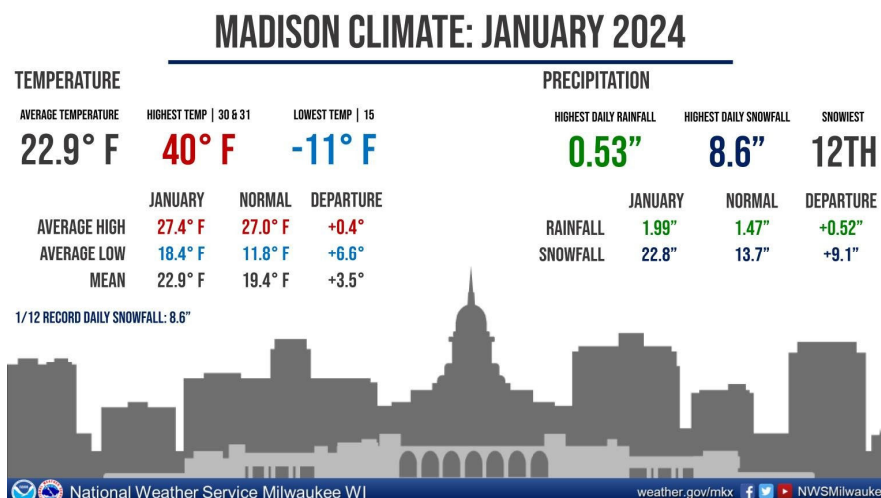


SUPERINTENDENT'S FEBRUARY 2024 REPORT

COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

2024 is in full swing and staff are busily preparing for the year ahead. Planning and preparation work is occurring to accommodate events and park users of all types for the busy spring that is on deck. This is the time of the year where our reservations, permitting, and street use work hits full stride and takes a significant amount of staff resources to make happen. Many sections are also busy working through the hiring processes to ensure we recruit, train and (hopefully) retain seasonal staff who make many of the things we do possible.

January was a challenging month for the Parks Division mostly related to challenging weather conditions for us to promote our historically normal winter recreation offerings. The month started with a dozen days with highs in the 30's, followed by a record snowfall of 8.6 inches on the 12th and a subsequent deep freezing environment for about 8 days. The end of the month then popped back up into highs in the upper 30's and we hit 40 twice on the 30th and 31st. Overall, the month was warmer and wetter. Of particular note was the fact that we were 6.6 degrees warmer on lows for the month. That is a significant deviation and challenges us to be able to create or protect ice and snow based activities. Despite the record daily snowfall on the 12th and the overall 12th highest snowfall total on record for the month, we remain [slightly behind on snowfall for the winter](#). The graphic below is from the National Weather Service and gives a good snapshot of January's weather for 2024.



This month I wanted to flag for the Commission the public the online data driven analytical tool Park Serve. The [Trust for Public Land's Park Serve website](#) is developed by the Trust for Public Land based on survey data we provide them and it can be used to review and analyze our park system on a number of facets. I will note here that the equity score portion of our annual [Trust for Public Lands Parkscore](#) ranking can be better contextualized with the Park Serve website. That portion of the score is related to acres available per capita based on the level of income within census tracts. It is notable that the lower served areas within the City with lower incomes are very much concentrated around the University and Downtown. We remain focused on the Downtown Park needs of the community, but it is important to note that recreational amenities owned and operated by the UW are not included in this analysis.

Future Commission Items

- Golf Enterprise Update – The Golf Team is working to prepare a report to the 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. This will heavily involve our new Golf Operations Director (see below).
- Olin Houses – We will be working on a management plan for the Olin Houses as we buy them. The one we have owned for a bit is under a leaseback, but the new acquisition will not be by the spring. We anticipate buying more of these and it would be good to begin developing the plan for holding strategy. We are hopeful to have a plan in place in the first half of 2024.
- Parks Division Work Plan / Roadmap – Staff will present the Division's roadmap to the Board between March and May of 2024. The roadmap provides an overview of significant change initiatives that the Division is undertaking and/or working on in 2024. The roadmap elements each have an assigned manager who are leading the work associated with that element.
- Art in Parks Policy – will be going through the Long Range Planning subcommittee and anticipated back to the Commission in the coming months. Until such time that this is adopted we are not currently accepting applications for installation of private art in the system.
- POSP Update – the Long Range Planning Subcommittee is working on the POSP and staff is looking into options for a good time over the next few months to provide an update to the Commission.

Personnel Updates

Promotions/Hires:

- Charlotte Blotz has accepted the position of Interim West Parks Supervisor in. Charlotte has been serving as West Parks Operations Leadworker since December 2022.
- David Vetovec has been promoted from Central Parks Supervisor to Golf Operations Director. Dave will begin leading the Golf Team on February 5, 2024.

Departures:

- Richard Gogert retired from his Parks Maintenance Worker position with the Mall Concourse Maintenance Team. After 11 years of service, his last day with the Parks Division was January 5, 2024.
- Paul Janes retired from his position as Parks Electrical Foreperson with the Parks Facilities Maintenance Team. After 14 years of service, his last day with the Parks Division was February 1, 2024.

Section reports

Parks Operations Monthly Highlights

Conservation:

- Groomed ski trails with support from Ecology Team staff after a long-awaited snow event in early January.
- Led the Operation Fresh Start crew and several volunteers on burning brush piles at Acewood and Cherokee Marsh Mendota Unit.

Construction:

- Staff Worked with the Streets Division keeping main routes open during daily snow events, then were crucial in performing assigned area plowing once the snow ended.
- Removed snow piles from the Mall Concourse, Goodman Facility and Dutch Mill park and ride.

Facilities:

- Capital project work included Law Park pier rebuild, golf drinking fountain install, park signature sign rehabilitation, Goodman Pool acid room door replacement and Brittingham boats window restoration.
- Installed charging systems for electric vehicles at Goodman Maintenance.

General Parks:

- Supported the Candlelight Snowshoe Hike at Warner park on 1/20/2024 by dropping off picnic tables and hay bales for the event.
- The cold weather aided in ice formation enough to open most ice skating locations.
- Brush clearing in several parks including Marshall, Sauk Creek and Orchard Ridge
- Cleared snow from assigned routes after an active weather pattern left over 18 inches of snow in the Madison area over a five-day period.
 - **The Ecology Team:**
 - Created a species list for our managed meadow scorecards.
 - Began working on the 2024 beautification project list.
 - Created a general parks burn rotation spreadsheet and contracting list.
 - Cleared invasives from a small woodland unit adjacent to one of our upper tier 2 prairies at Kingston-Onyx Park, Acewood park shoreline and Warner.

Mall Concourse:

- Performed winter pruning of trees and shrubs in the service area.
- Removed snow from major winter storms during the week of January 8-12.
- Removed holiday décor (bus shelter wreaths, holiday lights).

Planning and Development: February 2024

- Parks and Open Space Plan (POSP)
 - Parks staff and the Long Range Planning Subcommittee are working hard on the POSP update. MSA consulting and their team member All Together, are assisting the staff and committee members. Last weekend 5,000 randomly selected households received invites to complete the Parks Survey. We will have the results from the survey by mid-March.
 - Save the dates for the following POSP Open Houses:
 - Madison Memorial High School (Wisconsin Community Room); Thurs April 4th
 - Warner Park Community Recreation Center (Meeting Room); Thurs April 25th
 - Olbrich Botanical Gardens (Atrium) Thurs May 2nd
 - Madison Parks (330 E Lakeside Conference Room); Thurs May 9th
 -
- *all times are 5:30-7:30pm meeting with set-up beginning at 5, clear room by 8.

- Warner Park Dog Park and Burrows Park Parking Lot Rehabilitation
 - Planning staff are developing a BPW contract for the rehabilitation of these two lots. The Warner Park lot will remain much the same as it is in terms of shape and size. However, the Burrows lot and exit driveway are being redesigned for a more efficient layout. This will result in less pavement in the park, and maintain the same amount of parking stalls.

- Rennebohm Park
 - Rennebohm Park will receive a new set of tennis courts (the east side courts, the west side courts were rebuilt last year). In addition, the shelter will be remodeled to bring the restrooms up to current ADA standards. And, staff is working on a design for a water/spray feature to be located near the new inclusive playground. All of this work is planned in such a manner that it will not disrupt the band concerts.

- Garner Park Playground
 - Garner Park playground will be replaced with a new playground later this year. The playground location will be moved from its current location to a new location just south of the shelter. This new location more easily accessed, it will be easier to keep dry in rainy weather and will be more visible from the street and the parking lot.

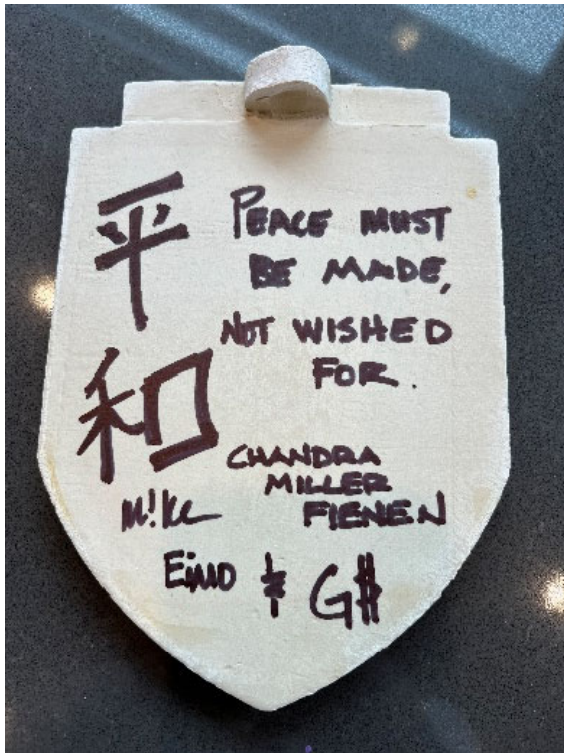
Olbrich Botanical Gardens



Orchid Escape – Orchid Escape opened January 27 and runs through March 3, 2024. The theme this year is Rise of the Angiosperm. Over 1000 orchids are on display in the Bolz Conservatory with dinosaurs. A pure delight for all ages!

Royal Thai Pavilion Tile Signing – The tiles arrived on Wednesday, January 24, 2024. On Sunday, January 28, 2024 Olbrich Botanical Gardens hosted a signing for the public to be a part of history by signing a tile. Over 1000 people have signed tiles so far. Messages of hope, peace, joy, art, love, celebration, and memory adorn the tiles. We received a lot of press from multiple outlets for this event and the Royal Thai Pavilion project:





- Wisconsin State Journal:
 - https://madison.com/news/local/thai-pavilion-olbrich-history-kalam-restoration-garden/article_bc970196-b54b-11ee-a4da-c78412d33423.html
 - https://madison.com/news/local/olbrich-thai-pavilion-tiles-history/article_87e2c1dc-bbbe-11ee-804e-73fd0ee1fda2.html
 - https://madison.com/news/local/heres-what-madisonians-wrote-on-new-tiles-for-the-olbrich-thai-pavilion/article_a9e8a59a-be29-11ee-8649-7b123afbfae3.html
- WMTV 15: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3FhnB8MVEA>
- WKOW 27: https://www.wkow.com/news/top-stories/olbrich-botanical-gardens-invites-people-to-sign-new-roof-tiles-at-royal-thai-pavilion/article_43b1dfd8-be44-11ee-9fec-ab65942caa68.html
- Channel 3000: https://www.channel3000.com/lifestyle/residents-sign-new-roof-of-the-royal-thai-pavilion/article_9646d3c4-be4a-11ee-b811-574fe7068e1d.html

- **Bolz Conservatory Closure:** The request for bids is due out very soon for the upcoming closure of the Bolz Conservatory for maintenance work. This work will include further assessment and possible repair for the windows, structural elements, and some mechanical equipment. Closure is from early March-mid June.