

Project Updates:

Professional Development: COVID-19

As a result of the abundance of information, recommendations and guidance from a multitude of entities, both Ms. Rubin & Ms. Merriam spent much time this quarter participating in the following virtual trainings:

- CT Land Trust Q&A with DEEP Commissioner Dykes
- American Camping Association: Virtual On-Boarding and Training
- NRPA: Continuity Planning and Virtual In Services for Aquatic Facilities
- Children and Nature Network: City Leaders Supporting Access to Nature
- City Parks Alliance: Planning for the Summer and Beyond in our Parks
- OEC Youth Camp Town Hall
- STMA Town Hall Meeting: Parks & Recreation, K-12 Facility Maintenance
- Sustainable CT: Community Match Fund
- Reopen CT Virtual Roundtable
- NEPA WEBINAR: The State of our Region
- Pre-Planning for Re-Opening: Beaches, Parks & Summer Camps. Are we ready?
- Redwoods Group: Discussing Aquatics in Uncertain Times (weekly)
- Inland Swimming Discussion w/COGs and DEEP
- Cyber Security Awareness: What All Municipal Employees Should Know
- COVID-19 pandemic. Youth Sports
- Best Practices for Navigating a Safe Reopening of Municipal Offices
- NRPA Webinar: Public Playspaces: Guide To Open Safely and Equitably
- CRPA Webinar: Opening Municipal Park & Recreation Summer Programs & Facilities and Planning for the Return to Play
- Virtual Town Hall Hosted by ACA & YMCA re: Camp Operation Field Guide & Recommendations Review
- NRPA Webinar: Summer Camp & Innovative Youth Programming
- Afterschool Network Webinar: Keeping Youth Engaged this Summer
- CRPA Camp Sections & Webinar: Making the Tough Call

Camp Wangumbaug: A Change of Plans

The State of CT Office of Early Childhood released their initial Summer Camp Guidelines in April, with another revision mid-May. Based on their recommendations, coupled with guidance from the Eastern Highlands Health District, the CDC, and the American Camping Association plans were determined for operating an in-person Camp this summer. However, due to the limitations of the guidelines and the overall risk associated with COVID-19, the Parks & Recreation Commission voted to *Camp Wangumbaug* for the 2020 season.

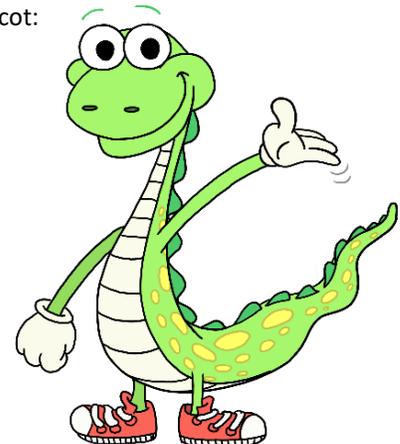
In lieu of an in-person offering, Camp Staff began work on a new initiative, the *Wangumbaug Weekly* Newsletter. The first edition was released on June 29th and included a craft project, a game to play at home, a design your own animal challenge and video content featuring our Camp Director Megan Yanez and Head Counselor Hayley Jacobs!



Wongy the Lake Monster Hits the Town!

Yasmine Forte, Office Assistant/Gatekeeper and Art Major was commissioned to give “life” to a long-standing Parks & Rec. folklore figure, Wongy the Lake Monster. Thanks to her works, Wongy is quickly becoming a prominent fixture in our new *Wangumbaug Weekly* Newsletters through coloring pages, mad libs, crossword puzzles, and graphics. Staff is also working on a “Flat Wongy” campaign to be launched in July, modelled after the well-known children’s book “Flat Stanley.”

Based on Yasmine’s rendering of Wongy, we also worked with a local graphic artist to turn Yas’s drawings into a high-resolution animation that can be used on print media, as well as on online platforms. Say “Hi!” to Wongy, your friendly neighborhood Lake Monster and newly improved Parks & Rec. mascot:



PARKS ARE ESSENTIAL!

If parks are essential (which they are) and have remained open during this time (which they are in Coventry, with appropriate restrictions and guidelines in place), then of course our parks and rec employees are essential as well. They always have been, of course, but their importance is now becoming clearer. For this, we say “Thank You!” to every parks and recreation employee here in Coventry and nationwide working through this stressful and challenging time. You were already doing it, every day, seven days a week, year-round, with a smile on your face and an unwavering dedication to public service, but now you do it in the wake of a pandemic and national emergency going into its third month. You too are essential – and you always have been.

