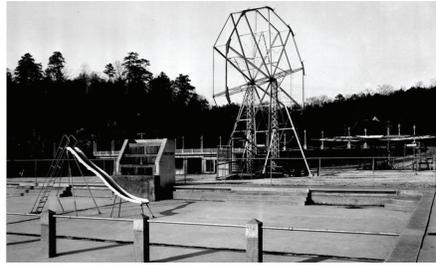
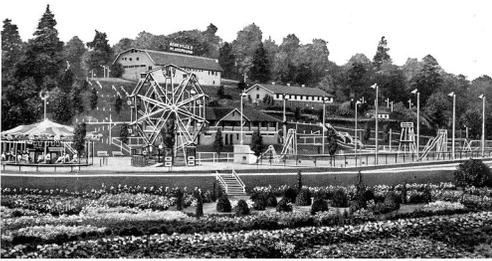


Department History

The City of Asheville began park and recreation services in the late 1890s with the construction of Riverside, Montford and Aston Parks. Shortly after, Recreation Park, McCormick Field and the Municipal Golf Course were added to the system. With a growing park system, the City developed the Parks and Playgrounds Division under the Public Works Department.

Augusta L. Barnett was appointed the first director of the Parks and Recreation Department in 1956. Although Barnett made significant improvements to recreation programs, she did not have the luxury of having quality facilities, and was forced to use schools and YMCA facilities to house programs.



After Barnett's retirement in 1971, Ray L. Kisiah became the director. During his tenure, Parks and Recreation experienced tremendous growth due to the abundance of federal funds to support public parks and recreation facilities throughout the United States. In all, over \$5.2 million of non-city funds renovated existing facilities and built new ones.

Kisiah retired in 1995 and Irby Brinson was named director. In 1994, Parks and Recreation became the first municipal recreation department to receive national accreditation from the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies and was re-accredited in 2004.

In 1997, Parks and Recreation began upgrading Asheville's parks and recreation system by developing the first long-range comprehensive master plan, the Asheville Parks and Recreation 2015 Comprehensive Master Plan and the Asheville Greenways Master Plan in 1998. Both serve as the guide to improvements to existing facilities and addition of new, greenway development, land acquisition, expansion of services and staff, and development of funding opportunities.



The National Recreation and Parks Association named Asheville Parks and Recreation the Gold Medal winner in 2002. Top-notch departments from around the country vie for the award each year in four different categories based on population size.

In 2005, the City of Asheville received significant recreation facilities from Buncombe County as part of the water agreement negotiations. The Municipal Golf Course, Nature Center, McCormick Field, Aston Park and Recreation Park joined the Asheville Parks and Recreation family.