



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF
ADAM J. BELLO
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE



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COUNTY EXECUTIVE BELLO LAUNCHES “PARKS 100” IN CELEBRATION OF 100th ANNIVERSARY OF MONROE COUNTY PARKS

ROCHESTER, NY – Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today kicked off community celebrations to mark the 100th anniversary of the Monroe County Parks system. On October 1st, 1926, the first rules and regulations for the creation of a County parks system were adopted, ultimately leading to the opening of the first County park, Ellison Park, on October 1st, 1927.

The Parks 100 Celebration honors the evolution of the beloved parks system and recommits to the continual stewardship of these natural assets. The events and activities held throughout the year will invite us to share stories that connect our community to the parks that we love.

“One of Monroe County’s greatest assets is our access to the natural beauty and recreational spaces found in our County parks system,” **said County Executive Bello.**

“Parks 100 is a perfect opportunity to reflect on our history and celebrate the uniqueness of our 22 county parks, all while keeping an eye to the future so that residents can continue to enjoy all our parks have to offer for the next 100 years to come.”

Since 2020, the Bello administration has invested almost \$20 million in the County parks system, updating infrastructure like roads and lighting, and ensuring compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act where possible. Additional amenities like spray parks, canoe and kayak launches, pickleball courts, and extensive renovations to popular lodges and shelters like Kanatota Lodge at Webster Park and Knollwood Lodge allow for unique recreational experiences across the Monroe County Parks system.

In the coming year, the County will break ground on the Seneca Park Zoo tropics facility and the Children’s Pavilion at Highland Park. The Tropics is a 23,000 square-foot indoor experience and 5,000 square-foot outdoor habitat space that will feature orangutans, lizards, sharks, and more. The Children’s Pavilion, a Frederick Law Olmsted-designed structure that stood at Highland Park

until 1963, will be rebuilt to honor the character of the original structure while incorporating modern accessibility features.

“We sincerely thank Monroe County for the establishment of our glorious park system, the pride of our community, and for the first one hundred years of commitment to the care and stewardship of our parks for all the public to enjoy forever,” **said JoAnn Beck, President of the Highland Park Conservancy.**

In addition to major park improvements, the Parks 100 celebration focuses on a simple goal: getting residents out to experience each of the 22 parks. Through the “Things to Do in the Parks” initiative, the County has identified a unique activity to explore in each park. “Things to Do” cards can be found at County libraries or downloaded at www.monroecounty.gov/parks100.

Residents can also experience the parks through KODAK Camera Club’s photography walks. The KODAK Camera Club is a community of imaging enthusiasts with a desire to learn, experience, and share. Residents are invited to join three Camera Club walks to both explore and document the natural beauty of Monroe County Parks.

KODAK Camera Club walks will take place on the following dates:

- Highland Park – Saturday, May 8th, 2027 from 10 a.m.-noon
- Durand-Eastman Park – Saturday, July 17th, 2027 from 10 a.m.-noon
- Ontario Beach Park – Tuesday, July 20th, 2027 from 6-8 p.m.

“The County parks are a great opportunity to experience the natural beauty of our area. What better way to capture that experience than with a photograph! The KODAK Camera Club is excited to participate in the Parks Centennial, share some knowledge, and have fun creating images in these great spaces,” **said Matthew Stoffel, Director of the KODAK Camera Club.**

Also as part of Parks 100, the Monroe County Library System is bringing a special “Rochester Playground Library” series to our County Parks system. A revival of a library program that began at the turn of the previous century, librarians would travel to local playgrounds to read stories to children, bringing story time outdoors and into our parks.

The Rochester Public Library will relaunch the program to celebrate Parks 100 with ten events in the parks:

- Mendon Ponds Park – January 8th, 2027, 10 a.m.
- Powder Mills Park – February 12th, 2027, 10 a.m.
- Black Creek Park – March 12th, 2027, 10 a.m.
- Ellison Park – April 9th, 2027, 10 a.m.
- Durand-Eastman Park – May 14th, 2027, 10 a.m.
- Greece Canal Park – June 11th, 2027, 10 a.m.
- Highland Park – July 9th, 2027, 10 a.m.
- Webster Park – August 13th, 2027, 10 a.m.
- Seneca Park – September 10th, 2027, 10 a.m.
- Northampton Park – October 8th, 2027, 10 a.m.

“Libraries and parks have so much in common. Both are free public spaces where people can gather, explore, learn, and connect with their communities,” **said Emily Clasper, Director of the Monroe County Library System.** “The Rochester Playground Library brings those experiences together in a wonderful way, inviting families to discover something through a story and then step outside and experience it for themselves. We are thrilled to celebrate 100 years of Monroe County Parks by bringing stories, learning, and exploration into these incredible community spaces.”

Bello also announced that the County’s first Harvest Fest, which took place September 26, will return again next year on Saturday, September 25, 2027, to cap off the year of Parks 100 events. Nearly 5,000 people attended last weekend’s festival at Northampton Park and enjoyed scarecrow building, free pumpkins, and activities with neighboring Springdale Farm.

For details on suggested activities at each of the parks in the Monroe County Parks system and to stay updated on community events during the Parks 100 celebration, visit:

<https://www.monroecounty.gov/parks100>.

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