

SUPERINTENDENT'S JUNE 2024 REPORT

COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary

Summer is here. Even if official summer is not, we are moving quickly into the busiest time of the year for Parks usage. Across the system thousands of people are visiting daily for a wide variety of purposes. Parks serves a wide array of users and the months of June and July highlight that. Lake access, events, athletics, nature recreation, and more are happening everyday across the system.

The Goodman Pool opens in June, and we are excited to welcome back the thousands of annual users. The Golf Courses continue to do well and despite a wet May are still ahead of last year's revenue and rounds pace. Lake Access permits, dog park permits, and disc golf permits are all solid and looking to sustain historic high levels over the last few years. Reservations for picnics, gatherings, and events are also at peak levels over the next couple of months. Athletic reservations are also doing well, and we continue to struggle to accommodate the demands on field and court spaces. One note on that is that we unfortunately have had to permanently close the Vilas tennis courts due to their state of disrepair and them becoming a hazard to public safety. Field trips to parks are also a common theme and if you have been by Vilas recently, you know that the parade of busses from across the state and region doesn't ever seem to stop in May/June. Park-hosted events are also kicking off in June with a full slate of Parks Alive, events at The Glen, the return of Ride the Drive, and many others slated for a busy summer. Though this level of activity is a challenge sometimes, we as a team are always excited to see all the work pay off through folks getting outside and connecting to nature and each other! We are in the fun business and business is good right now!

The City closed on the Marty Farm acquisition in early June so the long awaited completion of Elver Park is a big and significant step closer to reality. This is exciting but is just the beginning of additional work to maintain that land and to continue to acquire adjoining property leading up to a planning process coming in a couple of years. Even in these challenging times for operating budgets, we remain committed to acquisition of the land needed to make sure we have a great park system 100 years from now.

Future Commission Items

- Budget briefing – We are working on how to best engage the BPC as a policy making body related to budget considerations. There are a number of potential areas of important consideration, including service reductions and revenue generation opportunities to explore. There is also consideration of special charges and a tax levy referendum being contemplated by the Common Council at this time. The Common Council has hosted five community engagement meetings on the topic of the budget and has four more scheduled over the next month. In addition to the overview provided as a part of the Superintendent's report this month, we will work to provide a more significant update in July and/or September.
- Marshall Houses – Parks staff continues to work with Real Estate and the City Attorney's Office to engage with the property owners of the historic homes in Marshall Park. The goal is to bring an update and potential options for moving forward to the Commission in the next couple of months.

- Olin Houses – We will be working on a management plan for the Olin Houses as we acquire them. We own three of the houses at this point and would like to have a management strategy in place moving forward. We anticipate buying more of these and it would be good to begin developing the plan for holding strategy. We are hopeful to have a plan in place by the Fall.
- Parks Division Work Plan / Roadmap – Staff will present the Division’s roadmap to the Board, likely in May or June. The work plan provides an overview of significant change initiatives that the Division is undertaking and/or working on in 2024. The roadmap elements each have an assigned manager who are leading the work associated with that element.
- Art in Parks Policy - the Long Range Planning Subcommittee continues working on a new Art in Parks Policy. It is anticipated that it will come to the Commission in the next month or two.

Personnel Updates

Promotions/Hires:

- Charlotte Blotz has been promoted from West Parks Operations Leadworker to West Parks Supervisor. She started her new position on May 13, 2024.
- Jay Walters has been promoted from Payroll & HR Specialist for the Parks Division to Central Parks Supervisor. He started his new position on May 13, 2024.
- Erik Disch has been hired as Greenskeeper 1 Trainee within the Golf Program. He started his new position on May 13, 2024.
- Ken Allen has been hired as Golf Programming Leadworker for the Golf Program. He started his new role on May 28, 2024.
- Andrea Romines has been promoted from hourly Assistant Golf Professional to Golf Programming Leadworker. She started her new role on May 28, 2024.

Staff Departures:

- Sarah Grimalkin resigned from her position as Landscape Architect 3. Her last day with Madison Parks was May 10, 2024.
- Jeff Williams retired from his position as Parks Maintenance Mechanic with the Parks Facilities Maintenance Team. After 38 years of service, his last day was May 10, 2024.
- Dan Breunig resigned from his position as Golf Programming Assistant. His last day was May 17, 2024.

Section Updates

Community Services – Terrence Thompson

Community Events & Customer Service

Events (Kelly Post)

- The 2024 event season has begun. We had our busiest May in the last decade, permitting over 50 events in May!
- Carts in Parks started in May, with the first Glen Movie Night on May 19. It was a great night for The Glen, the food vendors, and the public, who came to see a free movie and enjoy some yummy food from local vendors at a beautiful Madison Golf Park.
- We have seen a lot of last-minute requests this year, which can make it more challenging to manage the workload. We will be accessing our current deadlines and permitting processes through the summer to see where we can improve in this area.

Parks Alive (Debra Alleyne)

Interns

- We were fortunate to have a competitive recruitment for the Parks Alive AASPIRE Internship and are excited to welcome Maria Fernanda Achaya. Maria has a lot of experience as a former educator and is fluent in English, Spanish, Italian, and Chinese. She will begin her internship on June 3, ahead of other interns, to prepare for our first Parks Alive event on June 10. This year, we will have a Wanda Fullmore Intern for Parks Alive.

Food Cart Guidelines

- Based on our observations last year and feedback from the communities we serve, we have decided to institute Food Cart guidelines specifically for Parks Alive. With the help of the Park and Street Use Supervisor Kelly Post and Meghan Blake-Horst, Street vending Coordinator, we are preparing the workshop for all potential participants. In addition to basic time and location information, these guidelines include:
 - Our new policy around event cancellation and alternative site relocation
 - Directions around the elimination of single-use plastics replaced by the use of environmentally friendly serving plates
 - Appropriate portion sizes to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to sample the cuisine
 - Appropriate menu choices so that all residents can enjoy (e.g. overly spicy food)
 - Invoicing and payment

Customer Service (Joanne Austin)

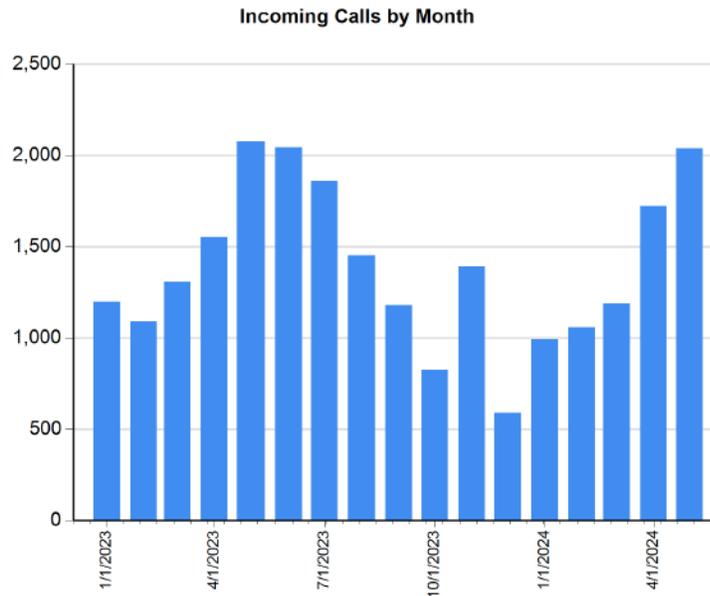
- Of the 441 watercraft rack spaces available, 423 have been reserved for 2024. Every spring, we often work with a few former agreement holders who don't remove their watercraft from the racks when they decide not to renew. This adds extra work for our administrative staff and rangers, who need to coordinate the removal of existing watercraft for new agreement holders to move in. Storage agreements are valid through March 15, 2025, unless an existing customer chooses to renew for the next year. This will give us

approximately two weeks to work with those who need to remove their watercraft before new agreement holders can start their storage on April 1. 27 of the 30 mooring spaces are filled so far this year.

Park	Spaces Available	Spaces Sold	Currently Vacant
BB Clark	18	18	0
Burrows	18	16	2
Cherokee	24	23	1
Cherokee South	18	18	0
Esther Beach	6	5	1
James Madison	42	37	5
Law Park	6	6	0
Marshall	60	59	1
Merril Springs	18	18	0
Olbrich	60	60	0
Olin	24	23	1
Paunack	18	14	4
Spring Harbor	24	23	1
Tenney	69	67	2
Vilas	24	24	0
Warner	12	12	0
Total Watercraft	441	423	18
Mooring	30	27	3

- Our main office line rings constantly on most days in late spring and early summer. Many of these calls are to inquire about shelter availability, purchase permits, and ask general park-related questions. We have a top-notch customer service team, and we juggle our daily duties to answer every one of these calls. The chart below shows the number of calls coming in throughout the year, from January 2023 through May 2024.

Period	Calls	Minutes
2023-01	1,198	1,668
2023-02	1,091	1,870
2023-03	1,309	2,560
2023-04	1,552	3,342
2023-05	2,079	4,423
2023-06	2,044	3,649
2023-07	1,861	3,266
2023-08	1,452	2,758
2023-09	1,180	2,309
2023-10	827	1,304
2023-11	1,394	1,610
2023-12	591	848
2024-01	993	1,318
2024-02	1,061	2,330
2024-03	1,190	2,520
2024-04	1,725	4,092
2024-05	2,039	4,058



Recreation Services & Aquatics (Shane Martin)

Aquatics

- All the beaches opened on Saturday, May 25, for the season, except for Tenney Beach. Tenney Beach is closed this summer to allow space to complete the new beach house.
- The splash parks at Elver, Cypress, and Reindahl opened for the season on Saturday, May 25.
- The Goodman Pool will open on Friday, June 7, at 12pm.
- The Aquatics team has been tirelessly preparing the splash parks, beaches, and Goodman Pool for their respective opening days, ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for our community.
- The Aquatics team has conducted dozens of interviews for Lifeguards and Special Event Attendants. There have been many job offers, and candidates are in all stages of the hiring process.

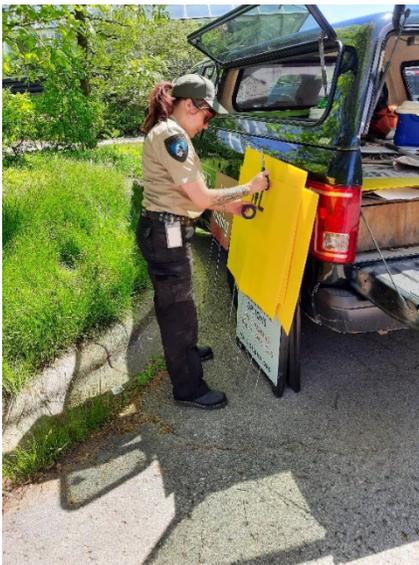
Rec Services

- Several Special Event Attendants have helped with WPCRC Family Fun Nights.
- The Flower Garden pick-up was on Wednesday, May 15, and will help make parks around the city look beautiful.
- The Glen Golf Course event on Sunday, May 19, was successful. Thanks to all involved for making that happen.

Rangers & Volunteers

Rangers (Jason Vroman)

- The first Ranger EV truck has been fully completed and is on patrol. In addition to the truck's electric nature, these new patrol vehicles also include an upgraded lighting system that features a light bar and spotlight. Previously, Rangers had to use the "brights" and a flashlight to navigate dark parks. These upgraded lighting systems allow for a better-lit environment, significantly increasing the Ranger's ability to observe any threats or obstacles within the park after dark.



- Harmony Danielson (FTE Ranger/PEO) and Andrea Grant (hourly) have completed their initial Ranger training and are out on their own for patrol. Harmony (pictured below) and Andrea have done a great job and have shown a great ability to connect with Park users. We are glad to have them on the team!

- The Rangers have been dealing with the impact of severe weather by inspecting and repairing damage to disc golf courses, dog parks, and other parks in the city. This year has been exceptionally wet, and the storms have been quite strong. The Rangers diligently patrol the parks daily to ensure park users' safety and work hard to maintain safe environments for everyone.

Volunteers (John Weichelt)

- The Flower Pick Up event was held on May 15, with over 15 lead gardeners picking up native and annual plants for over 15 different parks and public gardens.
- Monthly Conservation and The Glen volunteer workdays are underway for the season, with over 20 volunteers working at the two locations on restoration work and garlic mustard pulls.
- The Bird & Nature event was successful with over 12 volunteers from Madison Parks and representatives from all major friend groups with activities and 500-person attendance at the WPCRC on April 28.

Warner Park Community Recreation Center (Zach Watson)

- The WPCRC Expansion Project was put out to bid on May 16, 2024. We conducted a pre-bid site tour on May 29, 2024, with 5 construction companies in attendance. Another pre-bid site tour is scheduled for June 6, 2024, and a virtual bid talk will take place on May 31, 2024. Bids for the project are due on June 27, 2024, and the desired completion date is December 31, 2025.
- The Sustain Dane Powerful Teen Leaders Summer Internship has offered interviews to participants from the KNOW Program from May 13-May 24. It aims to hire 10 youth from the KNOW Program.

Parks Operations

Conservation:

- Contractors performed invasive species control work on 170 acres.
- Completed first pass through all remaining management units for spring invasive species control. Targets included garlic mustard, Dames's rocket, hedge parsley, motherwort, and burdock.
- Sowed native seed mixes in areas burned since last summer.
- Hosted conservation park tour at Elvehjem Sanctuary, and volunteer workday at Heritage Sanctuary to pull garlic mustard and Dame's rocket.
- Supported Friends of Edna Taylor volunteers with planting plants obtained through Dane County Ripple Effects.

Construction:

- Grading of North Sherman rd. at Cherokee Park which included removing the old gate poles, eliminating the cul-du-sac, and narrowing the drive.
- Finished the erecting of the new batting cage at Bowman Park.
- Poured 3 donor bench concrete pads at Wingra, Hoyt and James Madison Park.
- Installed a new climber at Oak Park Height's Park.
- Prepared all beaches for the season by removing debris, adding sand and grooming.

Facilities:

- Performed water startups on community gardens, irrigation, drinking fountains, Goodman Pool, splash pads and fountains.
- Painted the Bernie's Beach shelter.
- Installed HVAC in Elver Athletic garage, new doors at goodman maintenance facility building B, and finished demolition of the 30'x70' roof deck at the Mallards stadium.

General Parks:

- Athletic fields were prepped for various types of athletic events.
- Shabazz High School students visited Warner to learn about the forest spring ephemerals and were given seed to put down with the Ecology Team.
- Prepared Forest Hill Cemetery for Memorial Day.
- Began cleaning boat launches and did an initial cleanup of beaches.
- Responded to widespread damage caused by 5/21/24 storm.
- Prepared Rennebohm Park for Picnic in the Park.

Mall Concourse:

- Planted large landscape beds at the Top of State Street.
- Continued maintenance on Pedestrian Mall planters and benches.
- Power washing sidewalks and other amenities continued daily.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens

- **Bolz Conservatory** – Maintenance work finally began on the Bolz Conservatory in mid-May. This work is focusing on the condition of the steel framework of the building, condition of the windows, and repair and replacement of mechanical equipment in the cupola. Not all the repairs will be made during this closure time due to upcoming booked wedding ceremonies and Blooming Butterflies. Dates for 2025 are being reserved for completion of these maintenance projects and others.



Figure 1: Bauer Construction evaluates the windows from the outside of the Bolz Conservatory

- **Royal Thai Pavilion** – Phase 1, the roof replacement, is complete for the Royal Thai Pavilion. Phase 2 is now in progress. This phase is focusing on cleaning the structure and removing all the biologicals that have grown on it over the years. Once clean, they are replacing wood that needs to be replaced and painting. Overall, the gold leaf is in decent condition. They are repairing areas where it is in poor condition with new gold leaf. Last, they will replace the small mosaic tiles that are featured throughout the artistic details of the structure.



Figure 2: A contractor from Kalam applies new gold leaf to areas where it has worn off.

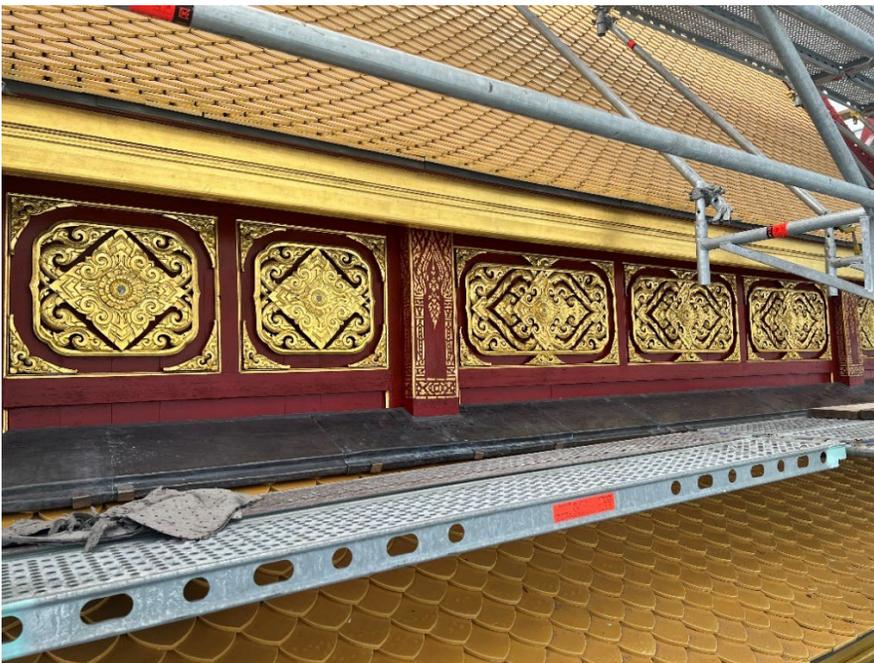


Figure 3: This section has been fully restored with new paint and gold leaf (where needed).

- Atwood Ave. Medians** – Olbrich Botanical Garden Maintenance and Horticulture Department staff completed the installation of irrigation in the median on Atwood Avenue in front of Olbrich Botanical Gardens. They completed the finishing touches to the medians by planting plants and mulching the beds. Soon commuters will have a garden to enjoy while driving or biking by.



Figure 4: Staff install irrigation in the Atwood Ave. median.

- What's in Bloom?** – Director of Horticulture Samantha Peckham and various members of the Horticulture Department are creating weekly bouquets featuring some of the week's best blooming plants along with walking tours. The bouquets are featured at the Greeter Desk. They are also creating weekly maps highlighting some of the week's most fantastic blooms for guests to see.



Figure 5: Example of a weekly Garden Highlight map.

Nature Everywhere BPC Highlights – May 2024

- Nature Everywhere Conference is this week (May 28-31, 2024) at Monona Terrace. Highlights of the conference include Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway providing a welcome to all the attendees. Assistant Park Superintendents Lisa Laschinger and CJ Ryan will share how Madison Parks connects children to nature with the Children & Nature Network Board of Directors as they travel by pontoon boat from Monona Terrace to Olbrich Park. The Board of Directors will enjoy a board meeting and dinner at Olbrich Botanical Gardens. On May 30, 2024 from 4:30-6:30pm, Olbrich Botanical Gardens is hosting an open house for all conference attendees. Activities include sound bowls, greenhouses open for viewing, tram tours, Frautschi Family Learning Center tours, and more!
- Nature Everywhere Day is Saturday, June 1st, 2024. Madison Parks and Public Health Madison & Dane County collaborated on out a joint media release about the Conference and Nature Everywhere Day that was sent out on May 28, 2024. A variety of activities are taking place in Madison Parks for Nature Everywhere Day. For the full schedule visit: <https://www.childrenandnature.org/conference/nature-everywhere-day/>
- Parks Superintendent Eric Knepp was recently featured in an article by National League of Cities discussing how local leaders can improve the quality of life for all children through nature access. Read the article here: <https://www.nlc.org/article/2024/05/08/how-local-leaders-can-improve-the-quality-of-life-for-all-children-through-nature-access/>
- The Madison Region Nature Everywhere initiative was featured in an article by Children & Nature Network in advance of the conference. Read the article here: <https://www.childrenandnature.org/resources/fnn-a-history-of-collaboration-in-madison-brings-nature-everywhere-children-live-learn-and-play/>