

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

February 2026

Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary

The days are getting longer, birds are singing more, and yet there is still plenty of time to take in the joys of winter recreation as we head into February. All 20 City of Madison ice rinks were officially opened as of January 28. The entire Parks team has worked hard to make this possible all season despite many weather-related challenges. I encourage you to get out and enjoy the ice season while it lasts! Cross country skiing is still available at many parks, but some trails have closed over the last several weeks due to lack of sufficient snow accumulation. The extreme cold snap that lasted for about half of January forced the closure of outdoor recreation services and cancellation or postponement of some events.

On February 1, the Parks and Engineering Divisions along with Katie Crawley from the Mayor's Office, Alder Sean O'Brien, Brock Woods representing MadNorSki, and over 280 community members celebrated the opening of the Door Creek Park Shelter. The ribbon cutting, which had to be rescheduled due to extreme cold on January 24, was a winter fun extravaganza, complete with ice skating and Learn-to Snow Shoe and Cross Country Ski workshops. This is a very exciting time for the neighborhood who has been involved in the shelter design process for many years.

With spring just around the corner, the Golf team is working hard to implement the new Club Caddy point of sale system in time for the scheduled annual spring Season Pass Holder & Kick-off Event scheduled for March 7 at Odana Hills Golf Course. The transformation of the golf program continues to move forward at a nice pace.

Madison Parks and the Board of Park Commissioners are sad to see Commissioners Catie McDonald and Michell Probst step away from their roles. The residents of Madison are so fortunate to have had them representing the interests of the park system. The Madison Parks system is a better organization because of them. Catie and Michelle, you and your dedicated service are greatly appreciated! We also are excited to welcome new Commissioners Bethany Alwa and Patrick Hasburgh, who will begin serving on the Board of Park Commissioners at the March 11 meeting.

Future Commission Items

- Alcohol in Parks Policy
- Parking Assets in Parks Analysis
- Olin Houses
- Marshall Houses

Personnel Updates

Promotions/Hires:

- Lewis Rogers was promoted from Public Works Laborer within the Streets Division to Parks Maintenance Worker in West Parks. He started his new position on January 21, 2026.

Departures:

- Jared Way resigned from his position as permanent Ranger. His last day was December 23, 2025.

Section Updates

Olbrich Botanical Gardens (Tanya Zastrow)

- Orchid Escape – This year's theme is Big Bugs, Big Questions. Among hundreds of orchids are large-scale bugs that have either beneficial or negative relationships with orchids. The show runs through March 8th.
- Comprehensive Master Plan & Interpretive Plan Updates – The first public meeting was held on January 22, 2026. Two sessions were held, one at noon and the other at 6pm. In total, over 150 people attended the sessions. In addition, there was a survey that received over 450 responses. The next public meeting is March 17th.
- Upcoming Closures – the Bolz Conservatory will be closed March 9-11 for the take-down of Orchid Escape.

Park Operations (Chad Hughes)

Central Parks (Jay Walters)

Performed maintenance on ice rinks as much as nature allowed.
Cleared brush along Olin shoreline.

Ecology Team

- Cleared Brush at Wexford Park.
- LMW's ordered bare root trees for 2026 Spring planting and pruned trees.
- Worked on contractor letters and updating maps for contracts and requests for bid in 2026.

Conservation (Hannah Quinlan)

- Completed invasive tree and brush removal projects at Cherokee Marsh South Unit, Edna Taylor, Knollwood and Stricker's Pond.
- Toured Turville Point with Friends group volunteers to plan spring oak tree plantings.
- Volunteers cleared and burned buckthorn and other invasive brush at Cherokee Marsh and Owen.

Construction (Rich Bergmann)

- Performed site clean-up of stored materials that included playground equipment, drainpipe, implements, retaining wall products, jersey barriers and more from Yahara Hills Park-West.
- Removed fence at Yahara golf course for future tree removals.

East Parks (Spencer Werner)

- Performed ice rink maintenance and recovery at all East Parks locations.
- Brush removal at O.B. Sherry Park and Olbrich Park shoreline
- Added more temporary fencing to the end of hole 2 at Hiestand to protect the long tee pad on Hole 6.

Facilities Maintenance (Joel Ringgenberg)

- Performed trouble shooting on HVAC and plumbing due to cold weather.
- Sorted through, disposed and recycled old pier sections at Yahara Hills Park-West.

Mall Maintenance (Mark Kiesow)

- Performed snow removal and trained a new park worker.
- Power washed bus shelters during warmer weather.
- Performed remaining leaf cleanup after the snow melt.

West Parks (Charlotte Blotz)

- Performed snow removal and trained new staff on routes.
- Completed brush clearing at Sherwood Forest, Marlborough, Indian Hills Parks.
- Conducted maintenance at Elver disc golf including brush work and tree removal.

Planning & Development (Adam Kaniewski)

- While most construction comes to a halt during the winter, P&D staff are busy preparing capital improvement projects for 2026 construction and starting the preliminary stages of park planning efforts scheduled for 2026.
- The Country Grove Park Singletrack biking project is currently advertised for bids by contractors. Bids are scheduled to be opened on February 26.
- Planning and engagement is underway for new singletrack trail at Carpenter-Ridgeway Park. Staff held a Public Input Meeting and held a workshop with 4th grade students at the nearby elementary school. This project is being funded with CDBG funds obtained by the Planning Division as a result of the Northeast Area Plan.
- Over the next few months, staff will be hosting a series of Public Input Meetings to receive input for Park Development Plans for neighborhood and mini parks in southeast and southwest areas. Staff also continue to coordinate with planning staff on the Area Plans.
- The Hoyt Park Parking Lot Reconstruction project has received permitting approvals and is currently advertised for bidding. Bids are scheduled to be opened on February 26.
- A few projects are currently going through the City's Site Plan Review process: Warner Park Pickleball, Worthington Park Futsal, Yahara Hills Golf Course Cart Paths. Once approved, these projects will be advertised for bidding.
- An RFP has been posted to solicit consultants for the Needs Assessment update in 2026.
- Staff held a Public Information Meeting for the Madison LakeWay project on February 2. The project is now in the Construction Documents phase.
- The redesign of Cypress Spray Park has been kicked-off with our design consultant. Design and public engagement will take place over the next few months.
- Staff anticipate posting a RFP to solicit design consultants for the Warner Park Southeast Recreation Area project. Parks has received a tentative LWCF grant award for this project.
- Work has progressed to submit for a WEDC Brownfields grant for the Olbrich Park – North Parcel development project. Staff are also preparing a RFP for design consultants for the project and are identifying the multitude of legislative approvals required for the project.

- The contract has been executed for four playground replacements (Ontario, Kennedy, Skyview, Sandburg). Construction is expected to begin in March.
- The contract has been executed to replace the artificial turf at Breese Stevens Field. Staff have been coordinating with the contractor and Madison Forward FC regarding the construction schedule. The project is anticipated to be complete by May 1, weather dependent, to allow a full summer of events on the new turf.
- Impact Fees: In the month of January, staff coordinated and processed 25 separate Park Impact Fee payments.
- Development Reviews: In the month of January staff completed reviews of 35 development projects. Plans are reviewed for potential new parkland dedication, impacts to existing parks, and park impact fees.



Door Creek Park Shelter Ribbon Cutting Celebration- Held February 1, 2026