

Community Services Quarterly Report—Lisa Laschinger

It may seem as though much continues to remain the same, but 2021 is off to an incredibly different start than what we experienced throughout the past year. The winter recreation season experienced record use of the facilities and park spaces, which speaks volumes to the community's value around connecting with nature and access to the outdoors as a means of caring for their mental and physical well-being throughout the pandemic. The reopening of WPCRC has been very well-received, and the KNOW program and open gym continue to be some of the only recreational options for middle school and high school youth on the north side. As summer approaches, and Public Health Madison and Dane County has released a series of public health orders in which restrictions have been lessened, we are cautiously optimistic that events and shelter and athletic reservations will resume to near pre-COVID levels. Many organizers have reached out to either reserve facilities, complete applications or inquire about opportunities for the summer. We are anticipating a major influx of programming and very different use of the park spaces than we experienced over the last twelve months, and when it does happen, we will be prepared to ensure safe and enjoyable experiences across the system.

Customer Services (Joanne Austin):

2021 Watercraft Storage/Mooring Update

Parks currently operates 396 watercraft storage spaces over 17 park locations. Over 75% of users from 2020 renewed their storage for 2021, with over 50% using the online renewal system implemented last year. A new 2021 policy allows two smaller watercraft to be stored in a single space for an additional fee. Staff have begun the process of offering vacant spaces to those on the waitlist, which is over 200 long. The mooring field at Marshall Park has 30 buoys. Staff are currently communicating with 2020 users to determine if they will renew their spaces. Any vacancies will be filled from the waitlist, which is 45 long. There are several improvement projects planned for 2021:

- Replacing of racks at Marshall Park with newer models, adding 30 additional spaces, and laying down a new gravel pad. This project will also include improvements to the mooring user dinghy storage racks.
- Spring Harbor will have 18 additional spaces on a new gravel pad.
- Tenney Park will replace racks with newer models, adding 3 additional spaces.
- Evaluating additional parks as potential watercraft storage locations.

2021 Athletic Reservations Update

Athletics is back! Baseball, softball, soccer, ultimate, football, tennis, pickleball, and more are back at Madison Parks. Groups like MSCR, MMSD, MAYSA, Southside Raiders, and MUFA have all scheduled a return to play at Madison Parks after a long 2020 without organized athletics. Nearly 30,000 hours of scheduled play by dozens of users have already been made for 2021. More reservations continue to come pouring in. Users must submit return to play plans that cover COVID-19 protocols set by PHMDC. The year has started sunny and windy, perfect for getting play started out on the fields as soon as early April, not always the case. Barring a late April snow-storm we're looking at a great start to the 2021 athletic seasons.

2021 Shelter Reservations Update

With fewer restrictions on group gatherings, the public interest in reserving park shelters is surging. We are taking reservations every day, and with shelters reopening for the season in mid-April we expect many more reservations for both large and picnic shelters. Many private events

as well as work/school picnics, concerts, etc. are looking to use park facilities, with the advantage of safer gatherings in the open air. Customers are advised to follow the PHMDC orders for their own safety, and to follow our regular cancellation policy. We are looking forward to a busy season

2021 Permits (Dog, Disc Golf, Lake Access and Cross Country Ski)

There has been a heavy and steady stream of online applications for dog, disc golf, lake access and cross country ski park permits. The change in the application procedure forced upon staff and patrons by the pandemic in early 2020 means that more customers have become comfortable with applying online or over the phone instead of leaving envelopes in onsite drop boxes. Parks has sent friendly email reminders to previous customers with convenient website links to purchase permits online. Patrons seem very pleased with the process.

	2019		2020		2021	
	Annual	Daily	Annual	Daily	Annual	Daily
Disc Golf	1470	5284	1908	3279	830	302
Dog Park	7959	590	9197	200	6493	63
Lake Access	3004	4561	6728	2044	1707	41
Ski Trail	1474	967	1501	1017	3545	1134

Warner Park Community Recreation Center (Terrence Thompson):

The WPCRC reopening is off to an excellent start. The WPCRC is open is for limited access to community programming, open gym, game room, fitness room, and facility rentals. MSCR Adult and 50+ fitness classes will resume starting April 5, 2021. NewBridge is offering foot care clinics on the second Friday and fourth Thursday of the month. With daily open gym times, afterschool open gym continues to be a popular service for Northside teens. The pandemic has provided opportunities to engage and serve a new community of adults that now access the WPCRC open gym services daily as well. With one of the only public facilities offering full-day active recreational services in the city, WPCRC staff are working hard to meet the community’s needs during the pandemic.



The WPCRC will be partnering with the Goodman Community Center Fit Youth Initiative (FYI) and Madison’s newest semi-professional basketball team, the Madison Mavericks, to host the 3 Annual Spring Break-A-Way 3on3 Basketball Tournament Series. After March Madness, the real tournament begins. Northside teens compete in a double-elimination tournament while enjoying a free meal, free skills clinic, live music, and prizes donated from local businesses. With on-site registration, players simply have to show up with two friends, or we will find a team for drop-in players. The tournament series is held on Friday nights, April 30 through May 28 from 5pm-8pm, and includes middle school and high school divisions. Appropriate modifications have been made and staff are finalizing COVID response plans to ensure a safe event.

The WPCRC now offers Silver & Fit and Active & Fit memberships, providing eligible members access to the exercise room at no cost through reimbursement of eligible health plans.

Rangers (Josh Schmitt):

With the onset of spring and the warmer weather returning the Rangers have seen an increase in activities in the parks. This means that it is time to bring on some additional help for the summer. We have completed our spring hiring and will be focusing on training new hourly Rangers over the next few weeks. These new Rangers will undergo a program designed to teach them about our park system, their roles and our standards on how we interact with people in our parks. We have great team and are looking forward to introducing some new faces to the Ranger roles.

The Winter Disc Golf season officially ended on March 31st and all of the baskets has been removed for the year. This winter saw an incredible amount of use of the course and great conditions for winter disc golf. The previous year’s mowing made for good turf conditions and a beautiful backdrop to spend a few hours. The summer disc golf courses are currently closed to let the turf get a head start for the year with a timeline of mid-April to open Elver. The current plan is to keep Hiestand closed until late April or early May to allow the significant investments into grass seed and fertilization that we made this year to get an extra head start.

Aquatics (Josh Schmitt):

The Aquatics team is very busy planning for the summer season. It will be another modified season as the Covid-19 pandemic continues and we are working hard to provide safe access to the pool, beaches and splash pads. We are confident that protocols will ensure another safe and effective Aquatics season and are currently looking into how we can safely host programs that we did not host in 2020. In particular, we are looking into the return of swimming lessons which we did not host in 2020 due to the uncertainty we faced as Covid-19 was emerging as a threat in our community. Our swimming lessons program is a very valuable service in a community surrounded by water and we feel like this is a very important service we can offer at a low cost.

Recreation Services (Tracey Hartley):

Winter Recreation showed impressive numbers this 2020-2021 season. Rentals were at an all-time high and people definitely looked to Madison Parks for their winter fun. Extensive measures were taken to safely serve customers for rental operations, including limiting public access to the buildings with exception of access to restrooms, heightened cleaning of building facilities and sanitization of rental equipment, as well as a good amount of time spent on educating staff and guests about the expectations. Many guests expressed satisfaction at the efforts taken to keep the community safe and keep the facilities open to the public throughout the winter. In an effort to streamline operations, No rentals were offered at Yahara Hills or Odana Hills Golf Courses for the 2020-21 season. Listed below are the number of days opened this season and a comparison of the data for the past three years of Winter Operations at three locations.

	Elver Park	Tenney Park	Vilas Park
Opening Date	December 15, 2020	January 6, 2020	January 2, 2021
Closing Date	February 28, 2021	February 21, 2021	February 21, 2021
Length of season	75 Days	46 Days	51 Days



Photography by Wendy Moran
Winter Concession (Tenney Park 2021)
Madison Parks Division

VILAS PARK	Winter 2020/2021	Winter 2019/2020	Winter 2018/2019
SKATE - HOURLY RENTALS			
ADULT SKATE 1ST HR	1605	629	708
ADULT SKATE ADD HR	6	11	9
CHILD SKATE 1ST HR	615	468	463
CHILD SKATE ADD HR	9	1	5
HOCKEY STICK	133	176	179
SNOWSHOE - HOURLY			
ADULT SNOW SHOE	244	N/A	N/A
ADULT ADD HOUR SHOE	16		
YOUTH SNOW SHOE	60		
SNOWSHOE - DAILY			
ADULT SNOWSHOE DAILY RENTAL	2	N/A	N/A
YOUTH SNOWSHOE DAILY RENTAL	3		
TOTAL	2693	1285	1364

TENNEY PARK	Winter 2020/2021	Winter 2019/2020	Winter 2018/2019
SKATE - HOURLY RENTALS			
ADULT SKATE 1ST HR	4326	2787	2268
ADULT SKATE ADD HR	26	7	31
CHILD SKATE 1ST HR	1150	1418	938
CHILD SKATE ADD HR	18	3	16
HOCKEY STICK	374	454	390
UNLIMITED SKATE	N/A	2	N/A
TOTAL	5894	4671	3643

ELVER PARK	Winter 2020/2021	Winter 2019/2020	Winter 2018/2019
SKI - HOURLY RENTALS			
ADULT SKI 1ST HOUR	2913	1090	918
ADULT SKI ADD HOUR	875	64	9
CHILD 1ST HOUR	761	362	514
CHILD ADDITIONAL HOUR	129	22	23
SKI POLE ONLY	13	6	N/A
SKI - DAILY RENTALS			
ADULT SKI DAILY	42		
ADULT ADDITIONAL DAY	15	N/A	N/A
YOUTH SKI DAILY	11		
YOUTH ADDITIONAL DAY	5		
SKI - WEEKLY RENTALS			
ADULT SKI WEEKLY RENTAL	13	N/A	N/A
YOUTH SKI WEEKLY RENTAL	9		
SKATE - HOURLY RENTALS			
ADULT SKATE 1ST HR	1457	356	672
ADULT SKATE ADD HR	32	1	8
CHILD SKATE 1ST HR	1014	456	638
CHILD SKATE ADD HR	21	4	7
HOCKEY STICK	72	62	77
SLED			
HOURLY RENTAL	936	668	627
PURCHASE	23	2	3
SNOWSHOE - HOURLY			
ADULT SNOW SHOE		187	121
ADULT ADD HOUR SHOE	N/A	6	3
YOUTH SNOW SHOE		31	16
TOTAL	8341	3317	3636

Community Events (Kelli Lamberty):

Our efforts in the last quarter have been focused on developing permits and process' to allow for more flexible use of parks and public spaces as COVID restrictions ease. We've worked on permits to provide organizations and businesses opportunities to utilize the less restrictive outdoor gathering limits. We have created streamlined, low cost permits for children's day camps and for groups offering small outdoor classes – yoga, dancing, fitness. We are working with the City's vending coordinator to take a look at expanding vending opportunities in Parks. These groups have minimal impact on our parks. We can still reserve shelters, fields, facilities, etc. - and offer them a lifeline to keep their business' going through the end of COVID.

With new Health Orders first increasing the outdoor gathering limit to 500 and now no limit, but maintaining physical distancing requirements, we are working to put together new information for event organizers, update the special event web site and review the permits currently in process. We've put together an Event Safety Checklist for organizers that details the expectations around the health orders and assures us that organizers know what the requirements are and have access to protocols.

We're hearing from many Park and Street Use event organizers excited to put on their events. Street Use Staff Commission meetings started up again on March 31 and we will likely continue on our regular schedule from here on out. Applications for Downtown Performance Spaces and Neighborhood Block Parties will soon be available to complete on-line.

It's looking like the light at the end of the tunnel is getting brighter – and that's a good thing!