

SUPERINTENDENT'S OCTOBER 2023 REPORT

COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary

I consider September to, on average, be one of the best months of the year for getting active outside in Madison. This September did not disappoint with some great weather and lots to do. It was a little warmer than average with some really warm days, but overall, it made for a great month for Parks. Ironman, Great Taste, concerts, and numerous other events were held across our system. We continue to see a higher than historically normal use of our system, especially in the non-peak, non-event type of use. I consider this to be a very positive lasting impact of the pandemic. People appear to be more connected to their parks and nature than before.

The City of Madison was selected to be one of the first cities for the new Nature Everywhere program hosted by Children and Nature Network and National League of Cities. The goal of Nature Everywhere is "Creating equitable access to nature everywhere children live, learn and play". They hope to have 100 cities in the program by 2025. Madison Parks and Public Health Madison & Dane County are the lead agencies for this program. This program ties into Madison's existing City's Cities Connecting Children to Nature.

Work is commencing on the landscape plans surrounding the Olin building. This work is a partnership of many staff including Olbrich and the Ecology team. The conceptual vision for this landscape was laid out by Jeff Epping, our former Director of Horticulture at Olbrich. This will be a many phase project over many years, but it will create a much more resilient and sustainable landscape surrounding the building and within Olin Park.

Golf courses remained busy and early in the month we set a record for revenue in a year. As of October 3rd, rounds played are nearing 140K, which will be a record at least for this millennium, and revenue is approaching \$5 million. This is a stunning figure given that the 2018 year saw a final revenue number of \$2.6M. Unfortunately, costs pressures continue to be a major issue for Golf (and Parks, and the world), so overall profitability will not be a record on a percentage basis, though on an absolute scale it will be close.

Future Commission Items

- Golf Enterprise Update – The Golf Team is working to prepare a report to the Facilities Programs and Fees Subcommittee and the Board of Park Commissioners on the past 2 years of operations as well as an outlook on future opportunities to continue to implement the Task Force on Municipal Golf in Madison Parks' recommendations. Given staff departures since the beginning of the year and budget actions, the goal is to present additional information to the BPC before the end of the year. This is in addition to the work being done to update Yahara.
- West Parks Area Plan – We are continuing the outreach and planning around the West Area planning region. We anticipate having final park development plans for neighborhood and mini parks in the area to share with the Commission in the coming months.

Personnel Updates

Promotions/Hires:

David Vetovec has accepted the General Parks Supervisor (Central Parks) starting 09.03.23

Samantha Peckham has accepted the position of Director of Horticulture (start date to be determined)

Section reports

Parks Operations

Conservation:

- Worked on controlling invasive plants including porcelain berry at Owen and Stricker's Pond, Japanese knotweed at Turville Point, and invasive brush at Knollwood and Owen.
- Collected native seeds at several parks, which will be sown later, and trimmed hiking trails system wide.
- Hosted a volunteer workday at Cherokee Marsh South Unit to collect prairie seeds and the Friends of Owen worked on woody species control in the prairie at Owen.
- Our Operation Fresh Start crew worked on collecting and cleaning native seed from various parks, and controlling buckthorn and other woody invasive species at Edna Taylor.

Construction:

- Reworked the west side of Glacier Hill detention pond to alleviate drainage concerns.
- Prepared the playing surface for the new cricket pitch at Elver Park by adding topsoil, leveling the grade, and spreading turf grass seed and fertilizer.
- Continued to emphasize playground safety by conducting playground inspections, replacing kick-out mats, and installing new swing chains and clevises.

Facilities:

- Closed and winterized the pool, splash pads and beach houses for the season.
- Built and installed signs recognizing donors at The Glen Golf Park, and at accessible playgrounds at Brittingham and Rennebohm parks.
- Completed painting Brittingham Boat House, completed construction of the trellis and seating area at Olbrich Gardens, and secured a contractor to re-shingle the Wingra Boathouse.

General Parks:

- Supported the Parks Trucks and Treasures event at Warner Park by providing equipment and staff support.
- Completed brush removal projects on the Yahara River Parkway, Warner Park, and Sycamore Park.
- Welcomed back the popular Talking Spirits tours at Forest Hill Cemetery, supported by the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.
- Supported special events including the grand opening of the Jeff Erlanger accessible playground at Rennebohm Park, and the E-Scow national championship regatta event at Marshall Park, which included more than 100 sailboats.

- Ecology Team

- Completed beautification projects at nine parks throughout the system (Aldo Leopold, Arbor Hills, Dominion, Hoyt, Owl Creek, Penn, Rennebohm, Sunridge, and Sunset) and worked on planning and preparations for fall tree and landscape bed planting.
- Worked on controlling Japanese Knotweed and collected seed of native species from Tier I meadows.
- Held four volunteer days with Wild Warner to remove buckthorn in the Warner Park woods.

Mall Concourse:

- Completed late-season lawn aerating, overseeding, and fertilizing to maintain turf strength throughout the upcoming winter months.
- Installed the autumn banners throughout the service area to complement the natural seasonal décor, and began daily leaf clean-up.
- Supported preparation and clean-up of several events including the Taste of Madison, Ironman, and Live on King.
- Began the work with other City agencies to proactively respond to any concerning Halloween State St activities. There will not be an organized sponsored Halloween event on State St again this year.

Planning and Development

- Work on the '2023 Sport Court Maintenance' contract was completed in early October by Contractor Poblocki Paving Corp with work this year at eight parks to perform crack and depression filling, coloring and re-striping on basketball, pickleball and tennis courts.



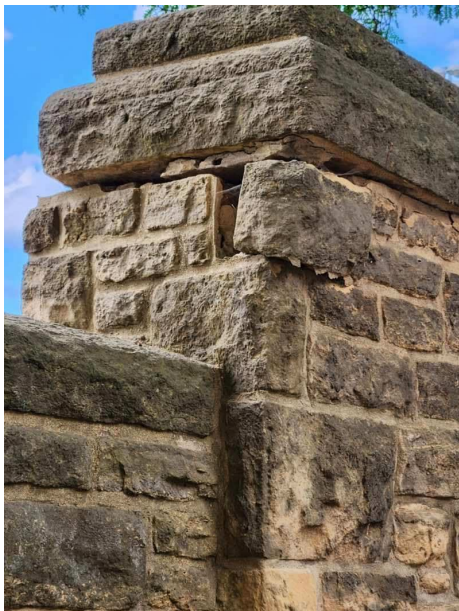
Maintenance work complete at Door Creek Park N pickleball/tennis courts.

- Work is currently underway by Contractor Madison Commercial Landscapes, Inc. on the '2023 West Parks Playground Replacements' contract. The playground equipment at Maple Prairie and Raemisch Homestead Parks is being installed the first week of October and is anticipated to be completed by the end of that month. Work at Oak Park Heights Park will get underway in late October and continue through the end of November.



The worksite at Maple Prairie Park playground.

- Breese Stevens- Brearly St Gate was recently repaired. Parks contracted with A&M Masonry to reset several stones that had been displaced. A separate contract for repair of the main gates at E. Wash and Patterson St. is being awarded to Bachmann Construction Co. This work is expected to be completed yet this fall.



- Park Development Plans- West Area public outreach is winding down. One additional listening session is scheduled for 10/4 at Marshall Park, to coincide with the "Learn to Fish" public event. After this event, staff will begin Phase 3 which entails drafting and finalizing the park development plans and prepping to present to BPC.
- Century Fence has been awarded a contract for fencing repairs, including at Warner Park Dog Park, Heritage Sanctuary, and Penn Park. This work will be completed this fall.
- The 2024-2027 Playground Equipment RFP is currently out for bid. Planning renews this RFP every (3) years, with the goal of vetting playground equipment vendors to ensure we are purchasing items which meet current safety guidelines, are of a high quality to minimize maintenance and maximize life span, and provide ample play value. Staff will score the submittals and ultimately choose 3-4 vendors to work with for the next (3) years.
- Penn Park Courts project is on-going with the Mini-Pitch planned to be installed in mid-October.
- A new concrete sidewalk was installed at Vilas Park for access to the new accessible beach mat. The beach mat will be installed next spring.
- New concrete pads were installed at Olbrich Botanical Gardens for a new bike parking area. The bike racks will be installed in the coming weeks.
- Clearing work is underway at Elver Park as the initial step to re-route holes 2-4 of the Disc Golf Course. The re-route will eliminate players throwing discs across the open hillside that is popular for use by other park users. Additional work to prepare the new holes will be done next year with the expected opening next fall.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens

- **Royal Thai Pavilion & Bridge** –The renovation project on the Royal Thai Pavilion started on September 19th, 2023. First up is the process to build scaffolding around the entire structure and cover it. This will provide the contractors with a heated environment so that the wood is protected once the tiles are removed. Any tiles removed that have legible writing on them from the community event in 2001 where community members wrote messages of hope on the tiles will be saved. Tiles are currently being made that identically match the current tiles.

A tree fell on the bridge to the Royal Thai Pavilion. It caused damaged to the railings. The wood boards on the bridge need replacement and this project was already in progress. Until the railing and bridge boards can be replaced the bridge is closed.

This Royal Thai Pavilion restoration and the bridge repairs were featured on a front page article in the Wisconsin State Journal in September: [Olbrich's Thai Garden off limits for the moment, as the bridge and pavilion need repairs](#)

- **GLEAM 2023** – Have you been to GLEAM yet? Get your tickets on the new GLEAM website: <https://www.olbrichgleam.org/> Take a sneak peak of this year's installations in this [video](#). Photo Journalist John Hart from the Wisconsin State Journal captured a variety of wonderful photos from GLEAM featured [here](#)!. GLEAM runs through Oct. 29th.