

SUPERINTENDENT'S MARCH 2026 REPORT

COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary

It is an exciting time in Madison Parks. Spring is quickly approaching, as is evident in the seasonal change within the landscape and increase in park users enjoying the longer warmer days. Winter recreation services have wrapped up for the season. Madison Parks was able to offer 48 days of skating and 43 days of cross-country skiing for the season. Staff across the agency has begun transitioning to summer operational activities.

The Parks Planning team has hosted several major public information meetings this past month, including the final Madison LakeWay design discussion, Southeast and Southwest Area Plan meetings, and other project-specific meetings. The team has over a dozen public information meetings scheduled for this spring to gather input on a number of projects happening across the system. There will also be opportunity to engage with the team that is developing the Olbrich Botanical Gardens Comprehensive Plan with multiple public information meetings scheduled throughout the day on March 17.

The Board received several updates regarding the upcoming project proposed for the Odana Hills Golf Course and Park Improvements and will become very familiar with this project in the coming months. This project will continue to a tremendous amount of collaboration within the Parks Division team, as well as with other City agencies and the Parks Foundation and donors. The timing of this announcement just happens to correspond with the opening of the 2026 season. Odana Hills Golf Course is open as of Saturday, March 7 and other courses will open when weather conditions are consistently favorable and appropriate. The new point of sale system is fully operational as the Golf Team heads into its first season as a 54 hole operation.

The Commission will be briefed on a parkland acquisition for a future Royster Park. In the coming months the Parks team anticipates moving forward on a number of key acquisitions. These acquisitions will address park and open space needs for current and future residents and help ensure that all of residents live within a 10 minute walk from a park.

The Parks team is looking forward to these amazing opportunities to create the best possible park system for all.

Future Commission Items

- Alcohol in Parks Policy
- Parking Assets in Parks Analysis
- Olin Houses
- Marshall Houses

Personnel Updates

Promotions/Hires:

- Remington Caley was promoted from Golf Improvements Leadworker (LTE) to Golf Superintendent 3 at Yahara Hills Golf Course. He started his new position on February 15, 2026.
- Joan Nelson was provisionally appointed to Program Assistant 1 at Olbrich Botanical Gardens.

Section Updates

Community Services Section (Terrence Thompson)

Warner Park Community Recreation Center (Zach Watson)

- We are excited to announce the launch of our all-new fitness and pickleball membership on May 18, 2026. This membership will include access to five full-sized pickleball courts, available throughout our operating hours, Monday through Sunday.
- We are also pleased to announce that the kitchen upgrade project will be completed by March 16, 2026. We will provide updated usage policies once the project is finished.
- Additionally, the "Green Gymnasium" upgrade project will involve installing new gym equipment from March 3, 2026-April 8, 2026. After installation, new flooring will be laid, and the gym will be ready for use by May 18, 2026.

Community Events (Kelly Post)

- The Community Event team is finalizing the special event permit webpages for the city's updated platform. This enhancement aims to improve navigation, clarity, and online resources for applicants.
- We are excited to begin the recruitment process for the Youth Engagement Coordinator position. This role will lead programming that engages youth in positive activities, fosters community connections, and promotes violence prevention in

southside Madison communities and at Goodman Pool. The position is expected to be hired by April 27, 2026.

- The 2026 special event season has officially launched. We are collaborating with various city departments and event organizers to ensure a balance between vibrant community events and minimal disruption to residents.

Parks Alive (Debra Alleyne)

Reindahl Park Imagination Center Public Art Selection

- Key staff members from various departments reviewed the final proposals related to the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park. There were many great proposals, which offered up insightful ideas and unique depictions around the theme of imagination. The prevailing desire was for an iconic piece that, interestingly, integrates with the surrounding park. *The Passage of Being* by Nate Page was the top choice. This piece is very interactive, offering visitors of all ages the opportunity to engage with it. The piece offers colorful plays with perspective, as well as a fully reflective side, allowing viewers to see themselves and the park around them.

Partner Prep 2026

- Our strategic partnerships are the backbone of our Parks Alive success. We are continuing to forge new connections with organizations and reconfirm with existing ones. As the year progresses, we expect to have more partnership commitments this summer. We have prepared a survey for existing partnerships to gain further insight into our mission alignment. We have scheduled 4 partner information sessions for new and existing partners in April.

Customer Service (Joanne Austin)

- Customers with watercraft agreements for 2025 have already been notified about the option to renew their storage spaces for 2026, which will expire on March 15, 2026. If they decide not to renew, their storage spaces will be vacated and made available to those on our waitlist. New agreements will take effect on April 1, 2026.
- Shelter reservations for 2026 are underway. We started accepting reservations on Monday, November 3, 2025. Highland Manor remains a highly sought-after weekend reservation facility, with every Saturday from January through July already booked.
- Athletic agreement users have submitted their requests for field and court use, and public users are beginning to submit theirs as well.

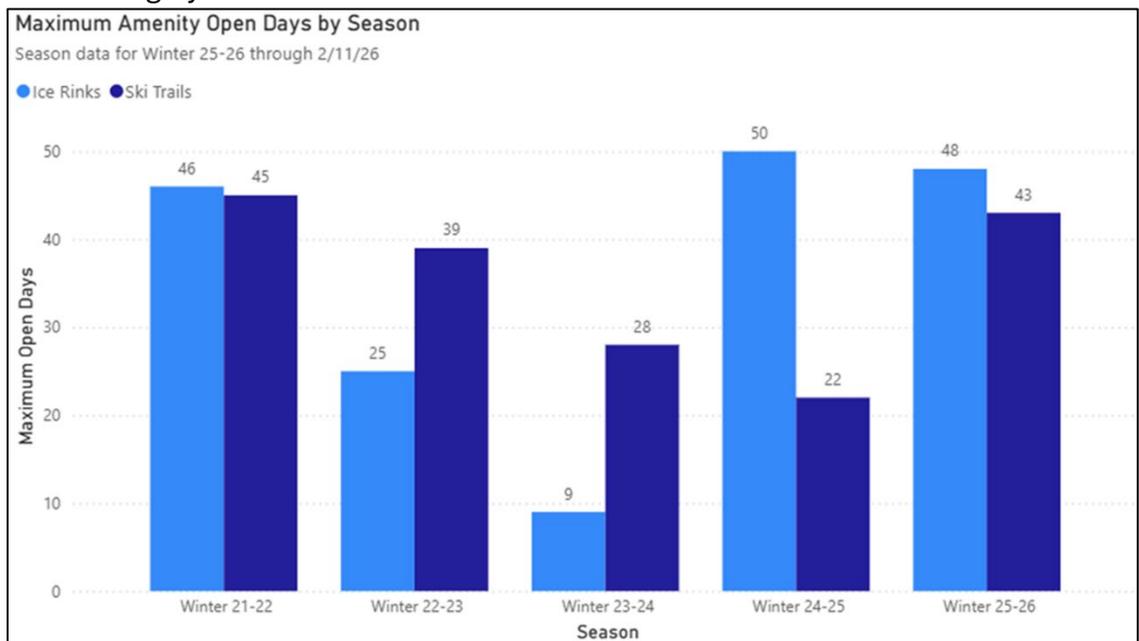
Recreation Services & Aquatics (Shane Martin)

Recreation Services

- The last major event was the Family Winter Prom, held in early February.
- Planning for the "Learn To" series for this summer and fall is well underway.
- April features several significant events, including:
 - Dog Park Cleanup on Saturday, April 4
 - Earth Day Challenge on Saturday, April 25
 - Bird and Nature Festival on Sunday, April 26

Winter Recreation

- The winter recreation season officially ended on Thursday, February 12, three days earlier than our planned end date of Sunday, February 15.
- Cleanup is in the final stages, with a focus on skate sharpening and ensuring all sites are thoroughly cleaned.



Aquatics

- Parks and MSCR will host two hiring fairs on March 18 and April 9. The goal is to eliminate barriers and hire potential candidates on the spot whenever possible. These events will take place at the Lakeside Offices from 4pm-7pm.
- Spring training sessions are scheduled in April, May, and June to recertify and train staff for the upcoming summer season.

Rangers & Volunteers

Rangers (Steve Dray)

- *Enforcement Contacts:* In February, Rangers conducted 18 enforcement contacts, which resulted in 12 warnings and 6 citations.
- *Disc Golf:* The Hiestand Disc Golf Course remained open for part of February despite this year's weather fluctuations.
- *Training and Professional Development:* In February, Rangers participated in self-defense training and Child Abduction Response Training (CART) in collaboration with the Madison Police Department and other city partners.
- *Recruitment and Hiring:* First- and second-round interviews for the full-time Park Ranger position were conducted. The next stages of the hiring process are expected to proceed soon, with a tentative start date set for mid to late March.

Volunteers (John Weichelt)

- *Special Event Support:* Recruited and coordinated over 15 volunteers for the Family Winter Prom at Monona Terrace (February 7). Continued winter event planning support and began early recruitment strategy for Earth Day Challenge (April 25) and Ride the Drive (August 9).
- *Winter Volunteering and Recruitment:* Weekly Conservation Volunteer Workdays continued at Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park and other natural areas, focusing on winter invasive species management and habitat restoration. Volunteer-supported ice rinks remained active at Rennebohm, Heritage Heights, Westmorland, Sunset, Wexford, Olbrich, Nakoma, and Hillington, weather permitting.
- *Earth Day and Spring Planning:* Began coordinating Earth Week cleanups with corporate groups, neighborhood associations, and returning partners. Several parks have been reserved for weekday corporate volunteer efforts in addition to the citywide Saturday Earth Day Challenge. Supply coordination and event postings are underway.
- *Volunteer Program Development:* Continued development of the volunteer website and registration system, including refining role descriptions, improving waiver completion tracking, and preparing spring plant and flower garden communications. Increased outreach to new volunteer leaders interested in recurring monthly cleanup models.
- *Data Tracking and Impact:* Began compiling early 2026 volunteer hour totals. Continued tracking of native plantings and habitat restoration metrics to better quantify conservation impact heading into the spring season.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens (Tanya Zastrow)

- *Tiny & Mighty: Wonders of Insect Life*: For the first time, Olbrich Gardens is hosting a spring art exhibition in the lobby. Olbrich is honored to collaborate with Wisconsin based artist, Jennifer Angus, to present [Tiny and Mighty: Wonders of Insect Life](#). This site-specific installation features a variety of insect specimens thoughtfully arranged in frames, pinned in patterns on the ceiling, and suspended in an array of colorful jelly jars. The space will be enhanced by custom wallpaper designs created from large-scale reproductions of original cyanotype prints. Exhibit runs March 14 – May 27, 2026.
- *Comprehensive & Interpretive Plan Update*: The next public meeting is March 17th at 12 noon and 6pm. There will also be a survey the public can fill out. We're also adding a virtual public meeting as well, tentatively scheduled for March 19th.
- *Upcoming Closures*: the Bolz Conservatory will be closed March 9-11 for the take-down of Orchid Escape.

Park Operations (Chad Hughes)

Central Parks (Jay Walters)

- Removed downed and damaged trees at Brittingham Park caused by beaver damage.
- Pruned park trees throughout Central Parks.
- Brush clearing at Wexford and burned brush piles at Elver.
- Worked on securing contractor work and trees for 2026.

Conservation (Paul Quinlan)

- Brush removal and canopy thinning at Cherokee Marsh South, Kettle Pond, Knollwood, Owen, Stricker's Pond, and Turville Point.
- Install native seed mixes at Prairie Ridge and Stricker's Pond.
- Secured contracts for spring invasive control on 200 acres across 11 parks.
- Applied for 2026 prescribed burn permit.

Construction (Rich Bergmann)

- Hauled fill dirt from Elver to make room for future projects.
- Spread playground mulch at Westchester Gardens, Whitetail Ridge, Westport Meadows and Berkley Parks.
- Forestry mow honeysuckle at Yahara Hills West Park along Mill Pond rd.
- Cleared out silted material at Olbrich boat launch.

East Parks (Spencer Werner)

- Brush removal projects along Yahara River Parkway, Olbrich Park shoreline, Warner Park between the beach and boat launch, north side of Cherokee Park along sidewalk, Door Creek Park behind houses adjacent to Ecology Team's 2-acre restoration area.
- Cleaned shelters out at ice locations to prepare for upcoming season
- Hockey boards were removed at Tenney hockey rink before too much ice melted.

Facilities Maintenance (Joel Ringgenberg)

- Pressure washer installation at Goodman Maintenance Facility.
- Worked on remodeling the reception area at Yahara Golf
- Installed a new pier at the Olin Park kayak launch.
- Performed seasonal shutdown of pumps and hydrants at skate locations.

Mall Maintenance (Mark Kiesow)

- Continued snow removal as needed and performed winter debris and leaf cleanup.
- Finished hauling the last of the snow piles off of the Square and State Street.
- Power washed amenities during warmer temperatures.

West Parks (Charlotte Blotz)

- Held equipment training for staff including chainsaw and front-end loader.
- Worked at Elver Disc golf performing tree and brush pruning and removal. Work was done to widen fairways, clear around tee boxes, etc.
- Performed property line/invasive vegetation clearing at Sherwood Forest and Indian Hills.
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Planning & Development (Adam Kaniewski)

- Planning and Development staff have been busy preparing capital improvement projects for construction in 2026 and beyond. Numerous projects are at various stages of the bidding process.
- Consultant proposals were received to prepare an updated Needs Assessment. The proposals are currently under review by a panel of staff to make a selection and contract award.
- Staff have been holding a series of Public Input Meetings to receive input for Park Development Plans for the 50 neighborhood and mini parks in the [southeast](#) and

[southwest](#) areas. Meetings are being held by Alder District. Three meetings have been held so far.

- Construction documents for the [Madison LakeWay](#) – Phase 1 project are underway with expected bidding in mid to late 2026. Planning and Development staff have been coordinating final design details with Sasaki Associates, the Madison LakeWay Partners, and internal staff along with other stakeholders.
- Design and community engagement for the next round of playground replacements is ongoing. Second public meetings for each project site are scheduled throughout March. Replacement locations include [Orton Park](#), [James Madison Park](#), [Marshall Park](#), [Heifetz Park](#), [Newbery Park](#), and [Eastmorland Park](#).
- Demolition of the existing single-family house at 346 E Lakeside St. as an expansion of Olin Park is expected to occur in March. The site will be restored with a combination of grass and native plantings.
- The [Warner Park Pickleball](#) and [Worthington Park Futsal](#) project are fully approved and scheduled to be advertised for bids on March 12. Both locations are being bid as one contract for construction.
- Construction of playground replacements at [Ontario](#), [Kennedy](#), [Skyview](#), and [Sandburg](#) Park is scheduled to begin in March, dependent on weather.
- Construction work is underway for the replacement of the [artificial turf at Breese Stevens Field](#). Work is expected to be completed by May 1, weather dependent.
- A public information meeting was held on March 4 regarding necessary repairs to the [Olin Park Pavillion](#) structure.
- A Request for Proposals is currently advertised soliciting a design consultant for the [Warner Park Southeast Recreation Area](#) project. Once proposals are received, a panel of City staff will review the proposals and select a consultant.
- The first public input meeting for [Hartmeyer-Roth Park will](#) be held on April 14.
- The Trail Maintenance Agreement with the Capital Off-Road Pathfinders was approved by the Common Council on February 24. P&D staff coordinated with CORP and other City agencies to prepare this agreement.
- Yahara Hills Golf Course: The contract for installing a new well transfer pipe is currently advertised for bidding with a bid opening date of 3/12. Staff are also preparing construction documents and working to receive permit approvals for the installation of cart paths through low areas of the course.
- Impact Fees: In the month of February, staff coordinated and processed 15 separate Park Impact Fee payments totaling about \$1.9M.
- Development Reviews: In the month of February staff completed reviews of 8 development projects.