

## Community Services Report February 2024 – Terrence Thompson

### **Community Events & Customer Service**

#### **Events (Kelly Post)**

The Community Events team has been working hard to prepare for the 2024 event season. We have been updating applications and websites. Additionally, we have been working with IT to update some of the online permitting software to make our processes more efficient and user-friendly. The Community Events team helped the Madison Fire Department and Madison Police Department develop and host a Community Event Safety Symposium for event organizers.

The symposium was held on January 11, 2024, at the Police Training Facility on Femrite Drive. The symposium was very well received, and we received great feedback about the information's usefulness. Fire and Police staff presented information for event organizers to develop their Emergency Action Plans better. IT filmed the presentations and Q&A, so we have a link to share with new or future event organizers. We will be adding this to our City websites in the appropriate places.

Community Events and the Ranger team are teaming up to revamp our vending policy. We plan on combining our research and knowledge to develop new, relevant, and equitable vending policies for Parks.

#### **Parks Alive (Debra Alleyne)**

**Volunteer Engagement and Planning:** We are taking the lead in planning the suite of summer events for the first time. With the support of the Backbone team, plans are being laid to recruit relevant city stakeholders to sign up to volunteer for different support positions. Due to the outpouring of support from city staff last year, volunteers expanded the range of their civil service to residents by:

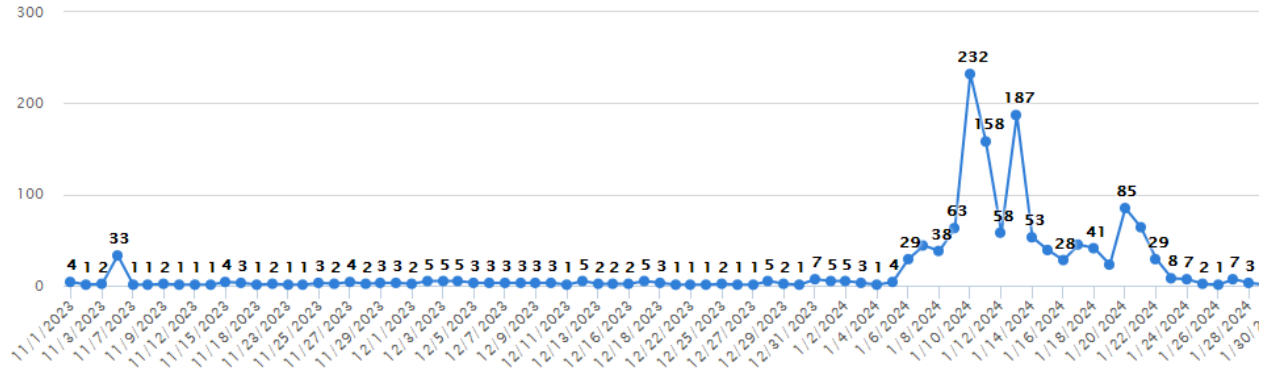
- Serving ice cream, a meal, or a cold drink
- playing jump rope, basketball, and disk golf
- creating arts and crafts
- reading books

This year, we plan to streamline and maximize the use of these staff volunteers as well as ensure more on-site support through NRT Leads in each park location. Through our data collection efforts last summer, we understand that many residents attending Parks Alive events experience loneliness, and part of the responsibility of volunteers this year will be to be available to help address this issue.

**Parks Alive + Movies in the Park:** Parks Alive events and the Sina Davis Movies in the Park have both emerged from the work of the NRTs to bring communities together. The movies in the park often happen during Parks Alive events. From our research and resident requests at NRT meetings, there is a desire to have some input in the movies screened. In partnership with the Recreation Services Coordinator, we will open a voting option on the Parks Alive and Sina Davis Movies in the Park page for residents to vote on the movies screened this summer.

**Customer Service (Joanne Austin)**

**2024 Ski permits:** Cross Country Ski permits are required for skiers to use trails at the Odana Hills Golf Course and Door Creek and Elver Parks in Madison. These permits are also valid for Dane County Park trails. The sale of 2024 Ski Permits started on November 1, 2023. Due to warm temperatures and lack of snow, there were very few annual permit sales, except for a meeting held with avid skiers on November 7, 2023. However, in anticipation of the winter storm in early January 2024, annual permit sales peaked and remained lively throughout January. Unfortunately, warm temperatures have returned, and trail conditions are quickly deteriorating. As of January 31, 2024, customers have purchased 184 daily and 1,684 annual permits.



**Watercraft storage:** We have recently sent notices to 2023 watercraft storage customers to inform them of their option to renew for another year. Current storage permits are valid through March 31, 2024. If anyone should decide not to renew, we'll be contacting those on our waitlist. We will share an update regarding the watercraft storage status in a few months.



BB Clarke Park storage racks

**2024 athletic reservations:** We are excited to report that all athletic field/court reservations will be processed through Vermont Systems' Rectrac software. This is the software used for our shelter and park event reservations. Athletic Scheduling Specialist Kevin Goke, City IT support, and Vermont Systems support team members have prepared for this transition for many months. There are now 617 athletic spaces built into the system, including park maps that depict these amenities. Athletic groups with priority scheduling have already started to enter their reservations, and it's anticipated that public users can begin entering theirs starting February 21, 2024.

## **Recreation Services & Aquatics**

### **Winter Recreation (Tracey Hartley)**

As of February 5, 2024, ski trail grooming has stopped until there is more snow. As a result of the warm temperatures and lack of snow, all winter locations are currently closed. We were fully staffed this year with attendants. We will start sharpening the skates used this season so they will be ready for next season.

Below is a table showing the days each warming shelter and amenity was open. VOL sites are one of our neighborhood volunteer ice rinks. We were closed in December 2023, and our first day of winter operations started on January 9, 2024.

<b>ICE RINKS</b>	<b>January Days Open</b>	<b>February Days Open</b>
Elver General	6	0
Elver Hockey	6	0
Goodman Nicerink	8	0
Heritage Heights - VOL	6	0
Hillington Triangle - VOL	0	0
Nakoma - VOL	0	0
Olbrich Hockey - VOL	6	0
Olbrich Nicerink	8	0
Rennebohm - VOL	0	0
Sunset - VOL	9	0
Tenney Hockey	0	0
Tenney Lagoon	6	0
Vilas General	8	0
Vilas Hockey	8	0
Vilas Lagoon	8	0
Warner	0	0
Westmorland General	3	0
Westmorland Hockey - VOL	3	0
Wexford - VOL	3	0
<b>SKI TRAILS</b>		
Elver Snowshoe Trail	23	5
Cherokee Marsh South	23	5
Elver Trails	23	5
Owen	23	5
Turville Point	23	5
Odana Hills	23	5
Door Creek	23	5
<b>SHELTER</b>		
ELVER	18	5
TENNEY	4	0
VILAS	6	0

### **Aquatics (Shane Martin)**

There is new material available for the Lifeguard team to review and implement. Additionally, aquatic positions have been posted and we are currently conducting interviews and in-water skills testing for Lifeguards. We have also scheduled training dates for both recertification and certification courses for Spring/Summer. Pre-season work is underway, including collecting staff paperwork, preparing the pool schedule, updating the website, and promoting job opportunities through job fairs and high school classroom visits.

### **Rangers & Volunteers**

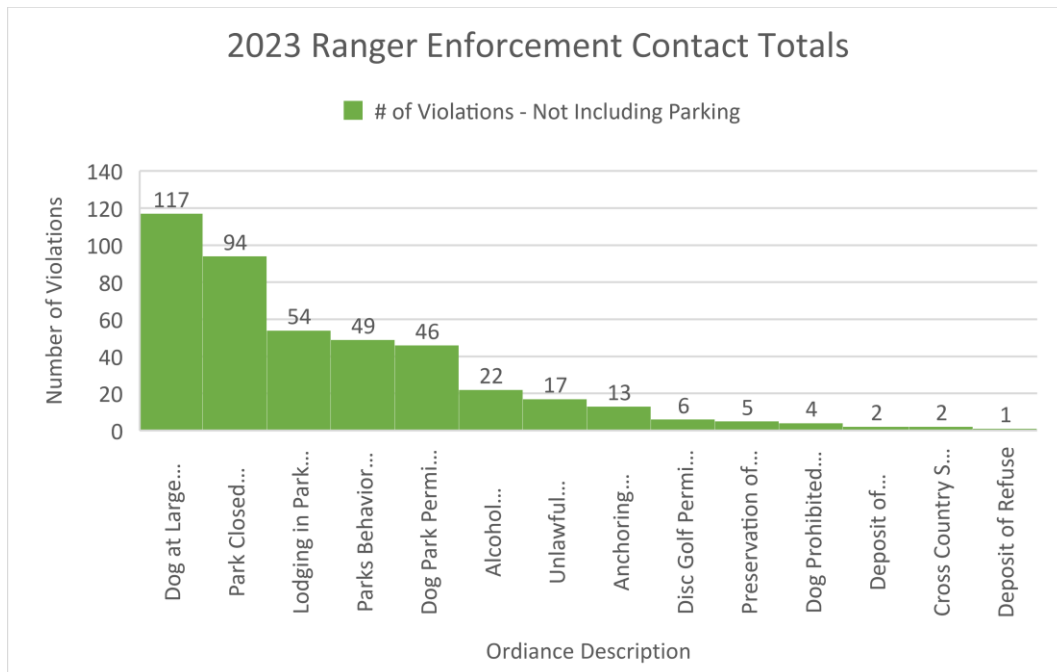
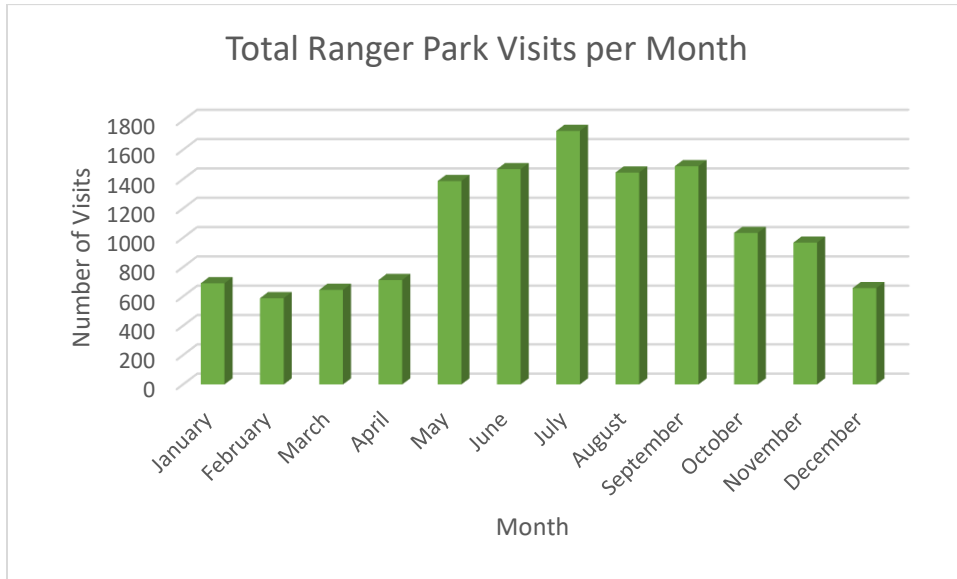
#### **Rangers (Jason Vroman)**

**Winter operations:** Rangers continued to support winter concessions sites as they were able to be opened by checking in with staff and providing change and other needed supplies. When the large snowfalls came, Rangers were out in the cold and elements to ensure that dog parks remained accessible and safe for the public. In addition, Rangers monitored Hiestand Disc Golf Course and recently closed it to public use due to muddy conditions.



**Ranger staffing update:** The shared Parking Enforcement and Ranger position was posted and closed recently. We were fortunate to receive many applicants, and HR is processing materials for referrals. We hope to have the position hired by April 15, 2024. In addition, we are looking to hire 2-3 new hourly Rangers with the same anticipated start date.

**Rangers by the numbers:** The end of 2023 means its annual reporting time! Rangers have put together numbers from the previous year. Below are two charts showing different aspects of Ranger activity. In addition to the charts below, Rangers successfully referred 117 unhoused individuals, resulting in 36 active cases for street outreach. Out of those, 8 were confirmed to have found permanent housing. Additionally, Rangers checked 3,191 permits with a 92% compliance rate.





### **Volunteers (John Weichelt)**

A highlight of the quarter was the formation of a new partnership with the Urban League Young Professionals. This collaboration led to the adoption of Penn Park, focusing on supporting special events and clean-up activities. One of the standout moments was the successful sunset clean-up event held on December 5, 2023, where volunteers came together to remove a significant amount of rubbish from the park, demonstrating the power of community involvement and the positive impact of our partnership. In the coming months, the volunteer program will partner with Goodman South Library, MPD South District, and more local partners to improve programming and clean-up efforts at Penn Park further.



In an effort to streamline and enhance volunteer management across the city, we have held productive meetings with representatives from the City of Madison IT, Olbrich Gardens, the Library, and the Senior Center. These gatherings aim to explore options for a city-wide volunteer management software that could support our diverse needs and simplify coordination across various departments and organizations. After a thorough discussion, Get Connected emerged as the preferred choice, setting the stage for more efficient and effective volunteer engagement city-wide. This procurement process is ongoing, and we hope to purchase by the end of the first half of 2024.

Additionally, the volunteer program actively recruited volunteers for a series of special events that have become cherished parts of our community's seasonal celebrations. These included the enchanting Candlelight Walks and the festive Winter Prom. The program looks ahead to recruiting volunteers for the signature Ride the Drive event, Earth Day Challenge, and city-wide dog park cleanup. These efforts provide unique experiences for participants and meaningful opportunities for volunteers to contribute to our city's vibrancy and spirit.

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

In 2023, the KNOW Program partnership with the Madison Parks Foundation provided various program opportunities, events, and employment development opportunities to nearly 5,700 young people (with some duplication). To further expand the KNOW Program, we purchased a 12-passenger van that will allow us to conduct off-site programming in the summer of 2024. Lastly, in the calendar year 2023, the WPCRC welcomed 133,327 visitors.

On December 2, 2023, the WPCRC held its 24th Annual Holiday Arts and Crafts Fair. The event featured over 80 vendors and artisans from all over Wisconsin, offering various unique gifts and items. We were pleased to welcome nearly 1,600 visitors to the fair. We are excited to announce that the 19th Annual SpringFest Arts and Crafts Fair will be on May 4, 2024. This event will also be known as "May the 4th Be With You" for Star Wars fans!