

SUPERINTENDENT'S MAY 2023 REPORT

COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary

Spring has sprung and with it the grass and plants are growing. Leaf out is also well underway. With those signs come the buzz of the parks team out and about doing the work to make sure we are ready for the throngs of people that use our parks in this busiest part of the year for us, from May through August. With plants starting to pop, we have been continuing to work with our partners in Streets on the migration of mowing of medians to their responsibility and we have taken on the planted median beds. Overall, this is going well, and that positive transition is driven by mission-driven, customer focused staff in both agencies. The spring also brings with it events and programming increases. Shelters are now all open and are being booked for a wide array of purposes. Soccer, lacrosse, softball, baseball, kickball, ultimate, and cricket seasons are all in full swing and thousands are enjoying our athletic fields weekly. Golf has continued to be busy and is significantly ahead of last year's pace at this point. The Glen's programming plan is continually be worked on, but a significant number of events are now published on [The Glen's event webpage](#). As we get closer to the end of school (less than a month away), we are preparing for the Parks Alive calendar of events and for the opening of the Goodman Pool. One of the biggest challenges again this year in preparation for the summer has been the recruitment of lifeguards. We are short of our goals and this will have an impact on the ability of the team to provide. The guard resources will be focused at the Pool and we will provide a limited amount of guarded beach hours. The Operations and Community Services teams have worked together to have a plan to provide beach cleaning at our beaches and efforts are underway to provide as much restroom access as is possible as well.

Parks staff are also engaged in the Planning Division's area plans and working to update park plans during that process. Currently, they are working on the northeast and west area plans. The Lake Monona Waterfront Ad Hoc Committee has selected Sasaki to move forward as the preferred consultant team to lead the master planning effort. This selection was based on the submissions, presentations, public feedback, and was made after the committee discussed and debated their own scores and rankings.

Another important note for the month is that we continue to experience a very challenging public works contract bidding environment. We have had multiple projects receive one or no bids over the last six months. This creates significant hurdles for the team in working to make these projects happen on time and on budget.

Future Commission Items

- Results Madison / Division Work Plan / Road Map– 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 first step in this process will be a briefing on the structure of the Division and the corresponding report of the management team's work on creating a Division Roadmap for the year. This is expected before June.
- Lake Monona Waterfront – After the update in May, there will be additional updates scheduled as we move towards a final recommended master plan.
- Golf Program Plan Update – Yahara Hills modifications to convert to an 18 hole facility are in planning phases and will come to the Commission late this summer or early Fall.

Personnel Updates

Promotions/Hires:

Tegan Rice was hired as Admin Clerk 1 with the Front Desk Customer Service Team and started on April 17, 2023.

John Kallgren was hired as a Parks Worker in Central Parks and started on April 17, 2023.

Departures:

David Lowes has resigned from his position as Facilities Maintenance Worker at Olbrich Botanical Gardens. His last day was April 8, 2023.

Luna Collins resigned from her position as Admin Clerk 1 from the Front Desk Customer Service Team. Her last day was April 28, 2023

Gabe Dommershausen resigned from his position as Parks Maintenance Worker in Central Parks to take a position with Madison Fire Department. His last day with Parks will be June 16, 2023.

Ryan Brinza, Golf Clubhouse Supervisor 2 has resigned from his position. Ryan has been in his position since 2014. His last day was May 12, 2023.

Trygve Ekern, Greenskeeper 3, has resigned from his position as the Head Greenskeeper at Yahara Hills Golf Course. His last day was Thursday, May 4.

Interim Staffing Appointments:

Provisional Clubhouse Supervisor: Dan Breunig has been provisionally appointed to Golf Clubhouse Supervisor 1. Dan will be responsible for oversight of the 4 clubhouses, and will provide limited administrative support to the maintenance staff.

Provisional Greenskeeper at Yahara Hills: Shannon Barstow has been provisionally appointed to Greenskeeper 3 from his position as Greenskeeper 1 at Monona Golf Course.

Provisional Greenskeeper at The Glen Golf Park and Monona: David Vetrovec has been provisionally appointed to Greenskeeper 2, responsible for both The Glen Golf Park and Monona Golf Course from his current position as Greenskeeper 1 at The Glen Golf Park.

Section reports

Operations (Greg Genin)

Conservation:

- Joined forces with the general parks Ecology Team to implement the prescribed fire program throughout the system. Long established prairie plantings (managed meadows) at Blackhawk, Flagstone and Huegel burned for the first time this spring. Staff and contractors also completed burns at Cherokee Marsh North and South Units, Door Creek, Edna Taylor, Kennedy, Prairie Ridge, Secret Places, Stricker's Pond, Turville Point, and the Olin Park savanna.
- Sowed native seed mixes at Cherokee Marsh, Heritage Prairie, Prairie Ridge, and Stricker's Pond.

Construction:

- Completed installation of sign posts and signs on the Cannonball Path, reconditioned sections of gravel roads at Cherokee Marsh, and delivered mulch and topsoil for the annual spring clean-up.
- Installed the new gaga ball pit at Olive Jones Park.
- Began the seasonal playground inspections, which will be supported by seasonal staff.

Facilities:

- Worked on seasonal preparations including installation of piers and re-starting the water service at shelters, restrooms and stadiums.
- Worked on multiple capital projects at the Warner Park stadium, including painting restrooms, rebuilding the dugout steps and benches, and upgrading lighting.
- Completed installation of the new inclusive railing at one of the Warner Park boat launch piers. The Yahara Fishing Club designed the railing and funded the project through a donation to the Madison Parks Foundation.

General Parks:

- Started mowing operations and shelter cleaning for the season.
- Performed the spring cleanup work on planted beds in medians, in support of the new Public Works approach to median maintenance.
- Supported three micro-learning sessions for staff development including a review of the Parks Land Management Plan, top ten invasive species in the parks, and a review of the findings of a UW Madison student study on snakes in parks.
- Began seasonal planting with a total of 178 trees and shrubs targeted for this spring.
- Two large events were held at Warner Park. Lake Edge Elementary School held an Earth Day event at which approximately 250 students cleaned up litter and planted an oak tree south of the rainbow shelter. Mayor Rhodes-Conway attended the event. The annual Bird and Nature Festival drew an estimated 800-1,000 people to the rainbow shelter to see live hawks, owls and eagles presented by Open Door Bird Sanctuary. The event also included 40 other nature-oriented groups providing educational exhibits and materials, and hands-on nature activities for kids.

Mall Concourse:

- Removed over 12" of snow and planted pansies in 116 planters this month; an example of the weather extremes and the impact they had on the work requirements.
- Began replacing bike racks, benches, and trash cans that were damaged or in poor condition, and started the sidewalk power washing program on State Street and the expansion area.
- Reinstalled the Visitor Center Booth at the Top of State Street in preparation for upcoming events.

Community Services Report May 2023 – Terrence Thompson**Community Events (Kelly Post):**

- The Community Events team is processing dozens of event permits, both Street Use Events and Park Events. The numbers of applications and requests for both types of events are on par with 2022, which was a record year.
- The Carts in Parks program is moving along nicely. We have received several event requests that qualify for the program, and we now have a full list of City licensed food carts. In May, we will connect food carts with qualifying events and schedule food carts at daily vending locations.
- As we pilot the Qualifying Discount Program (QDP) for athletic reservations this summer, our next step will be to assess the QDP program for Park Event permits.

Warner Park Community Recreation Center (Zach Watson):**Facility**

- The WPCRC Expansion schematic design received unanimous approval from the Urban Design Commission on April 26, 2023.
- The WPCRC Expansion Project schedule is being altered to delay the bid release from June to early fall. Various factors are involved, with the primary goal of bidding on the project during the most favorable time of year for contractor interest while not directly competing with the Door Creek Park Shelter for contracting bids.

Programs & Events

- The KNOW Program partnership with the Madison Parks Foundation was awarded an Angler3 Grant from the WDNR. The grant will be focused on providing off-site fishing and boating opportunities for the KNOW Program participants.
- The WPCRC hosted the Welcome to Spring Family Fun Night on Friday, April 14 and had 161 participants, despite the snowy day!
- The Friday Night Basketball Series occurred March 23-April 21, with 221 participants ages 11-21 attending the 5 Friday Night Hoops Events. We provided Referee Apprenticeship training, 3-point contests, and 5ON5 league games in partnership with the Madison Police Department's CORE Program.



Recreation Services & Aquatics (Tracey Hartley)

Events

- The Earth Day Challenge had 681+ volunteers supporting 67 parks. The Bird & Nature Festival had a long line all day for people to visit and see the live birds brought to us again by Open Door Sanctuary out of Door County, WI. We had a great turnout of 1,093 people.

Aquatics

- The beaches opening Memorial Day weekend, May 27-29, include Vilas and Warner, from 11am-7pm. In addition, splash pads open Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend from 10am-8pm. The Goodman Pool opens Friday, June 9 at 12pm. We are continuing to hire Lifeguards, and we are still short. We will be collaborating again with MSCR for swim lessons, aquatic fitness, adaptive swims, and new this year, adaptive swimming lessons.



Earth Day Challenge – Cherokee Marsh South



Bird & Nature Festival

Customer Service (Joanne Austin):

Watercraft Storage Update

- Of the 426 storage rack spaces (canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards) throughout the Parks system, 24 spaces are currently vacant, and we are communicating with those on our waitlist to get those filled. 14 watercraft spaces continue to be filled by two groups, the Goodman Community Center and Friends of Starkweather Creek. Of the 30 mooring locations off Marshall Park, 5 spaces have yet to be filled, which we anticipate will be filled in the next month.

Permits (Disc Golf, Dog, and Lake Access Update

- Annual and daily permit purchases are coming in daily, especially since the weather has dramatically improved and the opening-fishing season has arrived. Support staff are processing permits as quickly as possible.

ANNUAL PERMITS	2021	2022	2023
Disc Golf	2,387	2,183	1,287
Dog (Park/Reg)	11,132	8,924	7,210
Lake Access	6,965	6,012	1,505
Ski Trail	3,632	2,626	1,910

DAILY PERMITS	2021	2022	2023
Disc Golf	3045	2760	231
Dog (Park/Reg)	261	228	51
Lake Access	2173	2473	153
Ski Trail	1152	421	472

Rangers (Jason Vroman):

- Rangers completed 2 volunteer projects to clean up Hiestand and Elver Disc Golf Courses to prepare them for opening. Both events were well attended despite the weather, and the courses look great!
- Rangers completed the Starkweather Park clean up with CDD, City Engineering, Madison East Parks, MPD, and local outreach. Paul Davis was contracted to clean up the site, and they did a fantastic job.
- The 2023 Ranger Academy is complete, and we advanced 4 new hourly Rangers into the field-training phase. Rangers Nick Hellrood, Louie Brien, Sean Wenkman, and Matt Norton will be paired with field training Rangers and should be ready to patrol Madison Parks solo by Memorial Day weekend.



Hiestand and Elver Disc Golf Courses clean up



Starkweather Park clean up

Planning and Development

- West Area Plan
 - Parks is undergoing a planning process that will result in park development plans for the neighborhood and mini parks in the West Area. The planning process will result in a one page development plan which will guide the improvements to the park for the next 10 to 12 years. Public engagement began at the West Area Open House on 5/10, and going forward includes a virtual public meeting on 5/18, and two listening sessions at Sycamore Public Library on 5/30 and 6/2. An online survey will be made available to residents beginning in June.
- Warner Park Community Recreation Center Expansion
 - Parks received Urban Design Commission approval for the proposed expansion design on March 29. The design team is preparing construction plans and specifications, and anticipate releasing the project for public works bidding this fall, with construction starting in spring 2024. The facility will remain open during the expansion's construction, which will likely take a year to complete.
- Madison Senior Center Courtyard
 - On April, Parks received two contractor bids for the courtyard renovation project. Drax, Inc. is the apparent low-bidder, with a bid of \$1.1M. The contract is currently routing through the City approval process. Construction is scheduled to begin in June, with substantial completion by December, 2023.
- Door Creek Park Shelter
 - Parks, with support from Facilities Management, released the new multi-season shelter building for public works bidding in January. No bids were received on March 20, and the team is preparing the project for re-bidding in May, with a new bid opening date of June 22. Pending successful award of the contract in June, construction will begin in early 2024, with completion in early 2025.
- Penn Park Court Reconstruction
 - A single bid was received on April 20th and was not opened. The project will be re-bid, with an opening date of May 25th. Construction is still anticipated to begin in late august.
- North East Area Plans –
 - Parks attended the initial Northeast Area Plan public kick-off meetings as well as the Northeast Area open house which was held at Madison College with numerous city agencies in attendance. A virtual public input meeting for the park development plans is scheduled for May 24th. Parks will also be present at the East Madison Community Center food pantry on May 30th to solicit community input and will hold a listening session from 3:00-7:00pm on June 1st at Hawthorne Public Library.