

SUPERINTENDENT'S APRIL 2025 REPORT
COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary

The March weather was about as normal as one can expect for Wisconsin. Up, down, wet, and windy at varying points, sometimes in the same day. Through those changes, we were able to get a lot of our operations moving. Golf courses opened to the public and rounds are clicking upwards, though still somewhat behind last year's record pace. The team has been working on the multitude of tasks to get the system fully operational. Preparation for our facilities opening and getting equipment ready to go for mowing season have been key items. The Conservation and Ecology teams have been working, with a lot of assistance from other staff, on prescribed burns to promote a healthy and natural environment. We have burned a lot of acres this year and I'm confident it will be the most productive burn season we have had by the time we finish up this Spring. Our Community Services team is busy working on scheduling and permitting events, as well as planning for our programs and activities for the season. The team is working to ensure a successful Parks Alive season occurs and that year 2 of Ride the Drive's return is as fun as the 2024 version.

Starting on May 12, 2025, I will be moving to the role of Interim General Manager for Metro Transit. This assignment from the Mayor is an honor to the entire Parks team. Both the Mayor and I are confident that our talented Parks staff will do well in keeping things moving forward for Parks. This is not to say that there will not be any impacts as in combination with some key vacancies there may be some need to substantially evaluate priorities and focal points for the coming months. I have trust in Lisa, CJ and the entire Parks Management Team in determining the right balance of priorities during this time. I am excited for the adventure in this temporary assignment, but I also look forward to my return in the Fall.

Future Commission Items

- POSP – Staff and the LRP are preparing to start review of the full draft document over the next few months. The goal is to have the adoption process occur in the Fall.
- Given the temporary leadership changes for the summer, I have instructed staff to focus on sustaining efforts on major and significant time sensitive matters. This will mean that a number of items that we were preparing to move forward over the next six months will be a bit delayed. A few items that we anticipate involving the Commission, but with a somewhat indeterminate timeframe are:
 - Pay to Park in Parks Pilot
 - Olin Houses
 - Marshall Houses
 - Fall Work Plan Update
 - Farm Leases

Personnel Updates

Promotions/Hires:

Bill Remm was promoted from hourly Assistant Golf Professional to Golf Programming Leadworker. Bill began the new position March 16, 2025

Departures:

Michael Aeberhard retired from Parks West Maintenance as a Parks Maintenance Worker on March 4, 2025. Micheal worked for the city for 22 years.

Chris Daggett retired from Parks West Maintenance as a Parks Maintenance Worker on March 4, 2025. Chris worked for the city for 24 years.

Section Updates

Parks Operations

Central Parks

- Mowed brush with new boom mower attachment after staff training on the operation.
- Cleaned and repaired picnic tables and trash cans in anticipation of spring.
- Visited parks for post winter trash clean up and turf repair from snow operations.

Ecology Team

- Set 2025 tree planting locations and ordered trees.
- Prescribed burns scheduled/occurred at Warner, Reindahl, Richmond Hill, McClellan, Reston Heights, Galaxy Parks, Wingra, Raymond Ridge,
- Assisted Conservation with Conservation Park prescribed burning.

Conservation

- Bush removal and brush pile burning at Prairie Ridge.
- Prep units and conduct prescribed burns at Cherokee Marsh, Edna Taylor, Heritage Sanctuary, Knollwood, Prairie Ridge and Turville Point. Approximately 240 acres burned to date this spring.
- Support deer management at Cherokee Marsh.

Construction

- Removed all remaining debris, concrete foundation and driveway from the Roth St house removal project.
- Hauled salt for the Streets Division from South Point to Badger rd.
- Returned the rental excavator and picked up the bulldozer from yearly service and various other Fleet related exchanges.

East Parks

- Brush Clearing and restoration projects continued at Door Creek and Hiestand Parks.
- Various staff attended the Xerces Conference, pruning training, fire primer training, and Stihl Chainsaw training.
- Brush work and various tree removals happened after the house was burned down by the fire department at the Roth Street house lot.

Facilities

- New recirculation pump installed in Breese locker rooms.
- Installed Memorial Dog tags at Quann Park.
- Roth Street house demolition sewer and water caps completed.

Mall

- Performed annual landscape bed mulching.
- Performed spring service area preparations including placing planters, bike racks, trash cans and bench replacements.
- Transitioned equipment from snow removal to summer operations.

West Parks

- Performed brush project removals along property lines at numerous parks.
- Removed ice rinks from Elver, Westmorland and Sunset Parks.
- Staff attended various trainings including OSHA, pruning, prescribed burning and first aid.

Planning and Development Superintendent Report Highlights

- The Planning and Development section includes four Landscape Architect positions and one Engineer position. There are currently two vacant Landscape Architect positions and a third vacancy coming in mid-April. Recruitment to fill these positions is underway, with new staff expected to be hired and start in late April or May. In the meantime, staff is working to prioritize projects already underway. Staff capacity will be limited for the foreseeable future as new employees go through the onboarding process and staff continue to fulfill ongoing, time-sensitive, tasks such as development review and the 2026 Capital Improvement Plan.
- Work on the POSP continues. In April the Long Range Planning Subcommittee will review the full content draft of the plan.
- The new Door Creek Park Shelter has been approved for occupancy and will be available for reservations starting this spring. This shelter will be available year-round. Parks Construction staff will be constructing an area for a new nice rink adjacent to the shelter during this summer.
- The new shelters at Country Grove Park and Tenney Park Beach are planned to be completed this spring and available for reservations during the summer.
- Construction of the Rennebohm Sprayground and Sun Shelters at Kestrel Park, Sycamore Park, and North Star Park are scheduled to begin during April.
- During the month of April, the Rennebohm East Tennis Courts reconstruction project and Sport Court resurfacing project will be advertised for public works bidding.
- Engagement is completed for the 2025 playground replacements. Staff are now working to prepare the project construction documents for bidding.
- Staff continues work to prepare the Capital Improvement Plan for the 2026 budget process.

Community Services Report April 2025 – Terrence Thompson

Community Events (Kelly Post)

- With applications and inquiries pouring in daily for park events, street use events, and block parties, we have officially entered another exciting and busy event season!
- Our team continues to refine processes and improve efficiency, ensuring we can effectively support a thriving event season. Success isn't about the number of permits issued—it's about fostering community engagement, enhancing cultural offerings, and activating public spaces.
- We constantly work closely with other city departments to streamline event coordination, ensuring safe, well-organized experiences for attendees, organizers, and local businesses. One recent example is dissolving the Street Use Staff Commission and creating a non-BCC staff team that works on Street Use permitting. This updated process has created more detailed and efficient communications among City staff and with event organizers.

Customer Service (Joanne Austin)

Watercraft Storage Update

- The 2024 season ended on March 15th, and the 2025 season begins on April 1st. This allows a two-week gap, giving 2024 agreement holders time to remove their watercraft if they are not renewing, and leaves open racks for new customers.
- We've compiled a list after March 15th of people who did not renew for the 2025 season and sent that to the Rangers.
- Ranger staff have been hard at work verifying that those spaces are empty and, if not, tagging units for removal. We've contacted those who renewed and those whose boats have been tagged for removal.
- Starting Monday, March 31st, we'll work with the Rangers to do a full survey of the racks and make note of any units that are not in the correct spot, on the ground, or should not be on the racks. If there are, we'll make direct contact with customers.
- GOAL, so far it has been successful, is that spaces offered to people on the waitlist are, in fact, empty and available for the new use agreement holders.

Recreation Services & Aquatics (Shane Martin)

Aquatics

- Preparations are underway for the upcoming summer season. The splash parks and beaches are scheduled to open on Saturday, May 24, with the Goodman Pool opening on Thursday, June 12 at 12pm. Hiring and training lifeguards will be the primary focus going forward the rest of the spring.
- There are currently 24 lifeguards on staff, and the goal is to hire 50 total lifeguards before the season starts. Our Attendants and the Aquatic Management Team is fully staffed.

Events

- On Wednesday, April 2, MSCR and Parks hosted our second joint Hiring Fair, which was held at the Olin Parks Office. The event saw 26 individuals throughout the evening. We interviewed one lifeguard, and operations had several people interested in their seasonal labor position. The next hiring fair will be on Thursday, April 24 from 4pm-8pm at the Olin Parks Office.

- With assistance from the Volunteer Coordinator, all events for April are fully staffed and have volunteers. Rec Services is planning on showing 30+ movies at parks throughout the summer.

Upcoming Events

- Dog Park Clean Up: Saturday, April 5
- WPCRC Family Fun Night: Friday, April 11
- Hiring Fair #3: Thursday, April 24
- Earth Day Challenge: Saturday, April 26
- Bird & Nature Festival: Sunday, April 27

Rangers & Volunteers **Rangers (Steve Dray)**

Recruitment

- We have selected three for the Hourly Park Ranger position. All three bring different backgrounds and work experiences and will make great Rangers. We will start our Ranger Training Academy on April 21st. New Rangers will have 3 weeks of classroom training and 4-5 weeks of field training. Our Shared Ranger/Parking Enforcement position will be open for applications very soon, and we look forward to onboarding a new person in early June.

Enforcement Contacts

- Rangers have had 39 enforcement contacts, which resulted in 22 warnings, 17 citations, and zero bans. Eleven parking tickets were also issued during March.

Patrol

- As the weather gets warmer and the park's usage increases, the number of issues that arise in parks also increases. Rangers have seen a steady increase in calls for service with the warm weather. Things will only get busier as the disc golf courses open, boat piers go in the water, and all the dog parks open for the season.

Volunteers (John Weichert)

- **Earth Day Challenge 2025:** We are at 60 parks and getting lots of volunteers signing up.
- **Volunteer Website Growth:** The new volunteer website drives rapid engagement, with 10-20 new daily signups. It's quickly becoming a central hub for volunteer opportunities.
- **New Volunteer Programs:** We are expanding offerings with new roles like golf mentors, flower gardeners, and a monthly cleanup at Elver Park. These additions are providing more ways for volunteers to get involved.
- **Flower Gardening Program:** Volunteer orders for plants are all in for a set delivery date of May 14. Volunteers are actively involved in planning for the spring planting season.
- **Partnerships and Collaborations:** We are continuing strong collaborations with groups like Clean Lakes Alliance and numerous businesses, strengthening community engagement.

Warner Park Community Recreation Center (Zach Watson)



- The KNOW Program partnership with the Madison Parks Foundation will be supporting the East High School, Future Purgolders Basketball Open Gym Initiative by providing transportation for Black Hawk Middle School students and athletes to attend on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- The WPCRC expansion will complete the exterior masonry and steel installation starting April 7. Geothermal installation is scheduled to begin at the end of April 2025.
- We hosted our first Community Dinner of the year on March 30. We welcomed nearly 60 community members and had support from the Madison Police Department.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens

Comprehensive Master Plan Request for Qualifications – Proposals are in review for the final firm to lead the comprehensive master plan process. In-person interviews are planned for May 7-8, 2025 for the top 3-4 firms selected.



No Spring Show – In the past, this is the time of year Olbrich Botanical Gardens hosts the annual Spring Flower Show. Last fall, we made the decision to not host the Spring Flower Show in 2025. This decision was made due to the increase in warmer temperatures at the end of winter and early spring seasons. Instead of working indoors on the Spring Flower Show, our horticulture staff are working outdoors on garden maintenance such as annual pruning.

Viburnum Leaf Beetle –The viburnum leaf beetle overwinters as eggs and larvae typically emerge in mid-May. Viburnum leaf beetles are an invasive insect that feeds exclusively on *Viburnum* species. This spring, Olbrich staff discovered eggs on the viburnum shrubs in the Tower Garden. A volunteer group from

Millipore Sigma helped eradicate this invasive insect by cutting down multiple viburnum shrubs. If left to emerge, the viburnum leaf beetle would eat the leaves to the point the shrubs are defoliated and leading to possible death of the shrub.

- **Closure Dates:**
 - **March 24-April 4:** Bolz Conservatory closed for annual pruning.

