

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S MAY 2021 REPORT**

### **COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**

#### **Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary**

Spring has fully sprung, along with the mowing season. Notably, the work by many to provide education and understanding around dandelions not being a reasonable expectation in some places seems to be taking within our community as complaint calls are down this year. Overall, the mowing work during this time is a significant challenge as many users are getting out in this good weather to participate in numerous athletic events. This is a particular challenge as we never have all of our seasonal staff on board before May 1<sup>st</sup>. Events are coming back to parks this year, including the 2021 Ride the Drive, which will be held centered on four parks on Sunday, June 6, 2021.

The Parks Division has been actively involved since the beginning of the pandemic to support the City's Emergency Operations related to establishing and assisting with Temporary Permissible Encampments (TPE). Parks staff have worked to provide support to outreach staff and other City agencies. Parks staff have also led clean-up efforts of former encampments. This work has been done primarily by contractors based on the advice of the City's Risk Management Team, but it has taken significant effort to coordinate. With the planned ending of the TPE at Reindahl, staff have been working to support the efforts of outreach staff and prepare for the cleanup operation. At Reindahl there are significant upcoming uses of the park and shelter with a day camp for a youth group, shelter and athletic reservations, and the planned opening of the splash park for Memorial Day weekend.

The Glenway Golf Park project is nearing construction starting. Staff have been overwhelmed with the support of a broad array of professionals to make this project come together. The Keiser family and Craig Haltom with Oliphant have done a lot of work to support the redesign and integration of ecological improvements and potential programmatic enhancements. Multiple experienced professional landscape ecologists, including Jens Jensen, have worked to develop a plan for a dramatic improvement to the biodiversity of the site. An additional public meeting was held towards the end of April and there were many good questions asked and discussion of what happened next. There were concerns about the loss of trees, but the vast majority of the trees removed from the property will be Colorado Blue Spruce that are near the end of their life cycle. There are about a dozen hardwood trees slated for removal due to their location and state of decline. It is unfortunate to lose these trees, but the redesign does offer places to replant with intention to focus the landscape restoration efforts to grow new oaks and hickory trees.

The golf courses have all been open since the end of March and rounds played through 5/5/21 are already at 24,000. This is about 22% of the normal level of golf rounds played in a year over the past decade of 110,000. Even with a planned closure of Glenway, staff thinks it is possible to still come close to 110,000 rounds for the year.

The Goodman Pool and splash pads are all being prepared for a busy summer. The Goodman Waves will be back in action at the Pool this summer and staff recognizes the efforts of the Friends in making this possible. The beaches are also being prepared for the summer. This includes the new Warner Beach house, which will also include a new filtration system to promote consistent safe access to a quality lake swimming experience.

## Future Commission Items

- Encampment Regulations – See above regarding encampments in Parks. A resolution was recently introduced at the City Council that relates to the issue of TPEs. This resolution does not appear to be slated to come to the Board of Park Commissioners at this time, but it is possible that it would be referred to the BPC.
- Parks Division Equity Plan – Staff will continue implementation of the Parks Equity Team’s Equity in Action Plan. A key part of the implementation of this plan is to engage with the Commission on the plan and the corresponding work that is happening. This is anticipated to occur in July.
- Golf Enterprise Update – Staff will be working to provide both the Commission and the Golf Subcommittee and update on the Enterprise Fund and operations. The current target for this informational update is in July.

## Personnel Updates

- Assistant Parks Superintendent Christopher Peguero began work on April 26<sup>th</sup>.
- David Lowes started as a new Facility Maintenance Worker at Olbrich Gardens. This position was added to the budget in 2020 to support the expansion of the Facility.
- Park Ranger Leadworker Ashley Bowman left City employment after 8 years in April.

## Section reports

### **Park Operations**

#### **Conservation:**

- Conducted prescribed burns on 128 acres across eleven sites this month, including seven conservation parks (Cherokee Marsh, Heritage Prairie, Meadow Ridge, Owen, Prairie Ridge, Stricker’s Pond and Turville Point) and managed meadows in four general parks (Carpenter-Ridgeway, McClellan, Reston Heights and Whitetail Ridge).
- Spread native seed at Cherokee Marsh.
- Prepared specifications and requested quotes for spring invasive species control work at several parks as capital improvement projects.

#### **Construction:**

- Spread playground mulch at Bordner, Waldorf, Haen Family, and Indian Hills parks.
- Completed a number smaller projects including refurbishing the gravel service road at Odana Golf course, removing obstructions from the culverts at Yahara Golf course to prevent flooding, placing gravel for the canoe storage area at Marshall Park, and building compost bins at Olbrich Gardens.

#### **Facilities:**

- Continued spring seasonal work including pier installation and returning water service to shelters, restrooms and stadiums that were winterized.
- Worked on capital projects including park signature sign refurbishment, Hoover Boathouse window replacement, and the Gates of Heaven overhaul project.

## **General Parks:**

- Started the mow season this month.
- Began the process of hiring seasonal staff to meet the increased work demand. Used Zoom successfully for seasonal employee training for the second year.
- Assisted the Conservation team with staff to support controlled burns.
- Earth Day volunteers supported a number of park projects, including work at Forest Hill Cemetery.
- Resumed shelter reservations, bringing a sense of normality back to park activities.

## **Mall Concourse:**

- Completed spring landscaping tasks, including: mulching landscape beds, renovating turf (aerating and over-seeding), and planting spring flowers (pansies and kale) in the planters.
- Replaced rusty and damaged bike racks and benches.
- Started the annual sidewalk power-washing program.

## **Community Services**

### **Customer Services**

- Annual Permits - Annual sales continue to be on the rise and we are ambitiously keeping up with online sales to get customers their permits. Customers have acclimated to the online process quite well.
- Reservations (Shelters and Athletic Fields) – With PHMDC orders continuing to provide new updates with less restrictive gathering limitations, more customers are placing reservations, and we are beginning to see an increase in short notice reservation requests for each upcoming weekend.
- Watercraft Storage/Mooring - Parks operates 396 watercraft storage spaces over 17 park locations and a mooring field with 30 buoys at Marshall Park. Customers are still in the process of renewing their leases and staff continues to fill vacant spaces when and if they become available.

### **Warner Park Community Recreation Center**

- On 4/20/21, Public Health Madison & Dane County and Door Creek Church hosted a vaccine clinic at the WPCRC. The vaccine clinic was successful, with 81 Northside residents receiving vaccines during the 4-hour pop-up clinic.
- On 4/30/21, the WPCRC hosted the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Spring-Break-Away 3on3 Basketball Tournament Series. The 3on3 Basketball Tournament Series is a signature Kids Need Opportunities at Warner (KNOW) Program in partnership with the Madison Parks Foundation. 40 Northside teenagers participated in the action-packed tournament. The tournament takes place on Friday nights from April 30-May 28.

### **Aquatics**

- We tested new lifeguards on May 1<sup>st</sup> to complete our hiring for the year.
- May 28<sup>th</sup> we will begin training and recertifying staff to prepare for the upcoming season. We are looking forward to engaging with the community at the pool again.

## Rangers

- 3 new Hourly Park Rangers have completed classroom training and will soon be wrapping up field training. Due to some Covid-19 related delays we started training about two weeks later than normal this year. But our Permanent Rangers worked hard to keep our trainings on schedule and to develop the mentorships that will make these new Hourly Park Rangers successful.

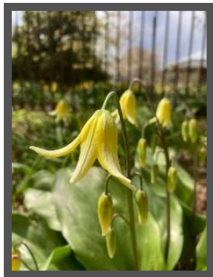
## Recreation Services

- Earth Day Challenge had a great turnout of 752 Volunteers supporting 66 different City Parks.
- Bird and Nature Festival hosted 660 people physically distanced with a flowing line of participants going through the Warner Park shelter to see the live birds of prey brought to us by Open Door Sanctuary out of Door County, WI.
- Ride the Drive is scheduled for Sunday, June 6 from 9am-1pm with closed streets on 2-mile routes around four parks to include Kennedy, Marlborough, Warner, and Wingra Parks. Visit <https://www.cityofmadison.com/parks/ridethedrive> to register for one of the many volunteer spots!

## Community Events

- Many organizers are reaching out with questions and to check the availability of parks for their activities. The physical distancing requirements in Order #16 still limits large events to a great extent.
- We are making good use of the Open Space, Day Camp and Outdoor Class permits approved to accommodate these types of requests.

## May 2021 Olbrich Botanical Gardens



**Yellow Trout-Lily**  
*Erythronium americanum*



**Checkered Fritillary**  
*Fritillaria meleagris*



**Snowflake**  
*Leucojum sp*

### Attendance

Total attendance for March 2021 was 13,248, close to the previous five-year March average of 16,909. We know that as weather warmed, our outdoor gardens are an appealing respite during the pandemic. The reasons 'why' are to the left. Spring blooms have been fantastic this year!



### Outdoor Gardens

It has been a great spring in the Gardens. You see some of the spring-flowering beauties above. Staff continue to source plant material to complete the Frautschi Family Learning Center plantings – and have had some help with mulching from an **Exact Sciences** Volunteer Time Off crew. It

was great to welcome them back to the Gardens. They made huge progress and seemed to enjoy their work.

### **Bolz Conservatory/Production Greenhouse**

It's all about production in the Greenhouses. Spring annuals are planted in the gardens and summer annuals are in production. Thanks to transplanting volunteers and good organization by staff these annuals will be planted outdoors in early June.



**Production Greenhouse**

### **Programs & Exhibitions**

The online plant sale largely sold out in 3 days – everyone is looking forward to a big sale on site next year! Streaming of programs continues – with collaboration from the Education staff. Education, in particular, has enjoyed larger ZOOM audiences than could be accommodated attend in person. Much has been learned during the pandemic that will remain part of OBG's offerings – especially in the winter months. Two Canopy Sessions in April were combined streaming and included a small audience in the Bolz Conservatory.

**Summer Concerts** will take place outdoors but will be ticketed to provide for physical distancing on the Frautschi Family Learning Center Rooftop and the Great Lawn. Concerts will take place on Tuesdays, from 7 – 8 pm, June 15 – August 17. The music committee is planning a diverse series of performances that will appeal to a wide range of audiences. Check the website for the list of artists.

### **Education**

With gathering restrictions somewhat eased, more in person classes are scheduled. Little Sprouts Story & Stroll (ages 2 – 5) are being held, restricted to 14 people – 7 children and 7 adults. Feedback from a child: "Oh, I love it! I love it soooooo much! Olbrich is the BEST place!!" Adults are also enjoying the new classrooms which provide enough space to maintain physical distancing within a comfortable learning environment.