



Allegheny County Council

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Title...

Proclamation congratulating the Allegheny County Parks Department on the occasion of its 90th anniversary.

Body...

***WHEREAS**, on April 14, 1927, the Allegheny County Commissioners created the Parks Department for the purpose of “establishing, making, enlarging, extending, operating and maintaining public parks within the county;” they also issued \$1 million in bonds, equivalent to \$14 million today, to develop the parks; and*

***WHEREAS**, Commissioner E.V. Babcock advocated for the preservation of rural areas, and his initial concept included two parks, one in the north and one in the south, which were developed between 1927 and 1931; in the 1920s, much of Allegheny County was still farmland, and most residents just had to step outside their door to go hiking; yet Commissioner Babcock followed his dream, personally buying two huge tracts of land, totaling around 4,000 acres; he sold the land to the County at cost to create North and South parks; and*

***WHEREAS**, despite mocking the idea at first, the public quickly came to love the “people’s country clubs,” and Allegheny County soon acquired another 500 acres; North and South parks provided the foundation for the county-wide system, which expanded to a total of nine parks and over 12,000 acres from 1958 to 1979; and*

***WHEREAS**, Commissioner Babcock hired Paul B. Riis, a nationally prominent landscape architect, as the first director of the new Allegheny County Bureau of Parks in 1927; Mr. Riis laid the groundwork for North and South parks, including major landscaping*

and road systems; and

***WHEREAS**, today, our parks - Boyce, Deer Lakes, Harrison Hills, Hartwood Acres, North, Round Hill, Settlers Cabin, South, and White Oak - all have their own unique features and amenities including golf courses, ice skating rinks, ski slopes, lakes, swimming pools, hiking trails, an historical mansion and more. We are grateful for Commissioner Babcock's foresight for these public spaces that so many of our residents continue to enjoy.*

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** , that we, Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and Council Member John Palmiere, by virtue of the authority vested in us, do hereby congratulate the Allegheny County Parks Department on its 90th anniversary and encourage all residents to visit and experience these wonderful county treasures.*