

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – MARCH, 2012

EAST PARKS – CRAIG KLINKE, SUPERVISOR

The unseasonably warm temperatures ended the ice skating season much earlier than normal. Our crews did what they could to extend the season, but we couldn't contend with Mother Nature. Hopefully, people got out and enjoyed the rinks while they could. We want to thank all of the volunteers who helped this year. They made a significant difference in establishing the ice and keeping it going.

The good part of having a warm and (for the most part) snow free winter is that we've had the opportunity to perform other activities. We continued pruning and performing invasive species removal. For example, by request of the Madison Police Department, we recently began working on a project thinning out a wooded section at Reindahl Park. This project will provide more visibility in an area of the park that generated concerns from MPD. We'd like to thank Forestry for helping us haul the brush away and West Parks for loaning us their stump grubber.

Some of the other projects we are working on are the following:

- Rewriting the Parks Safety Manual
- Meeting with user groups to prepare for athletics this spring
- Working on hiring seasonals for the upcoming mowing season
- Working on a spring parts and equipment order
- Converting some equipment back to summer use
- Painting and repairing hockey boards, benches, tables, and barrels

Kristin Mathews has received a promotion to Operational Leadworker. We look forward to working with her and having her on our team. **Welcome aboard Kristin!**

WEST PARKS – KRISTIN MATHEWS, INTERIM SUPERVISOR

What a crazy winter! With the warm temperatures we had, we were unable to safely do ice maintenance most of the month of February. Even our volunteer rinks had deteriorated by the middle of the month. The hockey boards at Westmorland were pulled in and are drying out before getting a fresh coat of paint and being put into storage for next winter.

As a result of this unusual season, we were able to get a start on many other projects. We have continued to trim trees throughout the parks and have made a lot of progress. We are also painting the barrels and picnic tables to spruce them up for the summer season. We have been doing a lot of early season trash picking in the parks and on the boulevards to keep everything looking good. The mower mechanics are already changing over the equipment to prepare for the mowing season as well. Soon we will be interviewing for our summer seasonal laborer positions!

CONSERVATION – RUSS HEFTY

The mild weather we've been experiencing continued in February, ranking the season as the 4th warmest winter on record. Needless to say, it has been a frustrating season in cross country skiing for both the public and staff.

Since conditions were unsuitable for winter recreation, the staff turned to land management projects in the conservation parks. Cherokee Marsh continues to be the focus of a significant oak woodland restoration that was started last fall. We leased a Forestry mower for a week and made great progress in reducing the presence of exotic brush (buckthorn and honeysuckle). Before we can even start with the mower, we have to put in a lot of preparation time to locate and mark rocks, old fences, and farmer dumps so that our leased equipment is not damaged. If damaged, it costs \$80.00 to replace just *one* of the carbide cutters. These areas will also be burned in the spring to injure the exotic brush a second time. We'll then follow with a foliar application of herbicide. Staff also trimmed up the lower limbs of trees along the woodland/prairie boundary. This give us more room to get the equipment in to the area to perform follow-up maintenance mowing, and also allow for the sunlight to reach the ground at this ecological interface. This tree trimming will also benefit the establishment of native grasses and forbs to increase the fire load so that, over time the "sharp edge" between these two plant communities will soften.

We also moved forward with the restoration process of the East Marsh at Cherokee (located east of the Cherokee Golf Course). Volunteers from the *Friends of Cherokee Marsh* helped to scatter native seeds over the wetland areas scraped as part of the ditch plug project of last summer. Staff is currently beginning planning efforts with our partners at the *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service* to close old drainage ditches in this marsh (Phase Two). In summer 2012 we hope to fill an additional 4,000 ft. of ditches, continuing the process of restoring the natural hydrology and hopefully, will aid our efforts to increase plant diversity. This project will also enhance the preservation of the high quality peat wetland located just to the east of the area. Cherokee Marsh contains 1,000's of acres under public ownership (city, county, state) but only relatively small portions have escaped the detrimental effects of agricultural and development drainage efforts, and high nutrient non-point source storm water runoff.

MALL CONCOURSE – TOM SKAIFE, SUPERVISOR; LAURA BAUER, LEADSWORKER

Winter arrived late in Madison, and we finally switched into snow removal mode. We've implemented a new scheduling scheme for the season, and with this schedule we've been able to provide more staff coverage in the early morning hours and later in the afternoons. We expect that with this improvement, we'll keep the sidewalks in better condition for the morning and afternoon commutes.

Between snowfalls, and as time allowed, our crew was kept busy clearing snow and ice away from seating areas and bicycle racks. It's tedious and often slow work, but we realize that the Mall/Concourse area is more inviting to pedestrians, bicyclists, and delivery trucks when the snow has been cleared.

In recent years, we've seen less and less demand for the use of our sand barrels. The sand levels have decreased very little while the barrels fill up with trash and waste, making the sand unpleasant and often unusable. Last spring we were forced to discard much of our contaminated leftover sand because it was very offensive and most likely was a health risk. In response to this trend, we've decreased the number of barrels that we put out in late autumn. After the first appreciable snowfall we received requests for two additional barrels, which we were happy to provide as this seems to indicate that the sand will actually be used. We will continue our efforts to site the barrels in the best and most useful places.

The Facilities Maintenance crew has finished removing the large lighted snowflakes from the downtown area, left up again this year until after the Winter Festival. We appreciate their help with this project; the annual removal seems like the first sign that winter is ending.

As we move into March, our crew will be busy getting the sidewalks thoroughly swept, picking the trash out of the melting snow, and replacing the winter banners with the spring ones. The reconstruction at Fairchild Street will begin as well, making it difficult to get around downtown again.

FOREST HILL CEMETERY – KEVIN SORENSEN

The mild winter continued in February. We had enough frost in the ground that we needed to defrost most of the graves that we opened. As usual, frost varies at each location due to many variables. With the lack of snow, we were able to get into some sections to do tree and shrub pruning. Facilities Maintenance and Planning are currently updating the location of all cemetery irrigation lines and standpipes. We hope this will lead to our getting a new system in the future. The existing system is very old and we continue to have problems every season.

Current staffing levels are at 5.5 permanent employees.

February burial numbers, lot sales and total monthly revenue are as follows:

Interments: 8 Lots Sold: 7 Total Revenue: \$12,835.00

OLBRICH GARDENS – ROBERTA SLADKY

People and Gardens

January and February 2012 were great months to stroll the outdoor gardens. The mild temperatures invited visitors outdoors. The few snowfalls that occurred draped each twig with white. Those who ventured out were able to see the vernal witchhazel in bloom as well as intrepid snowdrops which responded to the warmth of the sun and the spring-like temperatures.

Visitor comment from the past month:

2/16/2012 "Love the way you present things here and am looking forward to the upcoming spring and summer! Great job! (I'm a member.)" Phyliss G.

Numbers

OBG Attendance (counted from 9 – 4 only + event participants)	2012	2011
Dec 1 – 31	10,785	9,796
YTD Dec 31	10,785	9,796
Total Member Households (individuals*) Dec 31	6,262 (9,563)	5,861 (8,787)

OBG City of Madison Major Revenue Categories	YTD 1/31/2012	YTD 1/31/2011
Bolz Conservatory Admission YTD	\$4,441	\$1,892
Room Rentals YTD*	\$7,330	\$3,782
Catering Percentage Revenue YTD**	\$696	\$352

*accrued at time of booking – up to 21 months before the rental date

** accrued on a monthly basis following each catered rental

Website

Website Visits	2012	2011
Total Visits	13,761	12,319

In 2011, the five most frequently-viewed pages on our website were: homepage; hours/admission/directions; monthly events calendar; Olbrich special events page; weddings page

Events

- Art Exhibit: Julie Sutter Blair, detailed botanical drawings, Jan 29- April 1, Sundays, 11am – 5 pm
- Conservatory Exhibit: *Treasures of the Rainforest*, daily through March 18
- Spring Flower Show *A Garden Party* March 10 – 25, 10 am – 4 pm daily (\$2 suggested donation)

Please note: The Bolz Conservatory will be closed for spring pruning: March 26 – April 6

Music at the Gardens – Sundays, 2 – 3 pm, \$1 suggested donation, exception noted*

- March 4, *Safety Last* (western swing/old jazz);
- March 11, *Ida Jo and The Show* (soul/folk/pop);
- March 18, *Kicks for Kids*– Ken Lonquist (fun for kids and families)
- March 25, *Botanical Boogie* – *Swing Time Music* (swing/jazz standards) FOR DANCING – limited seating. \$2 admission*

Education

- Bolz Conservatory, Behind-the-Scenes Greenhouse Tour, Saturdays - 2/18 or 3/10 from 1 – 2:30

Learn & Play Together

- Toddler Story & Stroll Rainforest Romp (ages 2 – 4), Colors in the Rainforest, Fri, 2/3, 10 – 11 am
- Numbers in the Rainforest, Fri, 2/10, 10 – 11 am
- Shapes in the Rainforest, Fri, 2/17, 10 – 11 am
- Nighttime in the Jungle: Rainforest Nightlife (K - 3), Fri, 2/3, 6:30 – 7:30 pm

Wellness at the Gardens

- Yoga, Mondays 5:30 pm – 6:45 pm and Thursdays, 7:30 – 8:45 am (drop in OK)

Classes & Workshops for Adults

- The Art of Japanese Flower Arranging – Ichiyo School of Ikebana Sat, 2/4, 1 – 3 pm
- Pine Needle Basketry: The Art of Coiling, Sat, 2/4, 1 – 5 pm
- Designing and Installing a Food Forest, Tues, 2/7, 6:30 – 8:30 pm
- Annuals for Scent, Mon 2/13, 6:30 – 8:30
- Winter Interest Lecture and Night Garden Walk, Thurs, 2/16, 6 – 8 pm
- Sprouting Sprouts and Growing Micro-Greens, Mon, 2/20, 6:30 – 8:30 pm
- Help Your Vegetable Garden Produce Like a Vegetable Farm, Wed, 2/22, 6 – 8 pm
- Weeds and Invasive Plants in our Landscape, Thu, 2/23, 6:30 – 8:30 pm
- Introduction to Painting in Soft Pastel, Sun, 2/26, 9:30 am – 4:30 pm
- The Good, the Bad, and the Hungry-Wildlife in Your Garden, Tu, 2/28, 6:30 – 8 pm
- Herbal Tea: From the Garden to the Teacup, Tues, 2/28, 6 – 8:30 pm
- Inspiration from English Gardens, Wed, 2/29, 6 – 7:30 pm

GOLF – RAY SHANE

Looking at the snow covered grass it is hard to believe that the courses could be opening for play in the next couple of weeks. Maintenance staff has been busy this winter sharpening the blades on all of the mowers and getting the equipment ready for another season.

Almost all of the supplies for the upcoming season have been ordered and are awaiting delivery. Clubhouse preparations are in full swing with furnaces, ice machines, coolers, and freezers being serviced. In the next few days, staff will start the project of getting water turned back on, clean buildings, and stock shelves with inventory.

The winter has been very mild and we are expecting the courses to come through in great shape. Green fees and golf pass fees were frozen at 2011 rates and you will be able to follow us on both *Facebook* and *Twitter*. It appears that 2012 will be another exciting year for Golf Madison Parks!

FORESTRY – MARLA EDDY

Forestry Section	Total Trees	Total Hours
Cycle Pruning	1,192	1,166
Pruned by Request	295	311.75
Small Tree Pruning Cycle	1,758	533
Tree Removal	118	316
Storm Work/Hangers		32.5
Unfilled Vacancies		336

The West Forestry unit continued district cycle pruning in Forestry district 27 and small tree area pruning in Forestry district 19 and 37 as well as completing work requests. Also, West Forestry began pruning in advance of engineering street construction and resurfacing projects.

The East Forestry unit continued district cycle pruning in Forestry district 14. Crews also continued small tree area pruning in Forestry district 28 and along East Washington Avenue corridor. Pruning in advance of 2012 Engineering street reconstruction projects continued in February as well as completing work requests.

The Forestry section greatly appreciated receiving some assistance from both east and west parks maintenance staff. They provided staff for the Forestry clean-up crew on both the east and west side. In some instances this assistance made the difference in having more forestry section arborists doing tree work versus working on the clean-up crew.

Forestry Specialists finished preparing planting routes for Digger's Hotline to mark underground utility locates in relationship to our planting sites. Then the Forestry specialists began working on marking engineering reconstruction projects for "no root cutting" as well as responding to work requests from general public.

Special projects completed include:

- Forest Hill Cemetery pruning and removal.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT – KAY RUTLEDGE

Warner Park Parking Lot

The Parks Division will be reconstructing the Warner Park parking lot in three phases over the next three years. In Phase 1, fall 2010, we replaced the storm sewer and built 2 retention ponds that will hold all of the parking lot run off prior to it going into the channel and lagoons. Bays 2, 3, and the roadway binder were completed as a part of Phase 2 in spring/fall 2011. Phase 3 includes bay 4 (in front of the park shelter), bay 1 (in front of the Mallards office) and bay 5 (new parking bays by the soccer fields). Favorable bids were received and the contract was awarded to *Raymond P. Cattell*. Construction will start as soon as possible in spring 2012 and the project should be completed by May 25, 2012.

Quann Tennis Courts

The reconstruction of six of the 12 tennis courts at Quann Park is complete. The color will be done in spring 2012, under separate contract; the refurbishing of the net posts will be done by our staff this winter.

Cherokee Park Playground

Plans and specifications are being finalized for bidding in March. Neighborhood representatives have exceeded their fundraising goal of \$20,000; fundraising above the \$20,000 will be utilized for additional playground components requested by the neighborhood.

Tenney Park Maintenance Bridge

We hired *Bloom Companies* through our RFP (Request for Proposal) process in mid October and met with the consultant to begin the design process on October 28. We are reviewing preliminary designs and alignments with the consultant and coordinating with the City's Historic Planner, the State and the neighborhood regarding final design options. Construction is tentatively scheduled for this summer/fall.

Playgrounds, Paths and Basketball

The site restoration will be completed in the spring on most of the playground projects.

Park Landscaping

The park landscaping projects bids are due on March 2. Landscaping projects include new plantings this summer in BB Clarke Beach (the managed meadow along shoreline), Door Creek Park, Garner Park, Giddings Park, Heritage Heights Park, Sandstone Park, Tenney Park (after the parking lot is constructed), Thut Park, and Warner Park.

Olive Jones Park

The consultant is preparing the final plans and specifications for bidding the reconstruction of the retaining wall along the north, south and east perimeters, replacing the remaining fence, and repaving the asphalt surface. Preliminary pricing estimates exceeded the budget authorization, and discussions are underway to identify cost-savings measures. The bidding will begin in mid-March, for construction during the summer months while school is out.

Marshall/Spring Harbor Park Dredging

The Marshall Park/Spring Harbor Park Dredging is complete. The contract calls for us to pay 75% of the dredging bid item this fall then, in spring, survey the sediment pile after it has set and drained to determine actual final quantity.

Park and Open Space Plan

The draft Park and Open Space Plan was introduced to the Park Commission at the February 8 Park Commission meeting. The Plan will be discussed at the March Park Commission meeting.

Hudson Park

Staff is progressing with the design for the Hudson Park beach improvements and submitted a Chapter 30 permit to the Wisconsin DNR and Army Corp on February 14. This plan was also emailed to the neighborhood. Staff will be working on the plans and specifications for bidding, then for approval by the Board of Public Works on June 6. Construction is scheduled for the fall.

Hoyt Park Improvements

The staff has been working with the alder to inform the neighborhood of the planned improvements through mailings and e-mails to listserves. This notice included informing the neighborhood of a question and answer session hosted by staff at the Sequoya Library on March 12. Proposed improvements include: fixing the existing damaged stone wall by the restroom/storage building, improving the safety of existing stone staircases, acquiring soil borings to investigate increasing infiltration at the park, addressing water ponding near the walls at the overlook, and asphalt patching. Proposed improvements also include removing invasive trees and funding the purchase of native plants to add to the restoration efforts completed by the *Friends* group and additional volunteers.

Door Creek Park

The staff is designing plans and completing permits for installation of a box culvert at Door Creek Park to accommodate a ski trail. This crossing will allow users to access the ski trail from a trail head at the parking lot and will continue the City's efforts to create a ski trail system at Door Creek Park.

Warner Park Master Plan

The staff met with the alder and is developing the Request for Proposal for the Warner Park Master Plan. The consultant selection process should be completed by May.

Esther Beach Master Plan

The staff met with members of the neighborhood association on January 25 to start the public input process on the plan which will incorporate the additional land acquired in 2011. Based on the input received, a draft master plan will be created so that it can be discussed further with the neighborhood.

Blackhawk Park

We are working with neighborhood representatives, and city and park staff to provide an expanded playground and resolve current drainage issues in the playground area. We are preparing several conceptual plans to incorporate various playground components, and developing cost comparisons to present to the Neighborhood Association in March.

Highland Manor Open Space

We are working with neighborhood representatives and city staff to develop a master plan for recreational amenities in the right of way, which cuts diagonally through the Highland Manor Neighborhood. Concepts have been vetted after input from the neighborhood representative and will be presented to the alder and at a neighborhood meeting in the coming weeks. We are also working with city staff and the City Attorney's Office to obtain public access easements, and to resolve longstanding encroachment issues.

Other Projects

- We are working with the Planning Department on the Arbor Hills/Leopold Neighborhood Plan and Hoyt Park Neighborhood Plan.
- We are working with the IT Dept. to complete workable upgrade of computer system to accommodate Windows 7 and compatible upgrades to MicroStation V8.