called attention to a state-wide effort under way to promote beautification of private and public lands, to the end that our state might look its best when visitors arrive for the Century 21 Exposition in Seattle. The Board offered to coordinate efforts toward this end in Benton County. In 1960 Chairman Kirkeeng appointed a sub-committee composed of Ray French, Lee Lampson, and Margaret Thompson to spearhead action. Mr. French then, as chairman of the sub-committee, issued a bulletin to all civic organizations suggesting beautification projects, such as a paint-up campaign, weed control, mass plantings for summer color, and cooperation with city and county planning commissions to secure more effective planning.

Looking Ahead through 1961

Reorganization of the park board at the close of 1960 initiated planning for 1961. Officers elected for the new year were: Ray French, chairman; John Vibber, vice chairman; and Marjorie Sutch, secretary.

Two projects for beautification of Columbia Park itself were well under way, in addition to the partially finished Horse Heaven Vista above Prosser. Early in the summer of 1960 Chairman Kirkeeng had produced a sketch of what he conceived to represent an attractive formal entrance for the east end of Columbia Park. Board members received his ideas with enthusiasm and moved that steps be taken to develop an attractive formal park entrance. The landscape architect was authorized to produce plans for such a layout. The first plans had to be revised because of cost factors, so it was late summer before they were finished. It was then too late for the 1960 tourist season and the project was tabled for activation in the spring of 1961. However, during late fall and winter considerable work was done eastward from the east entrance to improve the landscape bordering Highway 410, including the hauling away of large boulders and placing them where needed for river-bank stabilization, and general clean-up and leveling. The other project is the landscaping of the flagpole plot. The aim of planning for 1961 is to finish the projects that have been started and to emphasize that which will best get ready for the large tourist visitation expected in 1962. This calls for more camping facilities and boat-launching facilities and more attention to that which has eye-appeal.

WITH THE BENTON COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

1961 through Feb. 1964

Dedicating the Horse Heaven Vista

The Horse Heaven Vista, developed on county-owned land atop the cliffs above Prosser, received considerable attention at the first park board meeting of 1961. Lettering on the marker was reported about a third completed. The parking area had been sterilized and was ready for gravel and bumper strips. Board member Lee Lampson of Prosser was appointed chairman of a committee to plan and conduct a dedicatory program at the site in late spring.

With the development completed, and directional signs placed by the Dept. of Highways at both approaches on Highway 8, the new facility was formally dedicated the afternoon of Sunday, May the 21st. Judge Orris Hamilton served as master of ceremonies. Mrs. Preston Royer, whose late husband had given conspicuous service to parks, officiated at the unveiling of the marker. Dignitaries included County Commissioners Tom Bettinson and John Dam. The inscription on the marker tells the visitor that he is "at the edge of the Horse Heaven wheat lands" and "below and stretching westward is the lush Yakima Valley".

A continuing problem to which attention has been given from the beginning is that of providing the visiting motorist with information as to eating, lodging, and motor services available in Prosser. It is hoped that the merchants of Prosser will eventually work out a practical way of doing this. The opportunity was expressed editorially by the Prosser Record-Bulletin of May 30, 1963, in commenting on "the dramatic change of scene which bursts upon the motorist" as he approaches from the south.

Dedicating the Flagpole Circle

The other major project happily finished that spring was the lovely flagpole circle on which the major development had been completed the previous year. It was dedicated the afternoon of Memorial Day following an impressive address on

"Freedom's Symbols" by the Reverend H. Paul Smith of Kennewick's First Methodist Church. Attorney Kenneth Serier served as master of ceremonies. Major Heimerl represented the U. S. Corps of Engineers. The flag, which had been presented by the Kennewick Junior Women's Club, was raised by a color guard of Marine Recruits--SSgt. Frank Pond, SSgt. Gerald Winters, and SSgt. Edward Douglas.

The High Water of 1961

Flooding from the Columbia was extensive that June. Ground between the flagpole and the river was well saturated at the time of the time of the dedication, and by June 8th the entire east end of Columbia Park and low spots through the central portion were under water. Roads at both entrances had to be closed. This called for opening the emergency entrance just west of park headquarters, permitting safe access and egress from that area to Highway 410. The most serious damage was the washing out of the causeway connecting Bateman Island with the mainland. However, by late June the water had subsided, debris had been removed and drain pipes cleaned. The causeway was restored by the Army Engineers.

Water Recreation

Although delayed, the summer recreation program went into high gear in July. Classes in water-skiing were started by Charles Thuot, a teacher in the Kennewick schools, and these have been given regularly each summer since. Interest in the sport is enhanced by the program of events sponsored each summer by the Tri-City Water Follies. Begun in 1960, the Follies staged events over a four-day period--July 13 through 16 in 1961. In 1962 they increased the program to five days, July 12 through 16; and in 1963 they filled two week-ends, with nightly programs during the intervening week. These consist of talent shows, selection of a "queen" and "princesses," dancing, swim meets, water-skiing, and boat races.

Mosquito Control

A "must" in plans to make Columbia Park attractive to local residents and out-of-town visitors is the control of mosquitoes. The "war" has been prosecuted relentlessly each season by improving drainage, larvaciding, and fogging.

Washington State Recreation Society

Culminating event of 1961 was holding the 14th annual conference of the Washington State Recreation Society in the Tri-Cities on October 27-28, Friday and Saturday. The Friday meetings were held in the Richland Community House, the banquet that evening in the Manor, Pasco, and the Saturday sessions in Kennewick's P. U. D. auditorium. Highlight of the meeting for Benton County was the Citation of Merit from the State Society awarded at the banquet meeting to John R. Vibber of Kennewick. Dr. Norman Kunde of the University of Washington in making the presentation dwelt on the two phases of John's avocational career. The first was his work as a Kennewick city councilman from 1948 to 1952, during which he led the campaign for a $35,000 bond issue that built the municipal swimming pool. The second was his activity since June of 1954 in applying sound business principles to park administration; his contribution to the campaign which won a $485,000 bond issue, put to a vote in 1958, for capital outlay; in organizing and serving as first president of the Washington State Association of County Parks and Recreation Boards; and consistent dedicated service to "the cause" of good recreation.

An interesting aftermath of this hosting of the state group was the elevation of our county park superintendent, John Clark, to its presidency. In the 1961 election he became east-side vice president. In 1962 when the state meeting was held in Yakima on October 29-30, he moved into the state president's position, with Kennewick's Recreation Director Jim Rhode as secretary.

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A highlight of that meeting was an afternoon program conducted by the Allied Arts Council of Yakima. Huntington Boyd, president of the council and a former president of the chamber of commerce, stressed the value of the arts in the economy of a community.

An Eye to History

Keeping in mind that the master plan for Columbia Park provides for a museum building, the Park Board in January of 1962 accepted the first piece for its museum collection. This was brought from Paterson by members of the Benton County Historical and Pioneer Association--an old ferry paddle-wheel which had been abandoned there for years. It was placed on one of the pre-park concrete slabs, which happened to be nicely situated at the intersection of the headquarters entrance and Columbia Park Drive.

Later in the spring a historical marker was erected near it, materials for which had been donated by the Historical Association. It tells the story of the first federal road in the West, authorized by Congress in January of 1853--shortly before creation of Washington Territory--and of the Longmire covered-wagon party which passed through this area in September of the same year. This made a second historical marker in the park, the first--overlooking Island Park--recording an episode of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. (The name "IslandPark--had been authorized on October 12, 1961, for the large island previously know as Bateman Island.)

Camp Kiwanis

The first facility to operate in Columbia Park, the youth day camp, went through difficult times during this period but came out "on top." Developed in the beginning from a group of old buildings, left for the purpose, by volunteer labor of Campfire leaders under the inspiration of Mr. and Mrs. Clem Cejka, the camp had been licensed to the Kennewick Kiwanis Foundation in 1956. The Foundation had in recent years erected some modern fire-proof buildings and made grounds improvement at considerable cost, and financing had become a problem.

In January of 1962 the Park Board introduced a letter from the Foundation indicating that they were in financial difficulty and asking permission to make a charge of ten cents per child for the use of the facility. The matter remained under study all spring, which gave time for all groups interested in the use of the camp to react. With one exception they were all favorable to the proposal. At the same time a move was afoot to get all five of the area Kiwanis Clubs to support the camp cooperatively. By July the request had been granted effective for 1962 only. Approval by the Corps was recorded as follows:

"It is the policy of the Corps to allow charges for facilities provided in the licensed areas over and above those facilities provided by the Corps, but no charge can be made for merely using Government-owned land. Since the Kiwanis Club is providing additional facilities and services, your request for our approval of this charge is granted."

Fencing Columbia Park

It was during the spring of 1962 that the State Highway Department erected a high-woven wire fence from the Kennewick end of the new Columbia River bridge along the north line of their right-of-way to the Colorado Street over-pass--leaving an opening, of course, for the east-end entrance. Also an emergency gate was provided on the high ground behind headquarters. Purpose of the fence is to discourage pedestrian crossing of the high-speed limited-access highway. Resentment was at first directed against the park board for such "extravagant" use of park funds. This subsided after the facts of the matter had been explained to a few inquirers.

John Day Reservoir Planning

The park board was represented at various hearings held by the Corps of Engineers regarding plans for developments on the shoreline of the John Day reservoir. Two factors on this project differed from previous ones. First, the plans call for higher clearance under highway and railroad where water backs up into tributary canyons and coulees, in order that boats may get through when seeking refuge from sudden high winds on the main body of water. Secondly, basic recreational installations will be constructed before the reservoir is impounded. This should make them

less costly and more satisfactory than when done after the water rises.

Park and recreation areas planned for Benton County are located at Plymouth, Paterson, Glade Creek, and Carley inlet just west of Crow Butte and adjacent to the county line. The last named may be licensed to the Fish and Wildlife Service. The water will back up around the base of Crow Butte to a zone which probably will become a swamp. Crop land to the east of Crow Butte will be devoted to producing feed for wildlife. With the butte itself this whole layout should make a desirable refuge for the wildlife after their present island areas are flooded.

However, another inlet, the one at Glade Creek, shows increasing potential for recreation since Mr. Frank Lenzie, owner of the abutting upland, has indicated his intention to deed some of it to the county for park purposes. On July 17, 1962, three members of the park board, together with Superintendent John Clark and two representatives from the Corps met with Mr. and Mrs. Lenzie and explored the site. It was brought out that the area has geological, archeological, and historical interest. Since Glade Creek is fed by springs, the area has camping potential in addition to boating. There was discussion of the possibility of developing a circular scenic drive around the crest of the bordering bluff.

In May of 1962 an interim permit was given the park board by the Corps covering the use of the old depot building at Plymouth and the grounds adjacent to it. In turn a permit was given to the Plymouth Social Club, which agreed to maintain building and grounds in return for use thereof. Some 260 acres are to be made available about 1967 with launching facilities and other shoreline developments where the backwash below McNary Dam affords good fishing.

Other County Areas

The large island at the mouth of the Yakima River, now officially designated as Island Park, was added to Columbia Park during this period.

It is popular both with fishermen and water skiers. The shallow protected water above the causeway is ideal for the amateur skier. Happily the Corps was able to put in a facility for their benefit in the spring of 1963-- a parking area and launching ramp on the river side of the Island View dike. Area of the island is estimated to be about 175 acres. The riding academy was moved from the east end of the park to the island in the summer of 1963.

Two down-river areas are one of about 72 acres near Finley, some five miles downstream from Kennewick, and another of 153 acres in the vicinity of old Hover, both of which are to be developed at some future time. Pioneer Vista Point south of Kennewick, donated by Jay Perry, grows in popularity because of the extensive panorama which it commands on a clear day, from the Hanford area to the north through the industrial port district developments on both sides of the Columbia below Kennewick and Pasco.

Columbia Park Drainage Problem

A continuing and vexing problem has been that of coping with drainage water which collects in Columbia Park, water which apparently has found underground channels from the new Kennewick Irrigation project. It early became necessary to turn to the Soil Conservation Service for help with this. In January of 1963 it was reported that this Service would like to see two possible plans tried to combat the situation in the campgrounds. One would be the use of a dragline to deepen existing drainage ditches and by the periodic use of a gasoline-powered pump to keep the seepage below the level of the drainage pipe leading to the river. It it can be done, an irrigation pump should be considered. The other possibility would be the installation of French-type drains.

By February it had been decided to dig 30 holes of varying depth from 4' to 10' throughout the park, and by the insertion of pipes to keep a record of water-table fluctuations. In addition, a small basin was to be dug in the campgrounds. To this end, a working agreement was executed with the Soil Conservation

Service. A drain problem that necessitated cutting across Columbia Park Drive was handled by the County Road Department.

Pageant and Amphitheater

After periodic discussions through the years concerning (1) producing an annual historical pageant and (2) developing an outdoor theater in Columbia Park, steps were taken in the fall of 1961 to bring them to reality. An amphitheater site in the west end of the park was explored and plans and books collected and studied. In the end it was decided to continue these studies for another year before undertaking the amphitheater, but to attempt the pageant at a temporary site in the east end of the park. A large concrete slab near the flagpole circle was selected for the stage, with portable flooring borrowed from the fair grounds. Bleachers were borrowed from the Kennewick high school for seating, together with sound and lighting equipment. The pageant was given two nights in July of 1962--Friday and Saturday the 27th and 28th. The park board was the official sponsor and no charge was made.

During the following autumn a pageant association was formed and incorporated as COLUMBIA HISTORICAL PAGEANTS, INC. Early in 1963 the park board authorized the development of a site plan by Architects Carson and Kesterson. Following its acceptance the bowl was shaped, seeded to grass and made ready for use in August. The finishing item was a board screen designed by Park Superintendent John Clark and erected by the Richland and Kennewick Lions Clubs from lumber furnished by the Kennewick Women's Club. The pageant, under the permanent name of WEST TO THE COLUMBIA, was given on week-ends, the Friday and Saturday evenings of August 9-10 and 16-17. A concession agreement signed by the pageant association made it possible to collect admission charges of $1.00 per person, with children admitted free.

Landscaping Progress

The determined effort during this three-year period to insure "eye appeal"

in Columbia Park brought good results. Board members on a tour of inspection late in 1963 were filled with justifiable pride as they took note of the improved appearance as viewed from within the park, from Highway 410, or from the Highlands.

Some half dozen separate projects had contributed to this result. There was the clearing of underbrush and shaping of remaining trees, done largely by laborers on state relief rolls. There was rodent control (pocket gophers) and weed control. Puncture vine, the most serious, had been brought under control both by soil sterilants and burning. To prevent willows and cattails from growing again after having been cleared, those areas were sprayed with amino triazol.

Then there was the installation of extensive sprinkler systems with electrically-driven pumps drawing water from the lagoon and the river. The several systems now water a total area of some 20 acres bordering Highway 410 from the lagoon through the tent and trailer campground.

As water became available the respective areas were seeded to grass and planted with trees. In the spring of 1961 the Blue Mountain District of the Washington State Federation of Garden Clubs contributed $170.00 to be invested in trees. Out of this fund 34 flowering trees were purchased and planted in two rows bordering the east-end entrance road in Columbia Park. By January of 1963 the park superintendent was able to report that 301 trees had been planted throughout the park.

A highlight in landscaping was the completion in time for the 1963 tourist season of the east-end park entrance plot which had been started in 1961. As an Arbor Day project the Blue Mountain District of the federated garden clubs planted a spruce tree in the plot to honor their retiring state president, Mrs. Kenneth Barrett. To this were added pfitzers and arbovitae, amid which a lamp was concealed to shine at night on the attractive entrance marker.

State Parks and Recreation Commission Visit

The Benton County Park Board had the pleasure on Sunday, June 16, 1963, of entertaining the State Parks and Recreation Commission, here for a meeting in Kennewick the following day. John and Patt Clark barbecued the beef and board members brought the other ingredients of a delicious dinner which was served under the big trees behind the Golden-Age clubhouse. All members of the Commission were present with their wives, together with Director Clayton Anderson and several staff members. Previous to dinner they had toured the park, and afterward they were taken by boats down-river to Sacajawea State Park.

An "ulterior motive" was to show them what Columbia Park has to offer as part of the effort under way to get this spot listed on the state parks map. Criteria to govern the selection of county parks for inclusion with state park listings had been worked out. Before the summer was over this policy change had been adopted and the "green light" given to include Columbia Park.

Park Board Changes

In September Mr. Charles E. Evans, on taking office as Benton County Superintendent of Schools, succeeded Mrs. Margaret Thompson, the retiring superintendent, as a member of the Park Board--inasmuch as the school superintendent, by statute, is ex-officio a member of the county park board. Two board vacancies occurred during the autumn, that of Ray French and of Lyle Mineer. These positions, respectively, were filled by appointment of Jim Boldt and Bill Sagvold. Organization of the board for 1964 is: president, F. P. Meverden; vice president, Bill Sagvold; and secretary, Mrs. Marjorie Sutch.

Benton County Parks and Recreation Program Reaches another Milestone

The chain of events which led to Supt. John Clark's presidency of the Washington State Recreation Society culminated on January 31, 1964, in his appointment as supervisor of planning and development in the state parks department at Olympia, this to become effective on March first. The Benton County Board, after

accepting Mr. Clark's resignation with regrets, appointed as his successor Milton H. Martin, who had come to Benton County as assistant superintendent the previous June from Vancouver, Washington, where he had served as director of city parks and recreation. At the February meeting it was noted that this marked a significant transition period--that park history began as the Corps of Engineers in 1947 began work on McNary dam and reservoir area, the same time that the General Electric Company began the major expansion program at Hanford; and that a milestone was reached in 1954 with employment of the first park superintendent in the person of Mr. Clark. Assessing the record of the past ten years, it was noted that the change in administration at this time coincides with the current process by which General Electric is transfering the operation of Hanford to other companies, and the beginning of what might be termed the "Era of the Peaceful Atom."

Mr. Clark in a summary report released to the Tri-City Herald, December 15, 1963, estimated park attendance for the year as between 400,000 and 500,000, as compared with the figure of 12,000 for 1955. He estimated that nearly $400,000. of bond money had been spent on park improvements, and that some $98,000. remained. The largest expenditure had been for the overnight camp-grounds and the swimming lagoon, each costing about $30,000. He listed other improvements to include five ball diamonds, six boat docks, 340 picnic tables, a boat-launching ramp, 16 parking areas, three sprinkler systems, four horseshoe courts, 12 restrooms, five large fireplaces and several small ones, one large barbecue pit, and an amphitheater.

One gain of the past ten years from which some fruit might be expected in the years ahead is closer cooperation between city and county park departments and state and federal recreation agencies. Of current interest is the 10-state program, coordinated by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, to memorialize the Lewis and Clark trail during 1964. The recently published Technical Publication No. 1, of the Bureau, titled Federal Assistance in Outdoor Recreation, states on page 6:

"The National Park Service upon request may provide technical advisory assistance in park operational and planning fields and in highly specialized fields such as history, archeology, and interpretive service planning which meets special needs." This may hold promise for the major item of unfinished business in the Columbia Park master plan, that of a historical museum.

HISTORY OF BENTON COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

A study of newspaper clippings and Park Board minutes indicates that interest in park areas bordering the McNary pool was being activated in 1948. During that year they were discussed as important features of the total land-use program in the meetings sponsored by the McNary Development Association, with headquarters at Umatilla, Oregon. Also during that year the Northwest Conservation League sponsored a series of caravan tours to study park possibilities of the shore line.

The first of these tours was organized by Rolfe Tuve, publisher of the KENNEWICK COURIER-REPORTER, Dick Rector, landscape architect of Kennewick (later city superintendent), and Margaret Thompson, Executive Secretary of the Conservation League. The route taken led from Finley to the Crest of the Horse Heaven Hills above Wallula Gap, and thence down the south slope and along the river to the damsite. Mr. Tuve's story of the trek appeared in his paper under date of April 22, 1948. The following is an excerpt from it covering the portion of the tour from the crest of the hills to the damsite:

"From there on you follow a slightly glorified cow track that takes you down to the river at a point about 12 miles east of the dam.

With me as co-pilot was Dick Rector. Mrs. Margaret Thompson, who is an authority on history of the region, had her pioneering blood practically boiling and was especially thrilled with the possibilities of developing recreational areas along the pool that is to be formed by McNary dam. . .

Along the river we followed a mere trail along the rocky bank where going was necessarily slow. First human habitation is the Bill Westermeyer place, as colorful a ranch as was ever seen in a western thriller. We stopped and saw Bill a few minutes and we're going back for another story. Bill's dad settled on that place in 1882. From there on the traveling is easy with a new road graded by the engineers to a point a few miles above the damsite."

Progress in development west of Kennewick is indicated by two other clippings. First of these is from the TRI-CITY HERALD for August 18, 1949.

"Power and sail boating on the Columbia River is expected to pick up when the City of Kennewick builds a small boat basin on Clover Island.

Not a project which will be completed in the next few months, the basin will accomodate power and sail boats and will have permanent storage facilities. Plans now call for rails to enable boat owners to take their craft from the water."

The other, written about the same time, is a feature by Dick Praul in THE COLUMBIA BASIN NEWS, from which the following excerpt is taken:

"The mouth of the Yakima at present is used extensively by waterfowl as a nesting and rearing area in the spring and summer, and as a resting and feeding area during the fall and spring migratory periods. The confluence of the Yakima and Columbia Rivers also provides a popular fishing grounds.

Impounding will provide a larger and more protected area which should result in an increase in its use by waterfowl. This area to be licensed is about 160 acres and lies two to three miles up Yakima River from the Richland bridge. It also contains lands suitable for growing cereal and cover crops for waterfowl. The plan is to attract a large number of upland game birds during the summer, hold them through the fall hunting season, and help provide food during the winter. Planners say the land should be protected from public access during the nesting and rearing period, and opened to public shooting during the fall hunting seasons."

Persons especially active during 1950 in spear-heading the move for park development between Kennewick and Richland were Jay Perry (County Commissioner for this district), Dick Rector, Bruce Lampson, and Margaret Thompson. Efforts of this group were directed toward inducing the State of Washington to develop the area, which by this time had come to be known as Columbia Park. Failing in this direction, they investigated the possibilities for development by Benton County and the City of Kennewick. Jay Perry called attention to the law enacted in 1949 authorizing county park boards, and Bruce Lampson prevailed upon him to prepare a resolution to set up such a board for this county. The resulting resolution was passed by the Board of County Commissioners at Prosser on October 2, 1950. Pursuant to the same the Commissioners established the Benton County Park and Recreation Board and appointed the following members:

Preston Royer, Prosser..... 6 year term to expire 6-30-57
Bruce Lampson, Kennewick..... 6 year term to expire 6-30-57
Margaret Howard, Richland..... 4 year term to expire 6-30-55
S. D. Wheeler, Kennewick..... 4 year term to expire 6-30-55
R. C. Rector, Kennewick..... 2 year term to expire 6-30-53
W. H. Seidle, Kennewick..... 2 year term to expire 6-30-53
Lillian Wise, County Superintendent of Schools, ex officio member.

The first meeting of the Board was held in the City Hall in Kennewick on October 22, 1950, at which it was organized with Bruce Lampson as Chairman, S. D. Wheeler Vice Chairman, and Lillian Wise, Secretary.

It is interesting to note that considerable discussion was given at this meeting to possible park sites other than Columbia Park. Among them were listed "Jump-Off Joe," a scenic point on the Paterson road above Prosser, and the hill above the Yakima across from Richland.

Meetings were held on November 17, December 8, and January 23, the chief matter of the discussion having to do with the proposal by Mr. Wheeler that the Army Engineers be urged to buy the property at the Richland Y instead of building a dike there, and to add this to Columbia Park. The answer of the Army Engineers was that this would be much more expensive than building the dike. Also many of the Y residents opposed the plan, and proponents ceased their efforts.

On the following October 4th a large public hearing was held in Kennewick's Junior High School by the Army Engineers., Col. Wm. H. Mills, chief of the Walla Walla District, presiding. Describing the McNary Pool, Col. Mills stated that it would have some 38,000 acres of water surface and about 242 miles of shore line. Further explaining the overall master plan for the reservoir shore lands, he pointed to "Camp Hover" -- land in the old village of Hover available for group camping -- and Columbia Park to be developed as a "green belt."

At the Board meeting of June 24, 1952, Mr. Lampson reported that the P.U.D. was in process of completing the connections which would supply electricity to the caretaker's residence in the park and that Henry Johnson and family were preparing to move in.

Roy Gross had replaced Mr. Seidle on the Board and first attended the meeting of August 6, 1952, which was called to confer with William B. Pond of the State Parks and Recreation Commission. Mr. Pond gave the group a review of some of the State's experiences with group camping problems and recommended that all groups be invited to a public meeting to discuss the problem of setting up a managerial board on which each would be represented.

The next meeting, held January 26, 1953, was called to discuss the problem of getting a plan made for Columbia Park. Col. Ed Hopkins now had replaced S. D. Wheeler on the Board.

Colonel Hopkins offered to make up a model of the park on Plywood, so as to have something tangible to show as a plan for developing the park. The Board authorized Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Rector to proceed with such a project. It proved, however, a bigger undertaking than could be consummated in the limited time that these gentlemen had to give to it, and the model failed to materialize.

Most of the year of 1953 was devoted to an attempt to reorganize the park administration. From the outset the east end of the area fell within the city limits of Kennewick, and development was considered a city responsibility. A single administration was thought to be desirable and considerable study was given to state legislation which gives authority to two units of government to set up a joint commission to administer park and recreation areas within their respective boundaries.

On June 25th the park board met with a large gathering of local leaders, there being present also B. C. Christensen of the Corps of Army Engineers, William Pond of the State Parks Office, Willard Shumard of the National Recreation Association, and William H. Savin of the United Community Defense Services. There was extensive discussion concerning the details (1) of a joint park commission, and (2) the type of development desirable for this river-front area. The COLUMBIA BASIN NEWS that morning had carried an editorial warning against the possibility of spoiling the area with a Coney Island type of development. Dick Rector (who had repeatedly warned against a policy of letting considerations of revenue govern park planning) joined with Mrs. Thompson in submitting the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS water areas and shore lands have an especially high recreational value in an arid region like our own, particularly during hot summer months; and

WHEREAS people of the Tri-Cities area hope to profit from the mistakes of other regions where adequate shore lands have not been reserved for public use; and

WHEREAS there are now nearly 50,000 people living in the Tri-Cities area, which population is steadily increasing, together with an additional large and increasing number of tourists and other visitors, all of whom may reasonably expect to have access to nearby shore lands of the Columbia; and

WHEREAS such shore lands being at present limited to little Sacajawea Park at the confluence of the Snake, a small city park in Richland, and the still undeveloped Columbia Park, are scarcely enough to adequately serve the needs of this growing population;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That in the planning of the Benton County Park and Recreation Board (1) the conservation of park values and considerations of long-range park benefits take precedence over considerations of revenue, and that (2) those types of recreation to which shore land is not an essential be located on upland sites, and that (3) the Columbia Park, which is essentially a shore land park, be planned and developed for the following uses:

a. Water recreation -- boating, swimming, fishing;
b. Picnicking and overnight camping;
c. Inspiration, culture, and education -- esthetic enjoyment of river beauty, bird study, outdoor drams, band concerts, art activities, etc.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That copies of this resolution be sent to the Benton County Commissioners, the U. S. Corps of Army Engineers, the Kennewick City Council, and the area newspapers.

Passed this 25th day of June, 1953.

A second conference, with most of the same persons present, was held three weeks later. On the evening of July 14th they met in the Youth Center in the Park with representatives of a large number of youth organizations. And the meeting of the following evening was in the Kennewick Recreation Center, with members of the Kennewick City Park Board and two of the County Commissioners present. Most of the discussion had to do with the legal steps involved in establishing a joint park administration.

There appeared to be general agreement on the feasibility of this move, but before it could be carried out the picture changed. Dick Rector resigned his position in Kennewick and moved to Moses Lake. By autumn the City of Kennewick had come to the realization that lighting approaches to the new bridge were going to be highly costly. To get out from under this expense it was decided to move the city limits back to the east of that approach. This change was accomplished early in 1954, leaving all of Columbia Park under the jurisdiction of Benton County and eliminating the need for a joint board.

The year of 1954 got under way with the following persons on the Park Board: Preston Royer of Prosser; Margaret Howard and Mrs. G. C. Sutch of Richland; Bruce Lampson, Roy Gross, and Don Duncan of Kennewick; and Margaret Thompson, County Superintendent, ex officio.

In February Don Duncan reported that he had discussed informally with Charles DeTurk of the State Parks Office and Mr. Beardsley of the Seattle City Parks Office the proposition of their making a plan for Columbia Park and that they indicated an interest in doing so. Don, in fact, proved to be the Moses who led us out of the wilderness. For this suggestion soon resulted in a contract and the beginning of that long awaited park plan. He also made two other suggestions which were acted upon with happy results. The first was that the Park Board adopt a set of by-laws and provide in them for holding regular meetings. The second was that a budget be prepared for submission to the County Commissioners which would be liberal enough to provide for the employment of a trained park and recreation superintendent.

On June 24th Don submitted his resignation, because of his plans to take a leave of absence to attend Central Washington College, and John Vibber of Kennewick was appointed to take his place. A committee consisting of Mr. Vibber, Mrs. Thompson, and Mrs. Sutch was appointed to draw up a set of by-laws. Under authority of these, which were adopted August 4, 1954, and made part of the Park Board records, John Vibber was elected Chairman and Margaret Howard, Secretary. Thus a new administration was inaugurated.

Compiled by Margaret Thompson
Retiring Secretary