

The park system in Joliet had its beginning with the purchase of West Park (40 acres) and Highland Park (45 acres) by the City of Joliet. These areas, purchased in 1899, became the nucleus of the present Park District. An additional 327 acres was given to the District by the late Robert Pilcher. This land was purchased from Harlow Higginbotham in 1920 and is now known as Pilcher Park.

An election on July 5, 1922 was successful in establishing the **Joliet Park District**.

In 1926, George Woodruff donated land to construct a nine hole golf course, and then donated additional land in 1927 to add another nine holes, forming Woodruff Golf Course. This property, located on Gougar Road on the east side of Joliet, totals over 100 acres today. **Woodruff Golf Club**

celebrated it's 85th anniversary in 2011. For more information on Woodruff Golf Club, visit [www.woodruffgc.com](http://www.woodruffgc.com).

In 1927, land then known as "Gougar's Pasture" was donated by Richard and Mary Barr. This land was subsequently named "Bird Haven" because the Joliet Park District intended the land to be used as a bird sanctuary. Bird Haven Greenhouse was erected on the site in 1929 on Gougar Road. This facility has played an important role in the cultural, recreational and educational life of the Joliet community. It's Lord and Burnham structure is historically significant to the architecture dating back to 1900. A \$5.6 million rehabilitation took place at the Greenhouse in 2004.

Also in 1927, Charles and Margaret Nowell donated a 20 mile tract at Mills Road and South Chicago Street to the Joliet Park District. This property became the District's first swimming pool, known as Nowell Pool, built in 1929.

In 1929, 241 acres on the west side of Joliet was purchased for what is now known as **Inwood Golf Course**

, located on Jefferson Street in the heart of Joliet. Inwood Golf Course was constructed in 1931, and celebrated it's 80th anniversary in 2011. For more information on Inwood Golf Club, visit

[www.inwoodgc.com](http://www.inwoodgc.com)

In 1930, property consisting of 178 acres was purchased along Jefferson Street for an airport.

With the demand for a municipal stadium to serve high schools and community groups, construction on the 10,000 seat **Joliet Memorial Stadium** began in 1950 on land previously used for **Inwood Golf Course**. Now known as ATI Physical Therapy Field at Joliet Memorial Stadium, this facility is home to various high school and collegiate sporting events, the Taste of Joliet, and the annual 4th of July Fireworks display. For more information on the Taste of Joliet, go to [www.tasteofjoliet.com](http://www.tasteofjoliet.com)

In 1967, the Joliet Park District purchased 177 acres at the corner of Rt. 59 and Caton Farm Road for a third golf course. **Wedgewood Golf Course** opened in 1970 on the west side of Joliet. Find out more about Wedgewood Golf Club at [www.wedgewoodgc.com](http://www.wedgewoodgc.com)

The **Inwood Sports Complex**, located on Jefferson Street, was completed in August 1991. This 25 acre complex features 6 softball fields with concessions and a playground, as well as six soccer fields. To accomplish this, nine holes at Inwood Golf Course were renovated in August 1990.

The Inwood Ice Arena, part of the Inwood Recreation Center was constructed on Jefferson Street in 1959 and burned down in 1991. A new, expanded \$4.5 million facility opened in April 1993. In March 1993, the Business and Administrative Offices moved into the second floor.

**The Andrew B. Barber and Clarence D. Oberwortmann Horticultural Center** opened in August 1998. The funds for this facility were provided through the Joliet Park Foundation via a trust for over \$1.5 million established by two generous benefactors, Mr. Barber and Mr. Oberwortmann. The Horticultural Center is connected to Bird Haven Greenhouse and features spacious banquet rooms, an outdoor covered deck, a computer resource center and full service kitchen.

In 2002 **Splash Station Waterpark** was constructed on 20 acres of land on Route 6 that was

donated by Hollywood (formerly Empress) Casino. The waterpark, which features a 200 foot six lane racing slide, an 865 foot lazy rizer, body slides, tube slides, a sand play area and zero depth pool. Over a half million people have visited Splash Station since 2002. For more information on Splash Station, visit [www.joliet splash station .com](http://www.joliet splash station .com)

In 2005 the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to move forward with construction on the \$13.5 million **Inwood Athletic Club**. This project, the largest in Joliet Park District history to date, connects to the Inwood Recreation Center to form a 62,000 square foot facility, now known as the Provena Saint Joseph Inwood Athletic Club. Features include an 8 lane, indoor swimming pool, indoor walking track, 10,000 square foot fitness floor, ice arena, two group exercise rooms, whirlpool/steam room and smoothie bar. 2011 marked the 5 year anniversary for the Provena Saint Joseph Inwood Athletic Club. To find out more, visit [www.inwoodathleticclub.com](http://www.inwoodathleticclub.com)

In 2009, the Joliet Park District entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the State of Illinois for use of 74.13 acres of open space located on Mission Boulevard, just west of the Illinois Youth Center. **The Joliet Park District Soccer Complex** was dedicated in September 2011. This complex features twelve soccer fields, as well as practice space and a concession stand. Using an adjacent parcel of this open space, the Joliet Park District unveiled the Organic Community Garden in October 2011.