

## **Park Operations Quarterly Report June - August 2019**

As we moved through this reporting quarter, the Operations' team primarily focused on the core work of stewardship and maintenance including mowing, trimming, weeding, invasive removal, planting and construction projects. This work closely aligned with our purpose of providing safe, well maintained and inclusive parks and recreation areas.

Despite a brief period of very hot weather that slowed grass growth, this quarter was generally marked by weather that supported rapid turf and vegetation growth that required continued attention.

In addition to the maintenance work, the team worked on construction projects to enhance the safety and accessibility of our Parks System. These projects improved play areas including cricket and tennis courts, playground equipment, and athletic fields.

The team also evaluated options for reducing our carbon footprint by testing various battery-operated blowers, trimmers and chainsaws. In addition to reduced emissions, the tools also reduced noise levels, which provided some benefit to early morning blower use on State Street. In many applications the battery life did not meet the longevity demands of the daily work. While the results were mixed and the applications somewhat limited, continued research and evaluation is merited.

This season also highlighted the challenge of securing temporary employees to support the seasonal work demands. While some gains were achieved through new efforts to streamline the interview process and reach potential applicants, overall, it was a challenging year for hiring the needed seasonal staff. The seasonal staff level targets were not achieved. However, through the hard work of our staff, and by prioritizing tasks, we were able to maintain acceptable maintenance levels.

The team continued to focus on Performance Excellence opportunities, identifying and implementing several new project improvement processes including a pilot project to improve hazardous needle disposal. The team also focused on work planning including a review of the work required to support bike path and bus stop snow removal and median mowing.

### **CONSERVATION (Paul Quinlan)**

Conservation staff worked to control invasive species on approximately 82 acres at 11 conservation parks, including: Cherokee Marsh – North Unit, Cherokee Marsh – South Unit, Edna Taylor, Elvehjem, Heritage Prairie, Heritage Sanctuary, Knollwood, Meadow Ridge, Owen, Prairie Ridge, and Turville Point. Target species included Asian bittersweet, bird's-foot trefoil, Canada thistle, crown vetch, Japanese hedge parsley, hybrid cattail, porcelain-berry, sweet clover, teasel, and wild parsnip. In addition, invasive native and non-native brush was mowed on 11 acres to supplement prescribed burning in prairie and woodland restoration units. Staff collected seed from several native woodland species for use in restoration projects within conservation parks.

Staff and volunteers began implementing a conservation park monitoring program by conducting vegetation surveys and surveys of frog and toad species. Volunteers participating in the Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey – Phenology Survey, coordinated

by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, collected data at Edna Taylor and Cherokee Marsh. Conservation staff hosted three volunteer training events for vegetation surveys, and supported volunteers in sampling the herbaceous plant community at Cherokee Marsh, Edna Taylor and Owen.

The Habitat Management Plan for Knollwood Conservation Park was completed and presented to the Habitat Stewardship Subcommittee in August.

The Operation Fresh Start conservation crew returned in August. They removed debris from the Yahara River at Cherokee Marsh, repaired erosion gullies at Meadow Ridge, and cleaned water bars on all conservation park trails.

**CONSTRUCTION (Rich Bergmann)**

Completed multiple capital projects and moved forward on others. The projects included the removal of old playgrounds at Doncaster, Penn, Walnut Grove and Lucia Crest in preparation for new playground installations; regrading of the Olbrich ice rink area to improve this winter’s ice and rink access; removal of old tennis courts at Northland Manor; and removal of old fencing at Reindahl, Segoe and Lerdahl Parks. The team constructed a council ring at Patriot Park, tore down the old farmhouse and garage at Apple Ridge Park, and reclaimed an old playground footprint at Washington Manor, turning it into a pollinator garden.

The team prepared sites and installed several memorial benches with new cement pads at BB Clarke, Brittingham, Bernie’s Beach, Woodland Hills, Tenney and Rennebohm.

**FACILITIES MAINTENANCE (Jon Landsverk)**

The Facilities team work focused on capital projects and preventive maintenance work. The team completed several capital projects including the replacement of the Elver Park tennis court bounding boards, installation of a new pier at Cherokee Marsh, and door replacements at Brittingham boat house. The team also replaced lighting with new LED energy-saving lamps at Rennebohm, Burrows, and the Olbrich beach house.

The pool, splash pads, and fountains were a high priority with daily checks and preventive maintenance work. The pool and splash pads have operated very well this season.

**FORESTRY (Marla Eddy and Craig Klinke)**

<b>Forestry Section</b>	<b>Total Trees (June, July, Aug)</b>	<b>Total Hours (June, July, Aug)</b>
Cycle Pruning	0	0
Pruned by Request	904	1484
Small Tree Pruning Cycle	564	276
Tree Removal	575	1781
Ash Preemptive Removals	389	1587
Storm Work/Hangers		981
Planting		40

Forestry Operations was busy removing ash and declining Norway maples. The team also responded to service requests for trees that impair vision, have low limbs that may be struck by vehicles, and/or have limbs growing into houses.

This season forestry operations began using a new call-out procedure for emergency after-hours calls. Thus far, there has been a 100% call-out success rate and call response has been quicker and more efficient

### **CENTRAL PARKS (Chad Hughes)**

Considerable effort was put forth to prepare for and clean-up after special events including Ride the Drive, Shake the Lake, La Fete De Marquette, Great Taste of the Midwest, Crossfit Games and others. These events were well planned and organized, but required additional staff resources and event focus. Thanks to the efforts of the staff, Parks was well prepared for all of the events.

Staff reviewed the maintenance requirements and prepared to support the additional maintenance required at the new Brittingham Dog Park. The park will require continued work to keep the turf clear of debris falling from the trees, which can plug the irrigation drainage.

### **MALL CONCOURSE (Chad Hughes/Mark Kiesow)**

Special events continued through the quarter, resulting in additional preparation and cleanup efforts. Jazz at 5, Madison Night Market, Art Fair on the Square, Concerts on the Square, Maxwell Street Days, Live on King and other events required additional team effort.

Olbrich Gardens supplied hundreds of diverse plants for the service area, including cannas, salvia, verbena, and an assortment of zinnias that were planted in the State Street planters to create a colorful downtown. Also, daylilies, hostas and fresh mulch were added to the large planters on the 500 and 600 blocks of State to welcome students back to the University.

With the return of the students came move in/move out days, which created large piles of trash on State. This required additional trash collection to maintain the quality State Street appearance.

The annual sidewalk power washing program was completed in late August, with the completion of Capitol Square and Side Streets.

### **EAST PARKS (Kristin Mathews)**

The first East Parks pollinator garden was installed at Washington Manor Park with a grant from UW Extension. The effort was supported by Parks staff and volunteers from the Eken Park neighborhood. An educational sign will be installed this fall.

All East Parks ash trees due for injection treatment were completed. Several ash trees were not re-adopted along the Yahara River. We worked extensively with the

neighborhood association to determine the trees to re-treat and clearly communicate the trees that will be removed in the fall. Also, the trees at Tenney Park that did not survive the flooding were mapped and tree removal will begin in September. The Alder and Neighborhood Association were informed. The Parks crew will map all removals for Planning's information.

The new Burial Mound Policy was approved by the Habitat Stewardship Subcommittee on August 20<sup>th</sup>. It will go before the Park Commission on September 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **WEST PARKS (Laura Bauer)**

Staff supported preparation for Opera in the Park at Garner Park. The park provided excellent natural theatre setting and the event was well-attended. Clean-up, especially turf restoration, was significantly less this year than previous years due to favorable weather conditions.

This was first year that Westfest was completely a neighborhood-run event. There were a few kinks, but overall it was a successful event. There was some turf restoration work required, however it was overall a success and a learning experience.

### **FOREST HILL CEMETERY (Laura Bauer)**

In addition to routine maintenance work, the Forest Hill staff was required to complete additional turf restoration work involving seeding and matting along the roadway, due to the road construction. The ground continues to be soft, requiring staff to take additional care when mowing these areas. Staff also worked on grubbing, filling, and seeding ash stumps removed over the past few years.