

**SUPERINTENDENT'S OCTOBER 2021 REPORT
COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary**

September lived up to its reputation of being a great time to get outdoors in our park system. Weather was slightly warmer and drier than normal, which led to sustained higher levels of use. Overall, the summer season was notably busy as there was a return of gathering, while also maintaining a significant increase from the pandemic year type usage as well. Permit sales across the system for disc, dogs, and lake access are all at or near record levels for annual sales. Reservations for shelters also were substantially higher than 2020 and mostly in line with 2019 levels. Golf has set a record for revenue generation and approaching 2020 levels of rounds played. Athletic field reservations and events returned in a major way in 2021 as well. The Mall team did a great job of taking care of State St. and Capitol Square this year and annual special charge billings went out early in October.

The Fall sees a substantial decrease in staffing levels as by early October almost all of our seasonals have left for the season. There is certainly value in having a dedicated seasonal staff to meet peak season demands, but parks management continues to work with our labor partners to explore opportunities to expand permanent year round staffing to support the operations and services we provide across the year. The Mayor's Operating Budget includes a reduction in hourly staffing for 2022, but also includes a new Conservation Tech Trainee position that we are excited to work towards allocating to support our mission with a focus on high quality natural area land management. Please mark your calendars for October 26 from 4-6PM to join us for a tour of the Glenway Golf Park Project.

As the winter approaches, the team will be preparing for all of our route based snow and ice removal and control. As always, we will also be analyzing staff commitments for recreational services and communicating a plan of what and where opportunities will be available this year. This includes ongoing conversations related to human made snow at Elver Park for this coming winter.

Future Commission Items

- Capital and Operating Budget Update – The team is working to prepare an update on the Budget process as it relates to Parks in November.
- 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 November. This will correspond with a goal of presenting an update and additional plan details related to Glenway for 2022.
- Update on WPCRC expansion plans – Funding for design and development work is included in the Parks Division's 2022 Capital Budget request, with construction funding in 2023. Staff anticipates briefing the Commission on this important project in November or December.
- Parks staff are working with an inter-agency staff team to prepare a presentation on potential future vision for the Yahara properties as the interchange project commences.

Personnel Updates

New Hires & Promotions:

- Jake Schneider started on June 24, 2021 as the Central Parks Supervisor.
- Steven Dray was promoted from Park Ranger to Parks Ranger Leadworker, he started his new position on July 11, 2021.
- Kimberly Owens was hired as the Parks Division's Account Clerk 3. Kim started on August 23, and will be primarily responsible for processing payroll for the entire division and managing personnel records among many other duties.
- Molly Berkholtz was promoted from Parks Worker to Parks Maintenance Worker, she began her new position with Mall Concourse Maintenance on August 23.
- Sandy Glodowski was promoted from Seasonal Parks Laborer to Parks Maintenance Worker, she began her new position in West Parks at Forest Hill Cemetery on August 23.
- Jonathan Sutherland started on September 20 in his position as Olbrich Facilities Maintenance Worker.

Retirements:

- Mike Mullarkey retired from his position as Parks Welder on August 6 after 49 years of service
- Ray Parkin retired from his position as West Parks Equipment Mechanic on August 23 after 24 years of service with the Parks Division.
- Dennis Heidenreich retired from his position as West Parks Equipment Operator 2 on September 16 after 27 years of service with the Parks Division.
- Leonard "Chuck" Speth retired from his position as West Parks Operations Leadworker on September 17 after 32 years of service with the Parks Division.

Section reports

Park Operations

Conservation:

- Re-surfaced the gravel trail at Knollwood.
- Treated re-sprouts of honeysuckle and buckthorn in selected areas that were mowed earlier in the summer at Cherokee Marsh, Edna Taylor and Owen.
- Paul Quinlan met Girl Scout troop 8035 at Knollwood to show them the goats and discuss prescribed grazing and habitat restoration.

Construction:

- Completed several park improvements: added donor bench pads at Vilas, Hillington Triangle, Tenney, and Wingra parks; finished the nature play area at Paunack Park; added mulch and installed a new swing at Ontario Park; and finalized the work for the Pop-Up park at Warner Park, including new grills, GaGa ball pit, and small nature nook.
- Removed the old equipment, regraded and added sand for the new volleyball court at Orchard Ridge Park.

Facilities:

- Performed daily work orders, inspections, and preventive maintenance, and began the winter shut down including closing the pool and splash pads, and starting to winterize drinking fountains and rest rooms.
- Replaced a door at Brittingham Boats and upgraded the lighting at Reindahl Park parking lot.

General Parks:

- Supported the work for parks-hosted events including: Cyclocross at Door Creek and Olbrich parks, Trucks and Treasures at Door Creek Park, Great Taste of Madison at Olin Park, Ironman at Law Park, Orton-Front Festival at Orton Park, and both Africa Fest and the Sessions at McPike Park.
- Volunteers supported work with staff at Warner Park and Hudson Park. Trash and woody invasive species were removed. Staff also coordinated with volunteers from the Clean Lakes Alliance to clean up beaches at James Madison and Esther Beach.
- Fighting Bob LaFollette's grave marker in Forest Hill Cemetery was restored by volunteers from The Progressive Magazine and the Daughters of the American Revolution.
- Athletic fields were fertilized and sprayed to prepare for winter. The fields sprayed are not scheduled for play.
- Removed the old kiosk at Kenneth Newville Park and refurbished the benches.
- Installed new landscaping around the Bernie's Beach sign bed and a small bed at Paunack Park. In both cases, aged junipers were removed in favor of plantings that are more diverse.

Mall Concourse:

- Worked on landscape and hardscape tasks. The landscape work included daily watering, turf aerating and fertilizing, mowing, and deadheading perennials. Hardscape included, wrapping up the sidewalk power washing, power washing bus stops, and light pole painting.
- Supported the preparation planning for Halloween night. There will not an organized event planned this year, but significant planning was made in preparation to minimize any impact from non-planned event.

Planning and Development

Warner Pop Up Park

- A third gaga ball pit joins others installed earlier this summer by Parks Construction staff at Warner Park along with several other components to create a "pop up" park in the formerly softball-dominated section of the park now ready for re-imagining. Grills, picnic tables, an improved basketball court, a "nature nook" play area and a "wheel spot" currently being constructed by volunteer partners round out the new offerings. These items are intended to increase the recreational amenities in this area of the park and to spark interest and discussion about 'what could be' with Planning staff during outreach events.

2022 Inclusive Playgrounds

- Planning for the 2022 inclusive playground projects is underway with a total of 6 proposals received from the Inclusive Playgrounds Request for Proposals (RFP) issued through City Finance. The proposals are being scored by a combined group of city staff and residents led by the founder of Madtown Mommas and Disability Advocates, who also assisted with drafting the equipment requirements in the RFP.

Aldo Leopold Pump and Skills Track Progress Update

- The contractor has been working daily, and the weather has been cooperating. We are on schedule to have the tracks installed and ready to open by the end of October.