

**SUPERINTENDENT'S NOVEMBER 2021 REPORT
COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary**

October was overall a bit warmer than normal with a bit more rainy day impacts than is normal. This led to grass growth a bit later and stronger than is normal. The Parks continue to be used at high levels in many different ways. It appears to the team that the growth in use from the pandemic has been more sustained than was originally anticipated. We have kept more seasonals on during the Fall this year to help with these factors, which was possible due to savings from vacant permanent positions.

The team is working to focus resources and attention on moving forward expeditiously with recruitment efforts to fill all authorized positions. There are a significant number of vacancies in Parks and across the City and Human Resources is very busy at this time of year. The Parks team is prioritizing this work to work to be as prepared and equipped for the 2022 year as possible. The team continues to work to implement the Equitable Hiring Tool process for almost all permanent staff recruitments.

With winter weather around the corner, the team is busy getting into the flexible position of being able to mow and/or plow on a given day. The team is still working with partners as it relates to machine made snow at Elver, but it is very possible that we will need to step back in this area due to budget and resource pressures.

Future Commission Items

- Golf Enterprise Update – The golf team is working to provide both the Commission and the Golf Subcommittee and update on the Enterprise Fund and operations as the 2021 season comes to a close. The current target for this informational update is in December or January. This will correspond with a goal of presenting an update and additional plan details related to Glenway for 2022.
- Update on WPCRC expansion plans – Funding for design and development work is included in the Parks Division's 2022 Capital Budget request, with construction funding in 2023. Staff anticipates briefing the Commission on this important project in December or January.
- Operating Budget Service Level Briefing – The team is working to prepare a presentation to the Board on service level changes based on final outcomes of the budget process. As currently resourced, there will be reductions in services from historic norms in aquatics and operations that will have an impact. Given the reductions are mostly in hourly staffing the impacts are a challenge to plan for with specificity, but will create challenges for hours of coverage for lifeguards at beaches, mowing and trimming operations, restroom and shelter date availability, as well as impacts on general maintenance support for the park system.

Section reports

Park Operations

Conservation:

- Invested considerable time working to control porcelain-berry at Owen Conservation Park.
- Worked on seed collection, buckthorn removal at Knollwood, and mowing firebreaks at Cherokee Marsh and Prairie Ridge.
- Paul Quinlan spoke at the Wild Ones monthly meeting, providing an overview of the conservation parks, research and monitoring efforts underway, and volunteer opportunities.

Construction:

- Completed several park improvement projects including bench pads at Warner and Tenney Parks, a new path at Orlando Bell Park, a significant drainage and regrading project at Odana Dog Park, and the new volleyball court at Orchard Ridge Park.
- Began the work on the new path at Country Grove and Vilas Parks.

Facilities:

- Performed seasonal closing and winterizing of facilities, irrigation, fountains, and shelters in parks and at the cemetery and golf courses.
- Worked on Brittingham boathouse door replacement, complete resurfacing of Goodman Pool floor, and park sign repairs and replacements at Westport Meadows, Eagle Trace, Sherwood Forest, and Demetral Parks.
- Started seasonal pier removal beginning with the fishing piers.

General Parks:

- Began winter preparation work including aerating turf, fertilizing athletic fields, flail mowing, mulching leaves, and installing shelter sides.
- Supported preparation work for several park activities including Halloween events, Cyclocross at Door Creek Park and Olbrich Park, and Trucks and Treasures at Door Creek Park.
- Volunteers supported work at Warner Park, Castle Creek, and Hudson Park by clearing trash and removing invasive species.
- Completed work in preparation for the grand opening of the Brittingham Park Nature Play area. The ribbon-cutting event was held on October 15th.
- Started planting the 250 trees scheduled for installation this fall.

Mall Concourse:

- Worked on fall turf maintenance, including aerating, overseeding, and fertilizing.
- Planted over 2,000 new spring daffodil and tulip bulbs.
- Supported maintenance requirements for several events including the final Mad Lit concert series and Madison Night Market and the Dane County Farmer's Market.
- Invested considerable preparation time with other City departments in preparation for potential State Street non-event Halloween activities.

Community Services – Christopher Peguero**Community Events (Kelli Lamberty/Kelly Post):**

- Park Event applications for 2021 are starting to slow down after a rash of last minute October event applications were submitted. Street Use Permit applications are also wrapping up for the year. We have one more scheduled SUSC meeting, if any applications are submitted.
- We have reached out to all qualified, annual park events to get their 2022 date requests and will be getting those reservation dates and locations into our system before we open shelter reservations to the public on Nov. 9.
- We are preparing a report for the FPF and BPC December meetings. Included in this report will be our COVID lessons learned; new permit analysis (Day Camps, Open Space, and Classes in Madison Parks) and how the administrative approval of events worked from a process perspective. We will present our suggestions for moving forward with these types of permits and permitting process improvements.

- We are working with the Economic Development Division to prepare a report about the Carts in Parks pilot program for the NACTO grant. At the December FPF and BPC meetings we will present a summary of this report along with suggestions about how Madison Parks could support and permit these types of Community Markets and food cart vending in our parks moving forward.

Customer Service (Mark Crosby):

- Preparations for 2022 reservations as well as 2022 annual permits continue.
- Hayrides and Winter Operations will be beginning soon as well, with staff preparing for both.

Recreation Services (Tracey Hartley):

As we head into fall, Parks is able to bring back hayrides! Offering public rides on 10/23 through Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park with Hikes offered by the Friends of Cherokee Marsh from 1-4pm, Hikes & Hayride event. Additionally, hayrides will be offered at Olin Park during Holiday Fantasy in Lights. Open public rides will be on 11/13 from 7-10pm and 11/14 from 4:30-8pm and then offering reserved hayride with campfire and s'mores for groups to book 11/15-11/18. Public rides are \$3 per person, 2 and under free, and reserved rides are \$115. Also working currently to prepare for winter operations.

Aquatics/Goodman Pool – (Jon Landsverk):

- Nothing to Report

Rangers (Joanne Austin):

- Rangers have officially moved back to the Goodman maintenance building and will return to Olin next summer.
- There were over 90 applicants for the two permanent 80% FTE Ranger vacancies we have had for the last several months. HR is reviewing applications and interviews will take place soon. We anticipate having those positions filled by Mid-November.
- Rangers will be using BadgerTracs software in the near future. This software will be efficient for both rangers and administrative support and will be very cost effective long term.

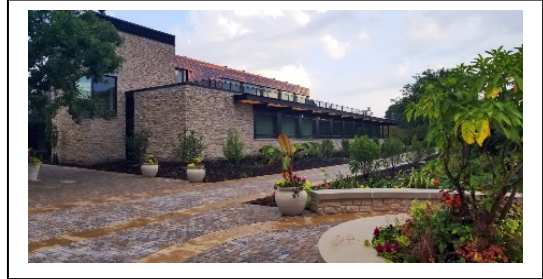
Warner Park Community Recreation Center (Terrence Thompson):

- With the nationwide shortage and decline in attracting new, younger officials, the WPCRC has created the Kids Need Opportunities at Warner (KNOW) Program Basketball Referee Apprenticeship Program, an 8-week training, and certification program for individuals 14-21 years old. The training program transfers our afterschool participant's love for basketball into an employment opportunity with the Badger Development League (BDL). In December, the WPCRC will serve as a host site for 10-weekend youth basketball game days with the BDL partnership, serving as a revenue-generating opportunity for the WPCRC and a youth employment opportunity for KNOW program participants.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens

- **GLEAM, Art in a New Light.** GLEAM will set a new record for attendance. While there are still 2 more weeks for guests to view the seven night-time garden art exhibits, to date, more than 20,000 people have purchased tickets—already more than attended GLEAM in 2019.

- **Grand Opening of the Frautschi Family Learning Center & Greenhouses.** On October 16, City leadership, the Olbrich Botanical Society Board of Directors, Olbrich staff, and many OBS donors, members and volunteers celebrated the formal opening of Olbrich's new learning center and greenhouses.



- **Personnel.** On November 1, Tanya Zastrow will join the Madison Parks staff as Olbrich's Garden Director. Tanya has 18 years of experience working in all aspects of public gardens, internship management, and nature-based programming with prestigious organizations, including currently with Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at the University of Texas at Austin and previously with the National Arboretum, Welty Environmental Center and Peace Corps.
- **Outdoor Gardens:** October and early November is a transition period in the Garden. Crates of bulbs have been arriving daily, with staff and volunteers beginning the annual ritual of planting them throughout the Garden. Staff are dismantling containers and removing tender tropicals from beds borders in preparation for first frost; these are put into individual nursery containers for over-wintering in our nursery quonsets and greenhouses. Cuttings of tender plants that can't be grown from seed are planted and relocated to the greenhouse for use in the gardens next year. The hort crew is also bringing unique succulents like aeoniums, agaves and mangaves into the greenhouses. Water features will be closed and cleaned, and irrigation lines blown out and readied for winter.
- **Bolz Conservatory.** In November, Olbrich will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Bolz Conservatory. With a mission to conserve and interpret plants native to the world's tropical forests for study, enjoyment, and public benefit, the Bolz Conservatory is home to nearly 700 plants that represent 80 plant families and 500 species and cultivars.