

SUPERINTENDENT'S AUGUST 2023 REPORT

COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary

July was Parks and Recreation Month and our community certainly demonstrated how important parks are to our City. Thousands of people attended special events, celebrations, and athletic contests across the system. Thousands more played a round of golf or went swimming at our beaches and the Pool. Our boat launches were busy throughout the warm month and dog parks and disc golf are both trending towards record years in permit sales. All of these uses combined likely are less than the day to day use and value of nearby parks and nature afforded to our entire community. With over 95% of our residents within a ten minute walk from a park, we are truly demonstrating what it means to provide the spaces, places, and programs for community to grow.

July also saw the Parks Division as the presenting sponsor for the All City Swim Meet at Goodman Pool which was led by the Friends of the Goodman Waves. It was a great event despite some challenging overnight weather. 2,000 swimmers and thousands more fans gathered and enjoyed our treasured asset that is Goodman Pool and Goodman Park. The event was well managed and overall went quite well. There were numerous comments that it felt like this place was built for this!

Future Commission Items

- Private Art Installations - Staff receive occasional requests for art installations from the public, such as visual art, signs, murals, or sculptures. (This is not the same as artwork coming from the City's official public art collection or from the Madison Arts Commission.) Staff will be working on an official Private Art Policy and will present that to the Commission and Long Range Planning Subcommittee for approval in the coming months. Until an official policy can be approved, Parks staff will not accept any new private art proposals.
- Golf Enterprise Update – The Golf Team is working to prepare a report to the Golf Subcommittee, Facilities Programs and Fees Subcommittee, and the Board of Park Commissioners on the past 2 years of operations as well as an outlook on future opportunities to continue to implement the Task Force on Municipal Golf in Madison Parks' recommendations. Given recent staff departures and budget actions, the goal is to present additional information to the BPC between in September.
- Results Madison / Division Work Plan– The City has been working on Results Madison, which moves towards a more significant utilization of data in decision-making, including budgeting for the past few years. Staff will be preparing information on this and the Parks Division's work plan to present to the Commission. The goal is to present information to the Commission in the Fall.

Personnel Updates

Promotions/Hires:

- Evan Deacetis was promoted from Parks Laborer to Parks Maintenance Worker position in West Parks. He started in his new role on July 7, 2023.
- Kelly Post has been promoted to Parks & Street Use Coordinator within Community Services. She started her new position on July 24, 2023.

Departures:

- Michaela Daly resigned from her position as Park Ranger, her last day was July 11, 2023.
- Jazmine Bevers resigned from their position as Conservation Tech Trainee, their last day was July 27, 2023.
- Brett Deakin has taken a different position in Traffic Engineering and will not be returning to his Shared Parks/Traffic Engineering position this fall.
- Greg Genin, Parks Operations Manager, has announced he will be retiring January 2024.

Section reports

Olbrich Botanical Gardens

- **VeeVart Approval** - City of Madison IT Department approved the software VeeVart which will be used to improve internal processes and guest services. VeeVart will bring together membership, donations, admission, registrations, and more into one software system. The highlights of this software include:
 - One-stop location for guest transactions that can handle memberships, donations, registrations, admission, and more in one transaction and location.
 - Same system for online, phone, and in-person transactions.
 - Membership information within the POS system.
 - Membership and donations will no longer be completed through the City of Madison payment portal.
 - Drastic reduction in the manual data entry of membership and donation data.
 - Unification of guest data into one software.
- **Children and Nature Conference** – Madison was selected as the conference location for the 2024 Inside-Out International Conference hosted by the Children and Nature Network. Conference is planned for May 28-30, 2024 at Monona Terrace. There will be many opportunities to showcase how Madison Parks and Olbrich Gardens are connecting children to nature.
- **Atwood Ave** – The Atwood Avenue construction project is going well. Attendance continues to trend upward at Olbrich Gardens. The new bike paths that are completed are already being used. Olbrich Gardens staff are working with Parks Planning to install new and additional bike parking at the Gardens anticipating an increase in bike traffic to and from the Gardens.
- **Blooming Butterflies** – Blooming Butterflies runs through August 6, 2023. New this year there are moths in the Bolz Conservatory in addition to the hundreds of butterflies. Also new this year is the promotion of biking for butterflies which included:
 - Three mile bike parade to Olbrich Gardens to visit Blooming Butterflies.
 - Virtual lecture by author Sara Dykman about her book [Bike for Butterflies](#) where she details her journey biking the monarch migration route.
 - Bike Tune-Ups which were hosted in the parking lot and guests could have their bike tuned-up for free.

Community Services Report August 2023 – Terrence Thompson

Community Events (Kelly Post & Debra Alleyne)

Events

- We are excited to announce the promotion of Kelly Post to the Parks and Street Use Supervisor position. The Parks and Street Use Supervisor position is a new reclassified position that oversees park and street use events, the Parks Alive program, and the customer service section. Kelly started her new role on July 26, 2023.
- After a very busy July, we have a full calendar of events for August and September.
- We have issued 189 Park Event permits, 107 Street Use permits, and 45 Block Party permits for 2023 so far.
- As we move towards fall, we are working on event data reporting, application updates, website updates, and planning for 2024.

Parks Alive

- Parks Alive began on June 20 and is approximately 2/3's complete. There are 14 more events scheduled to take place. So far, we have an average of 100 participants attending each event and about 7 organizations participating at each event.
- Due to the increasing number of wildfires, the city of Madison has had an unprecedented number of days with bad air quality enough to warrant concern. Days with particle pollution from 150 (Unhealthy) up to 245 AQI (Very Unhealthy) occurred, causing Parks Alive to cancel events 4 times for the safety of both our partners and residents.

Recreation Services & Aquatics (Tracey Hartley)

Events

- Emma Boicken is back working as the Event Services Assistant for Parks. We welcome her back to the team! The last two Learn to Fish events have had full rosters. The Movie series is going well. The focus has been on preparing and supporting the All-City Swim Meet.

Aquatics

- The All-City Swim Meet was a huge success. The 3-day meet featured over 2,000 swimmers, 7,000 spectators, and 500 volunteers. The event was a multiagency effort and involved support from all Parks sections, Traffic Engineering, and Streets and was led by the Friends of the Goodman Waves. The Goodman Waves and McFarland Sharks have completed their seasons. We will open the pool 30 minutes earlier in August, and additional times will be available for lap swimmers.



Customer Service (Joanne Austin)

ANNUAL PERMITS	2021	2022	2023
Disc Golf	2,384	2,179	2,070
Dog (Park/Reg)	11,076	8,855	8,376
Lake Access	6,956	5,998	4,581

DAILY PERMITS	2021	2022	2023
Disc Golf	3045	2760	1398
Dog (Park/Reg)	261	228	111
Lake Access	2173	2473	1757

- Most reservations are entered for 2023, but we still receive a few requests as the summer progresses.
- Although we've experienced extremely dry conditions this summer, severely impacting turf growth, we've not had to cancel athletic field reservations. Recent rain has helped tremendously.
- The pilot Qualifying Discounts Program (QDP) for athletic reservations is underway by a few athletic groups in 2023, and we look forward to fully promoting this discount program for all users in 2024.

Rangers & Volunteers (Jason Vroman & John Weichert)

Rangers

- Rangers have been out to many of the Parks Alive events. We recently brought out practice disc golf baskets to allow interested attendees to try the sport. So far, it has been a hit! We have also assisted the Parks Alive crew in installing signs and other logistical tasks to support the events.



Volunteers

- We developed a new "Group Clean-Up" form for single-day volunteer crews and have 8 groups signed up thus far for August-September. We anticipate this to increase in both number of groups and amount of clean-up groups.
- We have assembled a master list of ongoing park volunteer special and priority projects. We received valuable feedback from staff regarding volunteer needs and projects in the parks so that when groups are identified, we can match them with the appropriate type of work and location.

Warner Park Community Recreation Center (Zach Watson)

- WPCRC welcomed 96 participants at the July 14 Family Fun Night.
- KNOW program participants are co-leading coordinating opportunities for current and incoming East High School (EHS) Student-Athletes to obtain a sports physical. EHS Student-Athletes can schedule an appointment at Union Corners Clinic between 8am-12p every Saturday, July 15 – August 12.
- WPCRC is hosting a Wanda Fullmore intern this summer, Kjuan Washington. He began working with us at the end of June and has gained valuable work experience, serving in various tasks.
- For August, we are offering Women's Open Gym on Monday evenings and Men's Open Gym on Wednesday evenings (18+). We have also added the "Elite Open Run" series on Saturdays 10am-2 pm for the KNOW Program led by Hilliard Pro Development.

Operations

Conservation:

- Expanded the ongoing invasive species control work to also include Japanese hedge parsley at Cherokee Marsh and Elvehjem Sanctuary, and Japanese knotweed at Elvehjem Sanctuary and Turville Point.

- Mowed invasive brush at Cherokee Marsh, Edna Taylor, and Heritage Prairie, and trimmed conservation park hiking trails system wide.
- Hosted a volunteer workday at Sandburg Woods. Participants worked on controlling English ivy, Japanese hedge parsley and common buckthorn.
- Volunteers continued to support daily wellness checks on the goats at several parks.

Construction:

- Completed work at Veterans Memorial Park to remove the retaining wall, add 300 yards of fill, and re-contour the area surrounding the pentagon of flags.
- Poured a new memorial bench pad at Vilas Park and footings for the new basketball structures at Meadowood and Oak Heights parks.
- Completed playground inspections and maintenance system-wide to assure safe conditions, and replenished the mulch at Berkley Park and Westchester Gardens.

Facilities:

- Supported the facility preparation at Goodman Pool for the All-City Swim Meet. This involved removing the cabana structure to make room for bleachers, removing diving boards, installing new restroom dispensers, and other similar projects.
- Completed work on a number of capital projects including removing the hardware from the Brittingham Boat House to prepare the facility for painting, painting at the Elver athletic shelter, and pipe replacement and sign maintenance at the Marshall Park boat launch wash station.
- Built new signs for The Glen Clubhouse, Warner playground, and Brittingham playground.

General Parks:

- Supported All-City Swim Meet preparations, including site turf care, pruning, weeding and mulching.
 - Prepared parks for a number of events including La Fete de Marquette at McPike Park, Opera at the Park at Garner, which was then cancelled, the Disability Pride Fest, and several Parks Alive events.
 - Supported additional park clean-up efforts and natural area invasive vegetation removal given the reduced mowing required due to the drought like conditions.
 - Coordinated volunteer events at Hudson Park. The work included the renovation of the terraces that leads down to the water and scrub tree removal from the shoreline.
- Ecology Team:

- Removed invasive weeds in tier 1 and tier 2 areas and populations of noxious weeds.
- Completed sign bed weeding rotation.
- Documented species diversity and composition in managed meadows. Photo-documented units that were burned this spring.

Mall Concourse:

- Continued summer maintenance, including mowing, daily flower and landscape bed watering, and sidewalk sweeping and power washing.
- Placed benches and planters where bus shelters were removed in support of BRT implementation.

- Supported a number of large events with coordination and preparations, including Maxwell Street Days, Art Fair On-the-Square, Art Fair Off-the-Square, Farmers Markets, and Concerts on the Square.
- Completed sanding and re-painting 20 light pole bases, which improved the appearance of the downtown.
- Continued to work with Traffic Engineering on light pole repair work supported by the TID #50 funding. Other TID #50 work continued, including replacing damaged benches, bike racks, and trash cans.