

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S JANUARY 2020 REPORT COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary**

2019 was an exciting and busy year for Madison Parks. Significant planning efforts were finished (James Madison) and started (Vilas and Law); critical acquisitions were made to expand the system (Medical Society and Moraine Woods); 9 new Alders and a new Mayor were elected; dozens of projects were completed; and the Board of Park Commissioners added a new member. Staff anticipates 2020 being equally, if not more, productive and busy. There is significant focus on establishing improved processes to promote a culture of continuous improvement within the organization. Staff looks forward to sharing more on this work in the coming months.

The month of December was warmer and dryer than normal, which meant a very slow start to winter recreation this year. The good news is that by working with our partners, there has been a consistent snow presence for skiing and sledding at Elver Park during the month. The good news with the weather was it allowed some additional cleanup and maintenance work that is often difficult to get done to occur.

The Learning Center and Greenhouse project at Olbrich Gardens has experienced some significant delays in construction, but is on track to open before the busy springtime. Staff has been working diligently to ensure the transition of the Forestry operations section to Streets goes as smoothly as possible. There were significant administrative tasks to effectuate this transfer and staff if both organizations worked together to achieve these in an orderly manner.

### Future Commission Items

- IPM Taskforce – The IPM taskforce has started active work again after a brief pause to realign the group. Staff will present on the current status as a part of a land management update in April.
- On-Leash Dogs in Parks – Staff is working on an initial recommendation for dog free parks to present to the Commission based on the recently adopted policy change. The Ordinance change and this listing of dog free parks is anticipated to be on the agenda for February.
- Reindahl Park Imagination Center project – Staff is working with Library staff to determine the best course of action for presenting the Library led planning report to both the BPC and the Library Board. Currently, the concept is to hold a joint meeting for this purpose in March or April.

### Section reports

#### **Operations**

##### Conservation:

- Made snow for Elver Park sledding hill and supported MadNorSki with snowmaking for the 1.3 km ski loop. The team also supported grooming.
- The Operation Fresh Start crew continued invasive shrub removal at Acewood Pond, and burned brush piles produced by this work. Conservation staff assisted with burning brush piles. Volunteers continued honeysuckle removal at Cherokee Marsh - Mendota Unit.

#### Construction:

- Completed restoring the old playground areas at Segoe and Sherman Village to turf and placed wood mulch, boulders and a climbing log at the Brittingham Nature Nook.
- Completed the playground audits for the new playgrounds installed in 2019.

#### Facilities:

- Pulled the remaining piers and removed the Olbrich boat launch, which will be rebuilt for the 2020 season. Turned on the water for hoses and installed the ice ramps in support of the winter ice rink season.
- Supported kiosk and bus shelter improvements at the Mall, and the completion of the Brittingham Park Nature Nook project. Installed new lighting at Gates of Heaven, replaced the lighting controls at Peace Park and installed a new heating unit at Vilas shelter as the old unit had failed.

#### Forestry:

- Focused on district pruning, small tree pruning, and ash removals. Only 140 Ash trees remain to be preemptively removed. The EAB plan developed five years ago was well planned and executed.

#### General Parks:

- Skate rinks remained closed due to the warm weather, although Westmorland hockey was open for a week, and generated a large amount of use. Nice Rink installations were started, but remain unfinished in some parks as cold weather is needed to firm the ground in order to avoid damaging turf with the equipment used for this work.

### **Olbrich Botanical Gardens**

#### Construction:

- The greenhouse has been occupied for over a month, and we continue to work through 'punch list' items, as staff work with contractor on issues with the cistern water, fog, and mist benches. Construction is delayed, but staff expect that the Learning Center will be available by January 31.

#### Programs & Exhibitions:

- Rainforest Rhythms performances feature performance groups whose roots originate in the tropical and subtropical regions of the world. Families will be able to pick up an I Spy activity sheet to search for plants in the Bolz Conservatory that relate to the culture highlighted during the performance. Friday, January 24, 2020 (no school day) @ 10:30 am and 1:30 pm. – *The Barefoot Hawaiian* performs selections from Polynesian cultures.

#### Education:

- Registration has opened for adult and youth and family education classes held from January to May, 2020.

#### Conservatory:

- Spring annuals for the outdoor gardens and annuals for the Spring Flower Show are underway in both production zones of the new greenhouse.

#### Horticulture:

- Staff are preparing their plant combinations and designs for Spring, Summer, and Fall 2020.

## **Community Services**

### Warner Park Community Recreation Center (WPCRC):

- The annual Holiday Fest was held on Saturday, December 7. It was well attended with approximately 2,000 visitors looking to purchase arts and crafts for the holiday season.

### Recreation Services:

- Due to unseasonably warm weather, the winter season is off a bit of a slow start. However, concessions were offered at Elver Park for eight (8) days over the winter Holiday break to support the cross-country skiing and sledding hill users.

### Park Rangers

- Rangers have been monitoring the Cross Country Ski loop for permit compliance and working to educate park users on dog policies. In addition, significant work has been done on the disc golf courses to support the winter course at Yahara and prepare Heistand and Elver for the coming year. Most recently, the team built 20 new Leopold benches for the courses.

### Park and Street Use Events:

- Staff kept busy with a number of projects. We did a thorough sorting of event files that have accumulated over many years. We continue to work on development of First Amendment Events and a Park Event Ordinance. We also have spent time planning and organizing for 2020 events.

### Front Desk:

- Front Desk staff are in the process of taking reservations for the coming year. The team is meeting with Athletic field user groups to review the season and plan for the new year as well.