

Park Operations Quarterly Report December 2018

As 2018 winds down, all Parks Operations sections have been busy transitioning from fall into winter maintenance. Each section has their own unique responsibilities in order to make sure the Parks system is ready for the new season. An extraordinary exception to the normal routine throughout November continued to be flood response, as we worked together with the Streets and Engineering Divisions to collect many of the sandbags that were deployed in August/September. Many sandbags remain in place, and we anticipate that we will be assisting with collection of these in the spring. Staff also continues to work to prepare FEMA documentation in response to the flood. Work on the IPM Taskforce is underway as the taskforce looks to review the 2004 Pesticide Policy, and the Operations team is preparing for a presentation of our land management practices for an early 2019 Taskforce meeting. In a major staff milestone, our two (2) original Parks Workers have completed their training programs and have been permanently placed—one in Central Parks and one at Mall Concourse.

CONSERVATION (Paul Quinlan)

The Conservation section ended the growing season with woody invasive species (ie. porcelain berry, Asian bittersweet, buckthorn and honeysuckle) control work at various sites. Staff began to expand restorations in management units at North Cherokee Marsh, and also at South Cherokee Marsh, where this work was complemented by forestry mowing and selective non-native tree and shrub removal contracts. Brush piles generated over the summer by OFS and volunteer workdays were burned at Prairie Ridge and Stricker's Pond. Deer exclosures were constructed at Owen and Cherokee Marsh to allow us to monitor the plant community and compare conditions with and without deer browse pressure. Staff then began to prepare ski trails, and snow making and snow grooming equipment for the upcoming season. In addition, Madnorski volunteers began snowmaking efforts at Elver Park on November 17 and will begin grooming trails in early December.

Our third habitat management plan, for South Cherokee Marsh, was reviewed by the Friends of Cherokee Marsh and presented to the Habitat Stewardship Committee. Paul Quinlan completed a wildland fire training course, and Brandon Mann participated in a field trip to the Mississippi River, Pool 8, to learn about successful freshwater estuary restoration accomplished by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The trip was sponsored by the DNR and Dane County, as part of an effort to advance restoration efforts in the Upper Yahara River.

In the coming month, Conservation staff plans to burn additional brush piles, begin grooming ski trails, and making snow for the sledding hill at Elver if necessary for the holiday break. They will also begin drafting the habitat management plan for Turville Point, and will secure burn permits for 2019.

CONSTRUCTION (Rich Bergmann)

Despite the cold temperatures and frozen conditions throughout the month of November, the Construction crew was able to finish seeding at Junction Ridge, install concrete pads for bike racks at Reynolds and assist Forestry tree planting by hauling material and working directly with Forestry crews to excavate grate tree holes. In addition the Playground crew is nearing completion of our second in-house playground installation at Ocean Park playground, and they have topped off surfacing at five (5) playgrounds and removed the Washington Manors old playground in preparation for replacement playground installation. The crew has also provided assistance to the Olbrich/Garver by finishing the gravel pad around the newly relocated hoop houses.

As we head into winter, the crew will provide snow plowing assistance to Streets as needed. As long as weather permits, they will continue to work on project in preparation for 2019 (ie. Hill Creek retaining wall, Odana Hills regrading of ditch line, removal of damaged and underutilized backstops. Rich will also be outlining his work plan, including capital projects for 2019.

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE (Tom Skaife)

All facilities (shelters, drinking fountains, etc.) have been winterized as necessary. Shelters have been converted to warming houses, and staff has begun daily inspection of buildings with HVAC systems. In addition, ice rinks have begun filling and the infrastructure inspected daily. Piers will all be removed by the first week of December and staff is working to prepare estimates for flood-damaged piers. Staff has also worked with Olbrich crew to conduct fall maintenance in the Conservancy.

Staff continue to work on capital projects and will do so as time allows throughout the winter. To complete the accessible playground project at Elver, we have reconfigured/remodeled the restrooms in the old shelter. We will be outfitting the Cherokee restroom for year-round maintenance by retrofitting electric heat to LP and insulating the building. In addition we are completing lighting projects at Warner boat launch, Reger park and planning for enhancements at McPike. We have also updated the HVAC system at Gates of Heaven. Other ongoing projects include metering of our water sources, restoring Bordner’s bounding boards, and completing interior installation of walls and electrical in Olbrich’s new garage among many others.

FORESTRY (Marla Eddy and Craig Klinke)

We wrapped up the fall 2018 planting season on November 30. We faced many challenges this season. Nursery stock deliveries were delayed due to wet field conditions and we experienced delays in utility markings. We completed a large grate planting route and much of our normal routes in freezing temperatures/frozen ground conditions. This allowed for many opportunities for teamwork and group problem-solving. New this planting season, we piloted the use of a Vaxcavator to physically locate underground utilities in advance of the planting crew.

Production numbers for the months of September, October and November are as follows:

| Forestry Section | Total Trees | Total Hours |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Cycle Pruning | 41 | 51 |
| Pruned by Request | 751 | 1340 |
| Small Tree Pruning Cycle | 664 | 164 |
| Tree Removal | 449 | 1400 |
| Ash Preemptive Removals | 370 | 781 |
| Storm Work/Hangers | 287 | |
| planting | | 3179 |

We are looking forward to entering back into tree maintenance operations in the coming months which includes cycle pruning (both district and small tree). Forestry specialists will be working on planning for spring planting (finishing tree layout for engineering and new subdivisions) and their work queues for tree replacement. Finally, forestry operations will be reviewing fall planting and evaluating what worked and what did not work so well.

GENERAL PARKS:

Overall, mowing and leaf mulching operations have come to an end, as have athletic and shelter reservations. Crews focused on preparing parks for winter by cleaning up leaves, pulling in barrels and tables, and aerating/overseeding athletic fields. A good amount of time went into grubbing ash stumps in all three sections. For this fall, we worked with Community Services to extend shelter reservations at Tenney, Vilas and Elver by nearly six (6) weeks to until the weekend after Thanksgiving. Crews in all three sections are preparing for ice rink maintenance and finalizing snow removal routes. In mid-November, we were able to tour several of our burial mound sites (Edna Taylor, Hudson and Forest Hill Cemetery) with a representative from Ho-Chunk, and will begin working with him to revise our mound management policy over the winter. Our goal is always to have ice rinks up and running by the holiday break, and given the conditions, we anticipate that we will have staff on the ice rinks in the very near future.

Central Parks (Chad Hughes)

The Landscape Maintenance Workers have spent the last few months mapping out and planting Ash replacement trees in parks across the system. Fantasy in Lights at Olin Park is again open with the Parks Division concluding our fall hayrides at that location. The skate park at McPike Park closed for the season in mid-November.

We will begin to work on plans for beautification projects over the winter months.

East Parks (Kristin Mathews)

Athletics is wrapping up with a lot of work aerating and completing maintenance on our reservable field areas. We completely rehabbed one infield diamond at Olbrich by regrading and adding material, which will put us in good shape for next season.

Staff worked to install N'Ice Rinks in November at Olbrich and Heritage Heights. We are hopeful that these rinks will allow for better skating with minimal maintenance at these locations.

Staff continues to help Streets with sandbag clean up as needed. They have assisted in picking up sandbags with the Streets crew from residents, as well as emptying the bags for recycling at the old Cub Foods site.

We are nearing the end of the recruitment process for our Operations Leadworker and plan to have someone in place by mid-January.

West Parks (Laura Bauer)

Forest Hill Cemetery's leaf operations again took priority throughout the fall. By Thanksgiving, staff had made 2987 bales. Parks uses some of these as insulation at winter facilities and crash barriers at the bottom of sledding hills, but the majority are left alongside cemetery roads for people to pick up.

New this winter is a skating rink at Sunset Park. Parks is providing a commercial "N'Ice Rink" for the neighborhood volunteers to assemble, fill, and maintain completely on their own.

MALL CONCOURSE (Chad Hughes/Mark Kiesow)

Leaf cleanup continued throughout the past months, increasing the time that it took to clean the sidewalks. The sidewalk powerwashing program wrapped up in October before the sub-freezing November temperatures, with State Street and the Expansion area being thoroughly cleaned for another year. Tulip and daffodil bulbs were added to the Capitol Square, hoping for a nice colorful display in the spring. The BID hosted their second "Shine Madison" event, and all winter interest/decorations are in place, including evergreen boughs in planters and banners and snowflake lights hung.

The crew is fully prepared for winter and had its first taste of snow removal in November. In effort to expand upon the success of our salt reduction program from last winter, we continue to focus on calibration of salting equipment and increased staff awareness. Additional staff members attended the salt certification training program this fall. We added a John Deere drop spreader to the snow removal equipment arsenal in hopes of further reducing the salt use in the service area.

We welcomed Peter Castro as a new Parks Maintenance Worker in early November and are excited to have him join our team. Seasonal workers have continued with the Mall, with additional help brought in for possible snow removal during the holiday shopping season.

As we continue in to winter, snow removal and pedestrian safety will be our primary focus as always. We are also working to secure services and make plans for the spring and summer annual flower program, as we will be taking it over in the new year.