

Park Operations Quarterly Report September - November 2019

The work requirements for the Parks Operations team varied considerably this quarter due to unseasonable wet, cold and snowy weather. This quarter brought record rainfall, cold temperatures and snow, which resulted in the team transitioning back and forth between fall and winter weather work. Leaf pick-up gave way to snow removal and transitioned back to fall preparation work. The record rainfall altered work and project schedules. However, thanks to the adaptive response by our team, seasonal transition work was completed along with unseasonal snow removal.

Seasonal preparation included removing trash barrels from some parks, collecting picnic tables in need of repair, winterizing shelters, preparing warming shelters, removing piers and closing athletic fields. Work was also done to prepare the park areas for skating, skiing and other winter recreational activities. Land management efforts in parks and conservation lands this quarter included removing woody invasive species, mowing meadows and planting trees.

The team supported the hiring process that resulted in the hiring of a Parks Worker, a Custodian and two Parks Maintenance Workers. This staff will bring needed support.

The team continued to focus on professional development and continuous improvement efforts. Short training sessions were held to support self-development including sessions on delivering service excellence, effective leadership and empathy. The team also learned about process improvement tools, including a deeper review of the 5S process and benefits. The team reviewed how the 5S tool could be used to organize and evaluate storage space.

CONSERVATION (Paul Quinlan)

Conservation staff worked to control invasive species on approximately 25 acres at five conservation parks, including: Cherokee Marsh – North Unit, Cherokee Marsh – South Unit, Edna Taylor, Owen, and Prairie Ridge. Target species included Asian bittersweet, crown vetch, and porcelain-berry.

Staff also began cross country ski preparation by mowing and pruning vegetation along the edges of the ski trails at the five parks groomed by the Conservation section.

Staff conducted a preliminary survey for invasive jumping worms (*Amyntas* spp.) in 18 conservation parks. Results confirmed the presence of worms at five parks and revealed substantial evidence of their presence at three more. This relatively new invader is a serious threat to the ecology of the City's natural areas.

Habitat Management Plans for Stricker's Pond, Meadow Ridge, and the Bitzer Family Preserve were completed and will be presented to the Habitat Stewardship Subcommittee in February. The plan for Meadow Ridge includes a site-specific burial mound management plan that conforms to Park's guidelines for burial mound maintenance.

Volunteers worked on several projects this quarter, including seed collection and sowing at Edna Taylor, buckthorn removal at Owen, honeysuckle removal at Cherokee Marsh - Mendota Unit, and installation of plant monitoring transects for next year at Turville Point. The respective "Friends" groups at each park led all of these efforts. In addition, the Operation Fresh Start crew cleared a new 0.3-mile hiking trail at Acewood, and re-surfaced a 0.25-mile segment of gravel hiking trail at Owen.

CONSTRUCTION (Rich Bergmann)

Completed multiple capital projects as well non-capital project work. The capital projects included the removal of old playgrounds at Hiestand, Sherman Village, Lakeview Heights and OB Sherry in preparation for new playground installations. The team also constructed the new nature play areas at Brittingham and William Slater, and prepared the surface for a new memorial bench at Yahara Place Park.

Other non-capital work included constructing a berm to divert water at Odana School Park, moving 185 pallets of sandbags to storage and auditing the newly installed playgrounds for safety compliance and quality control.

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE (Jon Landsverk)

The Facilities team focused on capital projects and annual fall inspections and shutdown work. The capital projects included finishing the door replacements at Brittingham and Marshall Boat Houses, adding a 360-foot split rail fence along the Wingra shoreline, replacing the plumbing fixtures at B.B. Clarke, painting shelters and installing the new cricket pitch practice turf at Reindahl Park. The team also replaced lighting with new LED energy-saving lamps at Wexford, B.B. Clark, Olin Boat Launch, Marshall and Olbrich Boat Launches', and the Olbrich Beach and Elver athletic field parking lots.

The fall shutdown work included inspecting and winterizing the pool, splash pads, fountains, drinking fountains, shelters, restrooms, community gardens and stadiums. The Capitol Square fountains were shut down on October 17th after a successful year of operation.

To align better with the goals in the comprehensive plan, the Facilities work plan was modified to follow the strategies and action items of the comprehensive plan. This will provide the team with more measurable outcomes.

FORESTRY (Marla Eddy and Craig Klinke)

Forestry Section	Total Trees (Sept, Oct, Nov)	Total Hours (Sept, Oct, Nov)
Cycle Pruning	89	47
Pruned by Request	843	1304
Small Tree Pruning Cycle	396	118
Tree Removal	290	792
Ash Preemptive Removals	263	740
Storm Work/Hangers		240
Planting		2162

Forestry completed some cycle pruning and small tree pruning on the Madison West Side. The East Side team completed requested pruning that built up over the summer months. The team also completed fall planting, which was impacted by the challenging weather conditions, nevertheless planting 792 trees. The tree planting focused on the far West Side, the Isthmus and the far East Side where EAB preemptive removals had taken place.

Considerable time was invested in preparation for the Forestry department transition into the Streets Division beginning in January 2020. The effort included equipment identification, development of a Parks Arborist work plan, holding employee informational meetings and creating a list of responses to the employee questions.

CENTRAL PARKS (Chad Hughes)

All central shelters were closed until next spring, with the exception of Highland Manor, Vilas and Gates of Heaven. A new playground was installed at Penn Park, completing the final phase of the park's reconstruction project. The Madison Park Foundation hosted their annual Picnic in the Park fundraiser in the iconic Vilas Park this October. Hayrides at multiple park locations in October and November concluded at Olin Park, where participants took wagon rides through the annual Fantasy in Lights holiday display.

The team completed a beautification project at Giddings Park, which included invasive species removal, native plantings and installation of a set of wooden stairs.

Through the support of the Landscape Maintenance crew, Central Park staff, and the Parks Arborists, 300 trees were planted in parks this fall. This brought the season total to 700 parks trees planted by the Parks team in 2019.

In preparation for winter, water was turned on for the ice rinks at Vilas and Goodman parks, and picnic tables in need of repair and most garbage cans were brought to be serviced over the winter.

Four additional Central staff completed the Salt-Wise training. Currently over 80% of the Central staff is now certified.

MALL CONCOURSE (Chad Hughes/Mark Kiesow)

Fall brought transition to the Mall crew. Fall bulbs, including over 800 new tulip and daffodil bulbs, were planted in landscape beds, and the Fall turf practices of aerating, over-seeding, and fertilizing concluded at the end of the month. Special events started to wind down for the year, culminating with the Mall's largest event—Freakfest, which required two weeks of preparation for the event. Sidewalk safety maintenance and removal of benches, bike racks, and landscape items were part of the event preparation. The late-night/early-morning cleanup went well, and the event concluded with putting furnishings back in place.

The Mall Maintenance team was put to the test by the early snowfall and record low temperatures. Winter work schedules were assigned two weeks earlier than normal to help spread the work load throughout the day and to provide service area coverage. The use of Mall equipment by the Forestry department created some additional challenges. However, the experience and skill of the crew came through and by mid-November, the service area was snow-free and the team once again concentrated on autumn tasks before the next round of snow removal.

The BID's "Shine On Madison" was the final event of the year, and Mall Maintenance helped transform the service area into a winter holiday themed landscape. Seasonal banners on light poles were changed to express the winter season, and the popular snowflake lights were added to the large street lights. Planters decorated with holiday themes and evergreen boughs were grouped along State Street and the Capitol Square, including holiday lights sponsored by both the BID and Mall Maintenance.

With the slight warmup at the end of November, the crew was able to complete a final, thorough, power washing of the bus shelters.

EAST PARKS (Kristin Mathews)

The new Burial Mound Policy was approved by the Park Commission in October. As part of the implementation, a meeting was held with the Wisconsin State Historical Society at Hudson Mound to determine the actions and permitting needed to remove signs and reroute the trail. The water fountain and Streets garbage can were removed from the burial area.

We received the permits from the Wisconsin State Historical Society to proceed with the Tenney Park tree removals. Approximately 50 trees need to be removed, including those that died due to the 2018 flooding. Both the Neighborhood Association and the Alder are aware of the plan. A plan is in place for planting replacement trees.

Managed meadow and low-mow areas were flail-mowed after the plants went to seed. Even with the difficult weather conditions, the entire Fall mowing list was completed.

WEST PARKS/ Forest Hills (Theran Steindl)

West Park staff reworked the snow removal plan to improve winter operations and better support the growing West Side service requirements. The new approach addressed the addition of 32 new bus stops, as well as the creation of new bike paths and general plow routes associated with the new Highway M expansion.

The unseasonal cold weather allowed for early snow making through the efforts of our partnership with the CXC and MadNorSki ski clubs. The snow was piled for storage in preparation for constructing the 1 km loop portion of the Elver Park cross-country ski trails. The actual construction of the loop is weather dependent, but the partners hope for construction to begin in early December.

Winter preparation for the ice rinks is in progress. The hockey boards and all ice-related equipment were prepared and are being set. When the cold weather sets in for winter, the ice rinks will be flooded.

The Forest Hills team worked with Ann Shea to update the portion of the City website dedicated to the Cemetery. The effort included removal of outdated information, addition of new information about infrastructure improvements, and the addition of some pictures. They also began work to update the walking tour brochure and the general map of the cemetery.

While temporarily postponed by snow, the large leaf removal effort is back in full force at Forest Hills. Streets crews have helped to haul leaves, as the equipment was unable to effectively bale the leaves this year due to the wet conditions. Baling will resume if conditions become dry enough.