

with disgruntled public, and events that go wrong through no fault of the 'professional') do seem very close to home. The episode with the 'evil' library taking a site of a proposed park actually did happen to our department. But I can tell you that no 'special' favors were ever part of the deal, just books against tree lovers."—Susan Cooper, Newport, Rhode Island

"The show is about government. It is my opinion that our profession was chosen because out of all government services, the public can relate to parks and recreation. It brings people into government through us. It is a testament to our profession."—Sue Black, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

"It hurts our profession because it portrays top level recreation and parks personnel as political hacks. Although this is sometimes a fact of life in our business, we try hard to debunk this stereotype. Our professional associations have diligently advocated for qualified leadership, and this should be the standard."—Martin De-
necke, Hamburg, New York

"People find it amusing and put as much stock in it as they do in the police department's ability to solve a murder in 48 minutes."—Terry Bertels, Topeka, Kansas

"I believe we would serve ourselves well to have Amy Poehler speak at the next NRPA Congress."—Mark H. Thompson, Paducah, Kentucky

"I have asked non-parks people who participate in our activities. They don't believe it hurts the profession—it's just bad TV."—Dale Larsen, Phoenix, Arizona

"Who could not enjoy the town hall meeting in the school auditorium that holds hundreds of people, but has only 10 in the audience? While I thought it was not a flattering look at our profession, maybe we do better by laughing at ourselves and striving to do better."—Cory Atwell, Glen Ellyn, Illinois

"I have been asked numerous times if I watch the show and what I think of it. My response, 'It makes me laugh, and to laugh makes me feel good.' Have a good day...now go out and make somebody laugh."—Mike Baker, Kalispell, Montana



GREEN GIANT

Mike Trigg

ROOSEVELT PARK had lost its appeal. Erosion had made the park inaccessible and an eyesore in the community. The park has been a part of the Waukegan, Illinois, community since the early 1900s and was in need of major repair, especially along the Waukegan River, which runs through the 12 acre park.

Enter Mike Trigg, Superintendent of Parks for the Waukegan Park District. Trigg began working with Illinois EPA in the early 1990s on projects in various parks along the Waukegan River to counteract stream bank erosion that had been destroying park land and bridges. Before long, Roosevelt Park, which is located about 35 miles north of Chicago, was on the radar. "We needed to address issues upstream in Roosevelt Park," Trigg says. Seeing an opportunity, he thought, "Let's put together a complete park master plan rather than focusing on one small, minor repair. Let's look at the big picture and then see if we can phase in not only improvements along the river, but also throughout the park over a number of years."

And that's exactly what he did, laying the groundwork for a massive multi-stage improvement plan that has spanned a decade. The first objective was to control non-point pollution by converting the section of the Waukegan River in the park to a wetland to provide a buffer between the river and the park. The wetland was established, and continues to create a diverse wildlife habitat, reduce flooding, prevent bank erosion, and filter pollutants and sediments to improve the river's quality. An ongoing community education program includes interactive educational signage at key locations to explain the importance of habitat and showcase stories about the park's history.

"It has been 10 years in the making, but we're going to get it done," Trigg says. Phase three will be underway since he secured funding from the Illinois EPA through a Section 319 Grant to construct an eco-friendly parking lot with rain garden, designed to aid storm water runoff as it migrates down to the river. Also in the plans – a link to a pathway loop with a boardwalk trail system that will stretch several hundred feet through the wetlands that were established in 2000 during an earlier phase of the project. The boardwalk will include educational components such as signage on the importance of wetlands, the Waukegan River, and the Waukegan River Watershed as a way to highlight the impact they are having on Lake Michigan.

"It has been a labor of love," Trigg says. "To see it all come together over the past 10 years has been really exciting – especially to see the increase of the use of the park since we began the park renovation. You see people out on the playground and along the walkways all year round. The community has been supportive of all the improvements in Roosevelt Park."

