

**SUPERINTENDENT'S OCTOBER 2019 REPORT
COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary**

It is budget season within the City and many Parks staff have been involved in the work to formulate requests earlier in the year and are now evaluating and work planning from the Executive Budgets as they are released. The Capital Budget was released in early September, with some significant changes from the requested Capital Improvement Program. Staff are working to analyze the impacts of these changes and even as we focus on moving the 2020 budget through the adoption phase and into implementation, we are already looking at priority areas to focus our 2021 request. The Operating Budget will be released on October 1 and staff will be working to ensure any changes in resource allocations are tied to the work plans for sections.

In addition to the work around the budget, staff are working to move into the fall and winter seasons. This involves specialized seasonal work, such as controlled burns and tree planting, as well as planning work for the 2020 year. The planning work is focused on ensuring the calendar of events and projects occurring are being reviewed to reduce conflicts and to enhance user experience. This work is done in preparation for the general booking period beginning in November.

The Olbrich Expansion project to construct new greenhouses and a Learning Center is nearing completion. The project team expects occupancy late this fall, with a grand opening being planned for the spring.

Future Commission Items

- IPM Taskforce – The IPM taskforce is working to extend its work throughout 2019 to better inform recommendations. Staff will present on the current status as a part of a land management update in November.
- Golf – The Common Council adopted a resolution (File #56004) to establish a Task Force on Municipal Golf in Madison Parks at its June 18, 2019 meeting. The Task Force will begin meeting in September and will focus on making recommendations on the multiple systematic issues related to golf. The Task Force's first meeting is on September 30th.
- Off-Leash Dog Parks – Staff is continuing to work on potential off-leash improvements in the main remaining priority area (after West/Odana School and East/North Star projects) of Atwood/East Isthmus. This is a particularly challenging location and staff hopes to have additional concepts for discussion in the coming months.
- Performance Excellence Initiative – Staff is working on an informational presentation to share with the Commission on the City's Performance Excellence Initiative. This is anticipated to be ready for the Commission at the September meeting.
- Law Park Planning Efforts – Staff anticipates providing an update on the planning work for Law Park in either November or December.

Section reports

Operations

Conservation:

- Worked to control invasives including, Asian bittersweet, crown vetch and woody re-sprouts on approximately 15 acres at Cherokee Marsh, Edna Taylor, Owen and Prairie Ridge. Also installed approximately 300 plugs of various native species at Cherokee Marsh North Unit in 5th Addition savanna and South Hill prairie. In addition, volunteers conducted vegetation surveys at Cherokee Marsh, Edna Taylor, and Owen and the Operation Fresh Start crew established a new trail at Acewood Pond and removed invasive shrubs at Heritage Prairie.

Construction:

- Completed a number of construction projects including re-grading for Olbrich Nice Rink and started Bordner basketball court renovation. Significant work was done delivering material and grading for projects and demoing old playgrounds in preparation for new installations.

Facilities:

- Completed maintenance and repair projects including a new split rail fence for the Wingra shoreline, the installation of new cricket practice pitch turf at Reindahl and the bathroom renovation at BB Clark. Also began Fall/winter transition work including closing beach houses and closing and winterizing the pool and splash pads.

Forestry:

- Forestry Operations focused on ash removals in the central part of the city and have been making good progress. Approximately 415 untreated ash remain to be removed within City right-of-ways. Also significant time was spent responding to the recent storm event. Close to 200 labor hours were used to respond to that event.
- Forestry specialists created a fall planting plan to plant 794 street trees. These trees are both general (non-ash) and Emerald Ash Borer replacement street trees. As an appointed member of Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council, the City Forester was involved in the Wisconsin DNR Forest Action Planning. The Forest Action Plan is a collaboratively developed 10-year planning document intended to represent the entire forestry community.

General Parks:

- Continued to support summer activities including mowing, trimming and beatification projects. Giddings Park is an example of a successful beatification project. Athletics continued to be busy with softball, baseball, football and soccer still in play. Also began planning for, and transitioning to, fall work including closing beaches and shelters, fall planting, seeding and fertilizing and preparing the materials needed to support the ice rinks. The team began the planning work to plant 300 trees this Fall.

Mall Concourse:

- Continued to support summer events and prepare for Fall weather and events. Began aerating, overseeding and fertilizing lawns, leaf clean up and fall tree pruning. Changed the seasonal banners from "summer" to "fall" on the pedestrian poles in the service area.

Forest Hills Cemetery:

- The Forest Hill crew, with some assistance from the general parks staff, was able to grub, fill, and seed all ash stumps in Forest Hill Cemetery.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens

- Construction: Progress continues....
- Programs: GLEAM attendance is ahead of last year with eight installations wowing visitors Wed through Saturday evenings. GLEAM runs through October 26. Check out the video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G93YGPC33GM>
- Education: Ecology Explorer, for K – 5 classrooms program, begins October 1. Thirteen different elementary schools have registered as of September 11.
- Volunteer Program: Marty Petillo will present a plenary workshop, *Working with Staff to Sustain Volunteer Engagement*, at the American Public Gardens Association's Volunteer Engagement Symposium on October 14 – 16 in Phoenix. Marty attributes the 80% annual retention of volunteers to the staff who participate in her training so that they engage with the volunteers they supervise.

Community Services

Warner Park Community Recreation Center (WPCRC):

- We continue to grow our partnership with Madison Parks Foundation through their "Say YES to KNOW (Kids Need Opportunities at Warner)" initiative. MPF's fundraising event on August 21 created awareness about the KNOW initiative and ways the community could get involved in efforts at WPCRC. In addition, through MPF's new partnership with Schultz Vending LLC, WPCRC has been able to begin offering a snack program that gives youth access to healthy food and snacks each day after school. We are excited about the potential of the partnership and impacts we can have on youth in the community as we work together.

Recreation Services:

- The Recreation Services section is gearing up for fall hayrides and preparation for winter operations are underway. Private hayride parties are available during Holiday Fantasy in Lights at Olin Park or we will be hosting public hayrides at four upcoming events including WPCRC's Family Fun Night and Celebration of 20th Anniversary of the Center, Hikes and Hayrides at Cherokee Marsh, Downtown Madison Halloween and Holiday Fantasy In Lights.

Park Rangers

- Park Rangers are at reduced staffing for the fall season and our call volume is starting to trend downward. For the month of September Rangers will be focusing on some early morning patrols in an effort to vary our patrol hours and provide some much needed 3 hour parking enforcement. They will also be starting to look at signage needs and addressing outstanding issues from the summer season.

Aquatics

- The Goodman Pool, all beaches and splash parks are now closed for the season. The beaches and splash parks have been winterized. Staff is in the process of winterizing the pool.

Park and Street Use Events:

- We continue to receive and process Park Event and Street Use permit applications – for events yet this year. We are starting to see some applications for new events in 2020 as well and are reaching out to returning events for next year prior to Lottery day. We are also prepping for Freakfest and will be sending complimentary tickets to residents and businesses on State Street to help the event go more smoothly.

Front Desk:

- There have been 331 picnic shelters and just under 1400 main shelters reservations in 2019. The Highland Manor storm shelter has been reserved 110 times in 2019, with just 1 Saturday and 8 Sundays still available. Lottery Day, the first day to begin reserving in 2020, will be on Tuesday, November 12.