

## Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy

**State of the Parks 2010 - Earth Day, April 22, 2010 - Delaware Park Marcy Casino**  
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Thomas Herrera-Mishler, president and CEO of the Olmsted Parks Conservancy

### **Key Points:**

The Olmsted parks, parkways and circles represent sixty percent of Buffalo's parkland. These historic green spaces - Cazenovia, Delaware, Front, Martin Luther King, Jr., Riverside and South Parks - and their adjoining parkways, circles and smaller spaces have graced the Western New York landscape for more than 142 years. This tremendous legacy, compliments of the father of American landscape architecture, Frederick Law Olmsted, is poised to help secure Buffalo's future.

Beginning Saturday, April 24, three-hundred volunteers will plant trees in Delaware and Riverside Parks and on May 1 in Cazenovia and Martin Luther King, Jr. Parks. More than six hundred trees will be planted as part of our goal to reforest this great "city of trees".

Golf officially swings into play on Saturday, April 24, when the three Olmsted golf courses open to the public at 7:00a.m. Last year, more than 58,000 rounds of golf were played in Cazenovia, South and Delaware Parks. This represents a 12 % increase over the previous year, national trends show a 6% drop.

During the busy warm months, there will be more than 100 seasonal staff working throughout the system. Zone gardeners and turf care workers will be responsible for cleaning, planting, maintaining the grounds, mowing, edging, cutting, pruning, watering, litter and graffiti removal. We also continue our training of "welfare to work", C E O and summer youth participants. Last year 700 people were trained by Olmsted staff for green collar jobs and we expect to do the same this year.

### *Park by Park*

#### **Cazenovia Park:**

- Caz Casino has a new heating system, windows and interior painting.
- The Golf Hut has new awnings and the golf course has improved fairways.
- A Natural regeneration area has been started around the creek and playground area with some native trees being planted.

#### **Delaware:**

- Structural work continues on the Marcy Casino building.
- NYPA-funded Scajaquada Trail (Jesse Kregal Trail) project continues, this will be the first link between Niagara River Greenway and Olmsted spaces. Project includes new standardized signage and lighting.
- Ring Road will be repaved by June 1st with funding from Senator Antoine Thompson.
- There is a new memorial garden in Delaware Park, near Parkside and the 198, the Susan G. Komen Grove, in honor those who have battled breast cancer.

#### **Front Park:**

- We remain optimistic that portions of the park will be completely restored with the digression of a highway, restoring the parks view of the amazing waters.

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Park:**

- Working closely with the city, the \$4.8 million restoration of the Humboldt Basin is ongoing – the project will rebuild the historic water feature – swimming and water fun in warm weather and ice-skating in winter.
- Olmsted is a partner with Better Schools Better Neighborhoods Collaborative. Together we will take nearby park properties and beautify them with clean-up assistance and the planting of gardens.
- Progress continues on a project to eventually deck the Humboldt section of the Kensington Expressway making way for restoration of this stately streetscape and unifying a once strong and beautiful neighborhood.

**Riverside Park:**

- Work continues on the River Rock Gardens project (formerly known as the Minnow Ponds Project) restoring an original Olmstedian feature to this vibrant neighborhood park. Funded through Sam Hoyt and NYPA.
- The park's 90-foot baseball diamond is being renovated.
- The lighthouse has new electric and some new lighting, and there is an effort to raise additional funds to "relight the lighthouse" and enhance the landscapes around it.

**Prospect Park:**

- Boasts New York State's co-champion biggest Elm Tree.
- D'Youville College is planning a student run / student managed outdoor café in Prospect Park.

**South Park:**

- Ongoing invasive plant removal along the Lackawanna/Buffalo border.

Olmsted's **Tree Care** Crew has pruned over 200 mature and young trees and removed 70 hazardous or dead trees throughout the system. With help from AmeriCorps and CEO partners, we have regained lost parkland through the removal of dense invasive Buckthorn and Japanese Knotweed. Total Acreage that has become usable equals, 8.0 acres in Delaware Park; 5.2 in South Park, and 12.1 along the Scajaquada Creek and Jesse Kregal Path. Aesthetically pleasing and wildlife friendly native under story trees and shrubs will be planted.

In 2009, seven hundred trees were planted with a great survival rate of 95% (most volunteer planting programs have a 60 percent rate of survival). 731 trees will be planted in the next two weeks.

HSBC Bank Foundation has paved the way for our organization to "go green" with recycling and composting grants and the start up of the "Olmsted Naturally" team.

This year, we expect to grow our volunteer base to 2,000 volunteers and have over 15,000 donated hours.

"Change for the Parks" campaign kicks off tomorrow. Look for "Change for the Parks" boxes at Anderson's Ice Cream stores! We are thrilled that Anderson's, our exclusive sponsor, is working with us in this grassroots fundraising campaign, and could not have asked for a better partner...after all, what goes better with ice cream than a beautiful Olmsted park landscape.

Olmsted's membership has grown dramatically and our 2010 campaign kicks off in May. Last year we welcomed more than 1500 members. One million people use the parks annually.

Olmsted's key fundraising events this year include:

*Frederick Law Olmsted Gala* - Friday, July 16

*Olmsted Open Golf* - Saturday, August 21

*Party for the Parks* - Friday, September 24

*Fallfest* - Sunday, October 17

*Boating in Hoyt Lake* – all summer

*Golf* – begins April 24

Learn more about the Olmsted Parks Conservancy from our new website, [www.bfloparks.org](http://www.bfloparks.org) or Facebook.

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