



FILLING HANDBALL COURT EXPANSION JOINTS

Commissioner Stern announced in his January State of the Parks Address that Parks will begin an initiative this spring to repair approximately 1,500 NYC handball courts and promote awareness of the sport. The initiative will span three years.



As part of the initiative, repair crews will wash, scrape, and paint handball court walls around the city.

The crews will also work to repair court surfaces and replace worn-out expansion joints on the horizontal playing surfaces. Ex-

pansion joints are intentional gaps in pavement designed to absorb the movement of concrete as it expands and contracts due to temperature changes. Expansion joints are filled with a soft substance to allow for contraction and expansion. When the filler wears away, the empty expansion joints create trip hazards and interfere with handball play. In the past, Parks handball court joints have been filled with tar, which is unattractive, sticky, and only lasts one year due to freeze-thaw cycles. Expansion joints in older courts can be particularly hazardous because they are 1 1/2" wide, whereas the joints Parks now installs are 1/2" wide.

Five Boro Technical Services and OMP's R & D team have worked together to identify products for re-sealing expansion joints. They have selected elastomeric polyurethanes as the best products for the initiative. When filled with these rubbery materials, expansion joints are allowed to expand and shrink by at least 25% of their original width. At the same time, these sealants retain good resistance to abrasion and wear.

A number of companies manufacture elastomeric polyurethane sealants. Three available products are: Sika Flex -2c SL manufactured by Sika; Sonolastic SL-1 manufactured by Sonneborn; and Vulkem 227 made by Tremco. Typically, manufacturers offer free installation training and five-year warranties on their products. Parks plans to take advantage of both.

Numerous handball courts have already been identified to receive new expansion joint sealants as part of the handball initiative this year. Materials for the joint repair will be funded through Central Operations. The joint sealants will be purchased this month, with delivery and installation training occurring by the end of May.

The initiative will kick off with a citywide handball tournament this June. *For more information on the initiative, contact Rebekah Scheinfeld at (212) 360-1348 or Bradley Tusk at (212) 360-1309.*



Above: handball court joint in need of repair.

GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD LAWNS

An almost invisible revolution is taking place in the temporary fencing employed in two of the agency's flagship parks. In Brooklyn's Prospect Park and Manhattan's Central Park, wire mesh "range" fencing and plastic "deer" fencing are replacing traditional snow fencing used to protect lawns and trees.

The 4' high range and deer fencing are used in place of the red-brick colored,



Snow fencing

wood slat fencing known as "snow" fencing, originally developed to prevent the drifting of snow along highways. One advantage of traditional snow fencing is its price: Central Park Operations has purchased it for as little as \$0.44 per linear foot. But the wide slats on snow fences obscure the park visitors' views.

Wire mesh range fencing and plastic deer fencing are superior to traditional snow fencing for aesthetic reasons. Neil Calvanese, Vice President of Operations for Central Park, notes that the thin, black rectangular grid of wire



Range fencing

range fencing allows park users "to look through the fence...only the posts are visible." Range fencing, however, is more expensive than snow fencing. Made from 10-gauge steel wire, it costs about \$1.65 per linear foot (C. E. Shepherd, 1-800-324-6733).

In Prospect Park, PRM Mike Grattan and Anne Wong, Supervisor of the Natural Resources Crew, have pioneered the use of plastic deer fencing. Like range fencing, deer fencing seems to disappear before the eye.

But deer fencing, made of a light, black-colored plastic in a rectangular pattern, costs only \$0.33 per linear foot (Wayside



Deer fencing

Fence, 1-800-847-7789), less than both snow and range fencing. Deer fencing is often used in Prospect Park to protect young trees from vandals and overly aggressive lawn mowing. If the fencing falls down, its light weight will prevent it from damaging the trees it is meant to

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TWO-CYCLE OIL IN PLASTIC POUCHES

Brooklyn Operations, which has relatively few maintenance problems with small equipment, uses a product called Opti-2 in its two-cycle machines. Opti-2 is a synthetic, silicon-based lubricant that comes in small plastic pouches.

Two-cycle engines, used in small equipment such as lawn mowers and weed wackers, do not have reservoirs for standard motor oil and generally run on a mixture of oil and gasoline. Different machines use different proportions of oil and gasoline, and the wrong combination can ruin a motor. By using Opti-2 instead of standard two-cycle oil, it is virtually impossible to get the proportions wrong. Simply add one pouch of Opti-2 to every gallon of gas, and any two-cycle engine will run smoothly. The proportion is the same for every two-cycle engine.

Opti-2 is purchased in cases of 288 1.8-ounce packets at \$253 per case. This comes to \$0.88 per pouch. By using Opti-2 for all two-cycle engines, equipment will not break down due to mistakes in oil-gas ratios, mixing will be faster and easier, and fewer storage containers full of mixed two-cycle fuel will be needed at each district facility. Brooklyn Operations purchases Opti-2 from Sunset Hardware (718-748-0960) in Brooklyn. *For more information on Opti-2, contact Brooklyn Chief of Operations Nancy Barthold at (718) 965-8922.*

PARKS PAINT COLORS

OMP's R & D Team has compiled an updated list of standard paint colors that should be used by Parks' Capital and M & O divisions. The paint list replaces an older list that had fallen out of use, resulting in mismatched paint jobs on old and new park features. The new list includes a light shade of gray (Federal Color # 37150) that should be used on handball court walls as part of this spring's handball court initiative. The gray should be purchased in an exterior-grade latex. The list also identifies Central Park Green (Federal Color # 14050) as the color to be used on painted wooden benches citywide. Central Park Green is a forest green that is more attractive than the kelly green previously used on some benches. It should also be purchased in exterior-grade latex. In addition to compiling the list of standard paint colors, Parks has asked the Department of Citywide Administrative Services to compile a central requirements contract for paint in order to procure it at a cheaper price. *For the complete list of standard paint colors, contact Emily Willits at (212) 360-8298.*

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protect. The chief disadvantage of deer fencing is that it can be easily trampled.

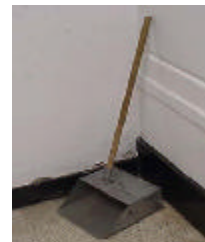
Grattan and Wong have introduced another fencing innovation. In place of the wood posts and 12-gauge steel posts that typically support fences, they use 1" diameter steel reinforcement bars. Each reinforcement rod costs about \$4.76 for a 6' length, as opposed to \$7.00 for the same length of 12-gauge steel post.

Grattan is considering reducing the height of these supporting posts from 6' to 5'. As the rebar comes from the distributor (Colonial Steel, 718-993-5500) in 40 foot lengths, this will enable him to cut 10 posts from a single bar, instead of the eight 6' posts he currently cuts. *For more information, contact Mike Grattan at (718) 965-6973.*

TAKE-OUT TRASH

Parks workers pick up tons of trash each year—literally. Some crews use grabbers and stabbers to pick up litter, but good-old-fashioned brooms and dustpans are still the most common tools of the trade for New York City's Parks workers.

Most park districts use standard industrial-strength metal dustpans to collect litter. These pans, available through the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) storehouse, cost \$9.40 each. Though adequate, the pans are small and require two hands to empty. Joseph Ross, a WEP participant in Brooklyn District 5, noticed these shortcomings and decided that the standard dustpans needed improvement. Using a discarded 5-gallon oil tin from a nearby Chinese restaurant, Mr. Ross made a larger dustpan with a long handle attached. Unlike the dustpans from DCAS, Mr. Ross' dustpan does not swivel and can be emptied using only one hand. Its large size makes it especially useful for sweeping up leaves in the fall.



DCAS Dustpan

Mr. Ross' dustpan proved to be so popular among workers in his district that the District 5 Supervisor, Irving Domenech, asked him to make more. The dustpans have been a joint effort on the part of the two men, who get the empty oil cans from a Chinese restaurant in the district. Mr. Ross makes each pick-up pan using one salad oil tin; metal wire to reinforce the pan opening; a 35-inch piece of lumber secured with two screws for the handle; and duct tape to wrap around the top of the handle. He estimates that he has made 100 pick-up pans to date.



Brooklyn Dustpan

Currently Mr. Ross is developing a stabber out of clothes drying racks that were donated to District 5 by the Housing Authority. The new stabbers will supplement the district's limited number of store-bought stabbers on days when large community service crews work in the district. *For additional information about the pick-up pans or stabbers, contact PS Irving Domenech at (718) 927-2059.*

SHARE YOUR INNOVATIONS!

Do you have ideas that you know would improve the performance of our agency? If you have suggestions for this newsletter or have recently implemented an innovative idea, please contact Parks R & D at (212) 360-8289.

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