

SUPERINTENDENT'S JANUARY 2019 REPORT

COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary

2018 was a challenging, but good, year for Madison Parks. It was the second wettest year on record in Madison and that does not take into account that for half of the City it was clearly the wettest ever (the official totals are from the East side and the West experienced the real deluge in August). These wet conditions created a significant amount of work for Parks staff, especially in Golf and field management. There were significant staffing changes across the year, especially on the Management Team. The Parks Administrative and Financial Coordinator position is in the interview stage and when filled, the Parks Management team will be fully staffed for the first time since January 2018. Parks staff worked on a number of large scale projects in 2018 including completing the Elver Park fully accessible playground and beginning work on Phase 2 at Breese Stevens and the Olbrich Botanical Complex project.

Staff are excited about beginning 2019. This year's project list includes a large number of important projects and can be reviewed at <https://www.cityofmadison.com/parks/projects>. This page will continue to be updated as all projects move forward. Additionally, in 2019 staff will be continuing to work on the City's Performance Excellence Initiative. Performance Excellence has an aim of focusing City resources on improving the quality of our services for our residents and employees. This aim is being met through giving a voice to our customers (both residents and employees) and through focusing on process improvement tools. Parks management is working to integrate and align this initiative with the Park and Open Space Plan adopted by the BPC.

Permanent Staffing Changes:

- Sarah Close was promoted to Landscape Architect 2 after obtaining her professional Landscape Architect license in Wisconsin.
- Ahna Stoker, Elizabeth Todd, and Jack Hedberg were all promoted to Permanent Part Time Park Worker positions. All three have previously worked in hourly positions with Parks (and Streets). Parks is excited to have these three talented team members start in their new roles beginning January 2nd.

Future Commission Items

- Urban Forestry Taskforce – The Urban Forestry Taskforce is likely to have a completed report with recommendations in early 2019.
- IPM Taskforce – The IPM taskforce has begun meeting and will have recommendations for consideration in 2019.
- Golf – The 2018 Golf season was a very difficult one with the wettest year on record since the City has operated golf courses. Staff is working to prepare a report to update the Commission, Golf Subcommittee, the Council, and the public on the status of the Enterprise and anticipate completing this report by April, 2019.
- Dog Policy – The Long Range Planning Subcommittee will be working on reviewing dogs in parks policy during the first part of 2019. Staff is hopeful that any policy changes will be brought to the Commission in the first half of the year.

- Off-Leash Dog Parks – Staff is working to determine potential off-leash improvements in the priority areas of the West side, Atwood/East Isthmus, and Far East/Grandview. The Approved Master Plan for North Star Park will address the deficiency in Grandview. Staff are working on concepts for the other two priority areas and anticipate moving forward with engagement processes in 2019.
- Capital and Operating Budgets – Parks staff will be working with President Leopold to discuss how to best present and take input from the Commission on the Division's budgets.
- Vilas Park Master Plan – The planning work for this iconic and historic Park will begin in 2019. The project is being led by Landscape Architect Kate Kane and is the process of selecting a consultant team to lead the effort. This is not anticipated to come to the Commission for approximately a year, but if Commissioners would like to know more about the project they can contact Kate to discuss.
- Performance Excellence Initiative – Staff is working on an informational presentation to share with the Commission on the City's Performance Excellence Initiative. This is anticipated to be ready for the Commission in March or April.

Section Updates

Conservation:

- Thanks to the efforts of MadNorSki and CXC, the manmade snow loop was open for a good portion of the month.

Construction:

- Completed playground mulching and backstop removal work and various soil removal projects. Also completed 7 of the 10 new playground audits.

Facilities:

- Seasonal work including winterizing, HVAC inspections and repairs, pier removal and repair.
- Progressing with water meter installations.

Forestry:

- Forestry crews are working on district pruning, ash removal, Engineering projects, and work requests.
- Forestry Specialists are primarily focused on planning for the spring, 2019 planting routes.

General Parks (Central, East & West):

- With warm temps and few snow events, crews were able to work on a number of other projects, including tree pruning, hand removal of invasives in no-mow areas that are hard to reach with the flail mower, and completing prairie seeding at Junction Ridge.
- Elver Sledding Hill was opened on New Year's Day following our first significant snow of the season.
- As weather conditions shift towards seasonal norms, our goal is to have ice rinks open in early January. Our Adopt Ice Partners have been dedicated as always towards getting their rinks up and running as well.

Operations Staff Updates:

- Three new Parks Workers started on Jan 2.
- Bob Templeton retired after 34 years with Madison Parks. We wish him well as he explores the next chapter of his life!

Olbrich Gardens:

- The concrete for the floor of the cistern (which is the 'basement' of the Learning Center) was poured in mid-December and the sides are being poured the last few work days of December. Fire protection installation in the existing building will begin the first week in January.
- The Holiday Express Flower and Model Train Show theme 'I Spy' has been very well-received by visitors. Running through the month of December, the show will attract approximately 17,500 visitors.
- Olbrich Botanical Society Board of Directors approved a budget of \$ 2 million dollars for 2018, which is a modest 0.7 % growth in budget from 2017.
- Rainforest Rhythms (rebranded from Children of the Rainforest) features *Kalpulli Yaocenoxtli*, which performs traditional Mexica-Nahua (Aztec) song & dance. They will perform at 10:30 am & 1:30 pm on Saturday, January 19
- Cocktails in the Conservatory will be held 4 times during 2018 and will feature all female DJ's. The first 'cocktails', Friday, January 25 from 7 – 11 pm, will feature DJ ACE.

Community Services:

- Front Desk/Customer Service - Madison Parks Gift Certificates were quite popular over the holiday season. With recent assistance from IT, purchasing a certificate online has become easier. Customers can now purchase a certificate for the exact amount desired. Sixty-three gift certificates were purchased in December alone, with 78% of them being purchased online.
- Park and Street Use Event Permits - Staff continues work on amendments to the Street Use Ordinance (MGO 10.056) to support the concept of a Downtown Zone Policy and allow Fire or Police to terminate the permit for an event that has not started in the face of "imminent danger or threat to public safety."
- WPCRC - On December 1, 2018, WPCRC hosted the 19th Annual Holiday Fest Arts and Crafts Show with 1,639 guests shopping for a variety of homemade goods from over 80 vendors.
- Recreation Services - Brandon has returned as our Winter Attendant Coordinator and we hired 45 Winter Attendants ready to work. We have been able to open Elver Park for cross-country skiers to use the Machine Made Snow Loop and the sledding hill is seeing high use with the recent snowfall. Ice skating locations open at this time are Heritage Heights and Sunset. Events upcoming include Ice Skating Lessons, Groove & Glides, Skate Cinema (Music and Movie at Tenney Park), Ice Skating Party bookings, and the popular Daddy & Daughter Dances are back.
- Rangers & Aquatics - Park Rangers hosted their annual recognition ceremony on December 5, 2018. At the ceremony Park Ranger Kevin Goke was recognized as the 2018 Ranger of the Year for stepping up to provide training to new hires after the departure of the other two District Rangers. Kevin has been with the Madison Park Rangers since May of 2015. He was previously voted the 2015 Rookie of the Year. This year's award for Rookie of the Year went to Park Ranger Steve Dray. Steve is hard working and consistent, and was a great addition to the team this year.