

SUPERINTENDENT'S MAY 2024 REPORT

COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary

With May comes the warmer weather, the busiest parks season, and the dandelions! The months of April and May always seem to fly by as we are focused on getting the final touches on the system to accommodate the thousands of daily users who flock to the park system across the summer months. Restrooms are opening, trash and recycling cans are out, potholes fixed, fields prepped, staffing work completed, etc. This last item is such an important thing to understand as in effect from late March to late May we more than double the number of people on our payroll. There are not many organizations that go through that transition annually, and even fewer who do it within a structure that is not built to accommodate efficiency in the hiring/onboarding process.

In addition to all of this work for today and next month, we maintain a focus forward on the summer as well. One of the significant focal points at this time is the continued work to prepare for the return of Ride the Drive. Staff is working closely with stakeholders to prepare for what is going to be a great event. We are actively seeking to secure additional volunteers to ensure the event is safe and fun environment for everyone. If anyone is aware of folks interested in helping here, it would be awesome to direct them to John W. Without sufficient volunteers it will be a much lower quality event.

Golf has been doing very well with that record early start. There has been some not so great weather, but in total, revenue is over \$1.1M which is about \$360K more year over year than 2023. In addition rounds played to date are over 21,000, which is nearly twice what was played to date last year. The golf team is busy putting together the final touches of the programming plans and we are optimistic about the outlook for 2024.

Spring is also a busy one for our partners. Brittingham Boats is open for the year (a true sign of spring), Forward Madison held its first home match, the Mallards opening day is in late May. And, of course, the new women's summer softball team the Madison Night Mares open their inaugural season at Warner on June 16th. In addition, the Madison Parks Foundation is hosting its annual Picnic in the Park on May 18th at Rennebohm Park.

With Election season upon us, I wanted to take a moment to remind the Commissioners of the "Policy for Administrative Permitting of Election Campaign Events in Parks," which was adopted by the BPC on December 19, 2019 (File #58447) and gives staff authority to administratively approve permits for Election Campaign Events. For your convenience, I have attached the policy. Such events, as defined in the policy, are often short notice, and this policy provides clarity to staff in how to manage them.

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 one community engagement meeting on the topic of the budget and

has four more scheduled over the next month. Our hope is to be able to provide a reasonably informed presentation to the Board in June.

- 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 few 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 late summer.
- 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.
- POSP Update – the Long Range Planning Subcommittee is working on the POSP and staff is looking into options for a good time over the next few months to provide an update to the Commission.
- Art in Parks Policy - the Long Range Planning Subcommittee is working on a new Art in Parks Policy. It is anticipated that it will come to the Commission in the next month or two.
- Donation policy - the Long Range Planning Subcommittee is working on an update to the Donation Policy that guides our partnership with the Madison Parks Foundation. It is anticipated that this will come to the Commission in June.

Personnel Updates

Promotions/Hires:

Harmony Danielson has accepted the Parking Enforcement/ Park Ranger shared position and started on 04.15.24.

Brent Mann has accepted the Golf Clubhouse Supervisor position and started on 04.15.24.

Fernando Hernandez has been promoted from a full time Public Works Laborer position with Streets to the Parks Maintenance Worker position at the Mall Concourse starting 04.29.24.

Ahna Geier has been promoted from Part time Parks Worker to the Parks Maintenance Worker position at East Parks starting 04.29.24.

Staff Recognition:

Dan Breunig has served as the provisionally appointed Golf Clubhouse Supervisor since April 30, 2023. Madison Parks wants to express sincere appreciation to Dan for his leadership of the Golf program throughout a period of significant transition. Dan has returned to his position as Programming Assistant in the Golf Enterprise Program. He will continue to lead and support clubhouse operations and administrative needs of the Golf Program. Thank you, Dan, for your dedication!

Section Reports

Olbrich Botanical Gardens

- **Museum Assessment Program** – Olbrich Botanical Gardens was selected to participate in the American Alliance of Museums Museum Assessment Program. <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/accreditation-excellence-programs/museum-assessment-program-map/> This program is designed to help museums strengthen operations, plan for the future, and meet museum standards. In April, staff will begin a one-year process of self-assessment, institutional activities, and consultative peer review with a site visit and recommendations. The area of focus for this assessment we've chosen is "Community & Audience Engagement" Botanic gardens, like Olbrich Gardens, are considered "living museums" since the collections are plants and most are maintained as living specimens.
- **National Phenology Network** – Olbrich Botanical Gardens has officially joined the USA National Phenology Network. This network is a national-scale monitoring and research initiative focused on collecting, organizing, and delivering phenological data, information, and forecasts to support natural resource management and **decision-making, to advance the scientific field of phenology, and to** promote understanding of phenology by a wide range of audiences. <https://www.usanpn.org/> Staff attended a training and are working on identifying species that will be observed for this program. Tags, see photo, are in the gardens identifying which plants we are observing as part of this program. Next step is to train volunteers to participate in the program.
- **Thai Garden, Now Open** – The Thai Garden is now open for garden guests. The Royal Thai Pavilion continues to be closed, but guests can now walk across the bridge to visit the Thai Garden. The restoration project is entering Phase 2 with Kalam beginning the work on the gold leaf, paint details, and mirrored tiles.
- **Bolz Conservatory** – Common Council approved the contracts for the maintenance work. Once officially signed, the work will begin to conduct further assessment and repairs on the windows, structural framing, and the cupola.



Nature Everywhere

- Nature Everywhere was shared in a joint press release by the City of Madison and Public Health Madison & Dane County. As a result it was featured by multiple media outlets:
 - WMTV 15: <https://www.wmtv15news.com/2024/03/30/madison-one-19-cities-chosen-youth-initiative-nature-everywhere/>
 - Wisconsin State Journal: https://madison.com/news/local/environment/nature-everywhere-madison-parks/article_806ab084-e230-11ee-9f19-373583d3f74c.html
- Nature Everywhere Conference is scheduled for May 28-31, 2024 at Monona Terrace. Registration is now open: <https://www.childrenandnature.org/conference/> A 15% discount of offered for residents in the Great Lakes Region: “2024greatlakes”
- Nature Everywhere Day planning is in full swing. The event will be held on Saturday, June 1, 2024 with activities at Monona Terrace and throughout the community. Anyone groups interested in participating should email: natureeverywhere@cityofmadison.com

Community Services Report May 2024 – Terrence Thompson

Community Events & Customer Service

Events (Kelly Post)

- The Community Events team hosted two Emergency Action Plan training sessions for event organizers at the Parks Lakeside Offices. Attendance was good, and there was a lot of great information and dialogue about preparing for an emergency response at a public event.
- The Park Event permit website has been updated with a new fillable application form, a new permit info packet, new EAP requirements and forms, and many helpful resources for events of all sizes and types. _
- The Community Events team has been in talks with several new, exciting events that are requesting space in Madison Parks. We have also permitted over 70 returning, annual events for 2024.
- Our team works hard to provide exceptional customer service to all Park Event permit applicants. We hope to provide all relevant information in a timely and friendly manner while helping to manage and maintain a healthy balance of public events and everyday park use.

Parks Alive (Debra Alleyne)

Internships

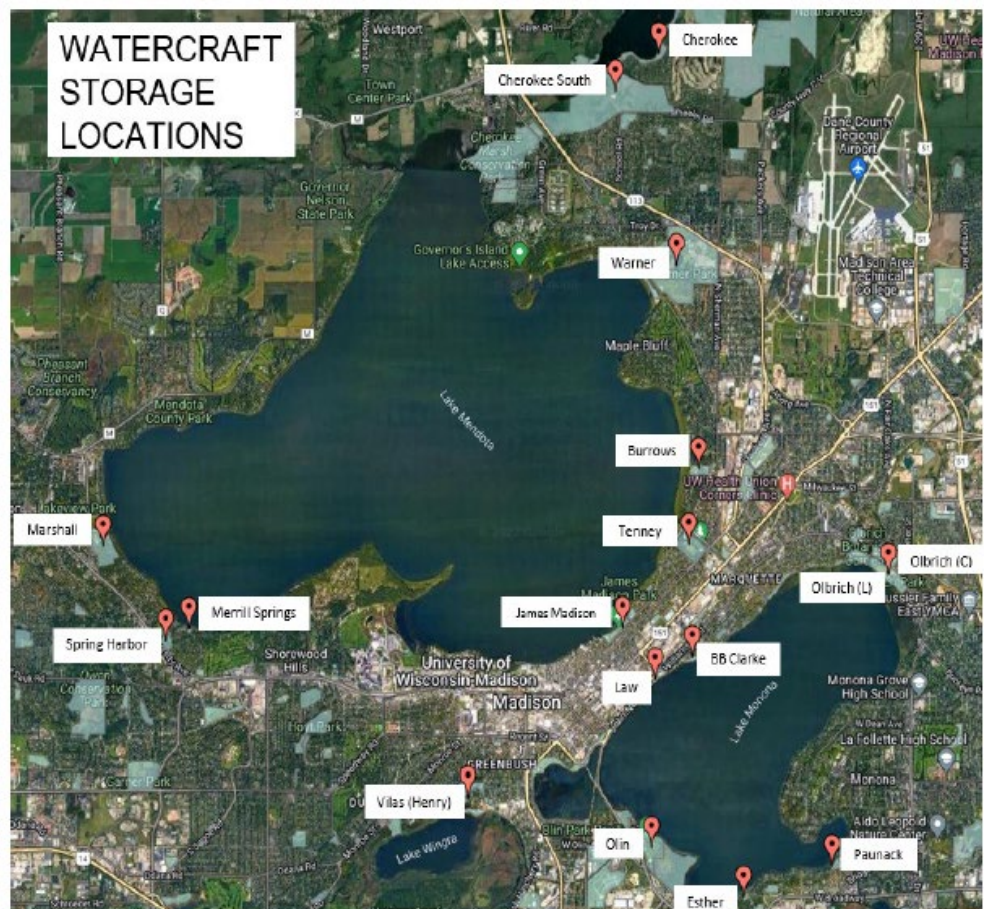
- Last year, the AASPIRE intern played a vital role in supporting the Parks Alive team. They assisted with event planning, data entry, and analytics and even contributed to designing the current Parks Alive logo. This year, we received 16 applications and conducted 12 interviews to fill the same role. We had the pleasure of hearing from some exceptional young candidates who expressed their interest in our program, and we're currently in the process of selecting a candidate. Additionally, this year, we're excited to welcome a Wanda Fullmore Intern to join the Parks Alive team.

Alternative sites

- To prevent cancellations this year, we have introduced the idea of alternative sites for the parks hosting Parks Alive. The purpose of these alternative sites is to provide a community space near the park that we can switch to in case of inclement weather or other atmospheric conditions that would make it unsafe or uncomfortable for our partners and community members to be in the park. We have secured sites for 7 of 9 parks and are working with NRT leadership to source the remaining sites.

Customer Service (Joanne Austin)

- Parks offers 444 storage spaces for watercraft at 17 parks located near three lakes. As of now, 377 of these locations have already been filled for 2024. The 2023 watercraft storage agreements expired on March 31. Renewal request emails were sent to all the agreement holders earlier this year, allowing them to renew or inform us that they would remove their watercraft and allow us to offer their spaces to those on our waitlist. About 80 individuals renewed their agreements, and approximately 25 of last year's agreement holders were able to move to their preferred locations. We have already filled 377 of the 444 spaces, and we are still working with those who are on our waiting lists. Vilas Park only has 24 spaces and has the longest waitlist (54), some of which have been waiting for over four years.



Recreation Services & Aquatics (Shane Martin)

Rec Services

- On Saturday, April 20, the Earth Day Challenge took place, involving 58 parks and over 800 volunteers. Another recent event was the Dog Park Clean Up, which took place in 8 dog parks with dozens of volunteers showing up to help clean them up. At Penn Park, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held for the new futsal court, where members of Forward Madison FC were present. In the month of April, we had attendants at Elver Park and Heistand Disc Golf Courses, who sold numerous daily and annual Disc Golf Permits. We are currently in talks to expand this partnership to include lake access permits and other permits as staffing allows. Finally, the Bird and Nature Festival was moved to the WPCRC due to the threat of storms and persistent rain.

Aquatics

- Planning for the upcoming Aquatic season is underway. We have held two hiring fairs that have resulted in a dozen lifeguard hires. The Aquatic Management Team is set for the summer; it includes two outside hires and the rest are returning or internal promotions. However, we are still anticipating a shortage of lifeguards this summer, but it is expected to be better than last year. Tenney beach will be closed for the entire summer season due to the construction of the new beach house. Spring Harbor will be under construction starting in May and continuing until July 1. Due to the construction, we plan to keep the beach and beach house open with intermittent closures. Beaches and splash parks will open on Saturday, May 25, and the Goodman Pool on Friday, June 7.

Rangers & Volunteers

Rangers (Jason Vroman)

- Rangers participated in the first-ever Ranger bike patrol training. Thanks to officers from MPD, Rangers participated in a two-day course designed to train staff in bike maintenance, operation, skills, maneuvering, and patrol tactics. Rangers learned skills on both conventional and E-bikes. With the recent purchase of the Ranger E-Bike, Rangers will now be able to connect with the community in a whole new way.



- Rangers played a large role in helping with the dog park clean-up event. Overall, we cleaned up every dog park and supported approximately 72 volunteers. This was the first year in several years that we were able to clean every dog park, as most years, several are closed due to weather.



- Lastly, the Hiestand Disc Golf Course opened for the year. Rangers coordinated another park clean-up that saw about 25 volunteers and a lot of bags of trash! The course opened for the season on Monday, April 15th.

Volunteers (John Weichelt)

- The Earth Day Challenge was a huge success, as 703 volunteers registered to clean up 58 parks, spreading mulch and removing invasive species. In April, several Madison area businesses and other entities also participated in park cleanups to celebrate Earth Day. Throughout the month, 330 volunteers participated in Earth Day efforts, representing 11 different businesses, schools, and community groups.
- We conducted Ride the Drive interviews on local radio stations Q100, The Zone, 93.1 Jamz, and WOLX. The stations will replay the interviews leading up to the event to promote the event and recruit volunteers.

Warner Park Community Recreation Center (Zach Watson)

- The Warner Park Expansion construction documents are currently being reviewed by City staff and other stakeholders. The project is planned to go to bid in mid-May 2024, having previously been planned for mid-July 2024.
- The KNOW Program and Sustain Dane will be collaborating for the second consecutive year to host the Powerful Teen Leaders (PTL) program. The PTL program provides employment programming for teens, including paid work experience and workforce readiness training for future employment in the green jobs economy.
- We received \$5,000 to provide five KNOW Program participants with scholarships to complete a Driver's Education Program and obtain their driver's license.

Parks Operations Monthly Highlights

Conservation:

- Conducted prescribed burns
- Sowed native seed mixes in burned areas and areas cleared of brush this past winter.
- Began pulling and spraying garlic mustard, dames rocket and other spring weeds.
- Installed seed and erosion blanket on recently cleared slope at Owen.
- Removed downed trees from trails.

Construction:

- Repaired various amenities such as playground slides, swings and the basketball pole at Hiestand park.
- Completed the demolition of the eastern tennis court at Rennobohm Park.
- Cleared accumulated silt from culverts at Yahara Golf.
- Started performing playground route inspection/maintenance.
- Assisted the Mall and West Parks with specific delivery requests of the visitor booth and new equipment demonstration.

Facilities:

- Installed boat launch piers
- Started turning on water service at shelters and other facilities.
- Started deconstruction of decking at Mallards stadium.
- Installed bare root irrigation system at Sycamore facility for Forestry.

General Parks:

- Completed transition of winter equipment to summer.
- Mowing operations have commenced.
- Cleaned and mulched ornamental planting beds
- Inspected and repaired all basketball, tennis, pickleball and volleyball nets.
- Arborists conducted hazardous tree removals in various parks across the City
- Athletic fields and diamonds inspected and repaired for summer play.
- Pickleball nets placed back at Olbrich Park for the season
- Winter snow routes have been repaired of sod damage.
- Bathrooms, shelters and sun shelters have all been power washed, cleaned, and stocked for the season.
- Assisted Ecology team with sign bed clean up
- Began marking select fields
- Finished up repairing sod damage
- Performed snow removal duties for April 3rd snowstorm.
- Commenced mowing and weekend reservations/garbage collection operations.
- **The Ecology Team:**
 - Assisted with prescribed burns in conservation and general parks.
 - Received and installed trees for the gravel bed.
 - Began spring tree planting.

Mall Maintenance:

- Transitioning winter equipment over to spring maintenance
- Mulching landscape beds
- Turf maintenance—aerating, overseeding, spring fertilizer and black gypsum applications
- Spring flower planter install
- Bike rack, trash/recycle can, bench replacements
- Sidewalks Powerwashing Program begins
- Pedestrian Mall Preparations