



BOCA RATON BEACH & PARK DISPATCH

March 2024 | Official Newsletter of the Greater Boca Raton Beach & Park District



Celebrate With Us As The District Turns 50!

The Greater Boca Raton Beach and Park District turns 50 this month and we're inviting the entire Boca Raton community to join us for a golden celebration.

In March of 1974 the Florida legislature created what was first widely known as the Greater Boca Raton Beach Tax District to help the city pay for the purchase of land that became Red Reef Park and the Gumbo Limbo Nature Center. A few months later residents of Boca Raton voted 2,645-1,649 to approve the legislature's work.

The District's accomplishments over the next 50 years on behalf of the Boca Raton community are worth celebrating!

Beginning on April 11, a special display highlighting our 50 years will open in the Sugar Sand Park Community Center. Ten days later District Commissioners will host a barbecue at Sugar Sand Park that will include free carousel rides for children.

[MORE ABOUT OUR 50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION](#)



Schine On You Crazy Diamond

Ever wonder why, unlike many South Florida neighboring cities, Boca Raton has so few condominiums along its beaches?

A large part of the reason is that the Greater Boca Raton Beach and Park District spent the past half century ensuring Boca Raton's coast remained pristine and open to the community.



Madlane Behind The Scenes

Early in the mornings at then newly opened Sugar Sand Park, Madlane Bentivegna enjoyed sitting on a bench watching the birds, squirrels, raccoons, and even a normally nocturnal fox begin their days.

She'd then head inside to her office within the Sugar Sand Community Center, usually leaving the wildlife behind.

That's by design.

Florida's state legislature created what is now known as the Greater Boca Raton Beach and Park District for the primary purpose of helping the city of Boca Raton spread the cost of a recent beachfront property purchase between residents within city limits and those west of the city who will use the beach.

[CONTINUE READING](#)



North Park Getting Greener

District Commissioners voted at their most recent meeting to pursue a golden SITES rating at North Park. SITES ratings evaluate and certify sustainability and resilience in landscape design, development, and management. Achieving a high SITES rating indicates a commitment to environmental stewardship while positioning North Park as a leader in sustainable landscape management. The designation enhances its value and appeal to the community. A preliminary evaluation determined North Park would currently earn a silver rating. With minimal improvements North Park would become Florida's first gold rated park. The District is also taking steps to ensure the safety of North Park's surrounding communities and by increasing ranger patrols in and around the park.



History In The Making

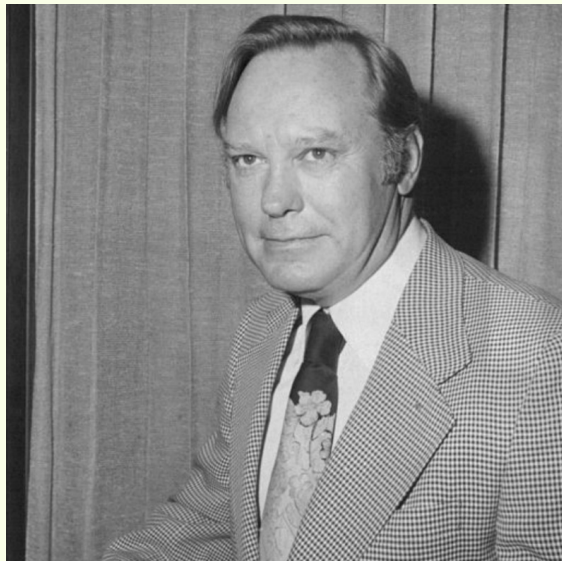
Our golden anniversary celebration within this and future newsletters wouldn't have been possible without the help of the Boca Raton Historical Society. The photos and maps – and much of the information - which can be viewed by following the link in the above Schine Tract Beach Preservation story were provided by the BRHS. One of our favorite displays within the Historical Society is an actual 18th century cannon uncovered in 1984 when a storm eroded sand at Red Reef Park. It's worth a look. Unfortunately, we couldn't fire the cannon as part of the 50th anniversary celebration.

But not always.

Then again, the venomous coral snake slithering through her office wasn't exactly invited.

"Briann [Harms] was in the office and I wanted to ask her a question," Bentivegna said. "I turn around. I see the snake. I said, 'Briann, there's a snake headed your way!'"

[CONTINUE READING](#)



Year Of The Month: 1976

In the year of our nation's Bicentennial, the District became more democratic. Our series highlighting the most important years in District history initially planned to launch with 1974 – the year of the District's creation - but we figured other stories in the newsletter covered 1974's events well. So we're starting with 1976 – the year Boca Raton voters first chose their Commissioners. The process that created the District didn't leave enough time for the first commissioners to be elected, so the governor appointed the initial five. In 1976, William E. Johnson (pictured) and Don Capron defeated their opponents. Former Boca Raton mayor Byrd Marshall, whose son, Richard, was one of the governor's five original appointees, ran unopposed. So did Edward Tobin and Henry Perl.



Pickleball Projects Progressing

Two District pickleball projects continue to move closer to fruition. CSR Construction is currently navigating the City of Boca Raton's permitting process as they endeavor to build 18 covered pickleball courts at Patch Reef Park. There's optimism that construction could begin in the coming months. At North Park, Boca Paddle is refining the designs for its pickleball complex. Twice in the past couple months Boca Paddle briefed Commissioners on their plans – in some cases refining designs to accommodate Commissioner input. America's fastest growing sport will soon have two new homes in Boca Raton.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

MONDAY APRIL 1

**Commissioners' General
Public Meeting, 5:15 p.m.**

MONDAY APRIL 15

**Commissioners' General
Public Meeting, 5:15 p.m.**

MONDAY MAY 6

**Commissioners' General
Public Meeting, 5:15 p.m.**

**Meetings at Boca Raton Swim & Racquet Center
21618 St. Andrews Boulevard Boca Raton, FL**

Ode To Open Space

“You can’t tell a kid that it’s time to exercise; that’s a turn off...you have to say, “Let’s go to the park and have some fun! Then you get them to do some running, play on the swings, practice on the balance beam, and basically get a full workout disguised as play.” – **Arnold Schwarzenegger**



LINKED INTO BOCA RATON

The city of Boca Raton's Recreational Department recently completed an upgrade to the registration portal that allows members of the community to register to play sports, reserve fields, sign up for camps and much more. Follow the link below to use the new and improved portal.

[Recreation Registration Portal](#)

**GREATER BOCA RATON
BEACH & PARK DISTRICT**
Phone: (561) 417-4599

[Send Us A Message](#)

Keep in Touch!



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