

QUESTIONS FOR ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

TRAVIS

- What volunteering have you done with Madison Parks?
 - Clean-up
 - Removal of invasive species
 - Plant flowers and maintain gardens
 - Head Gardener: organizes volunteers, weeding, maintain trails, spread compost
 - Update fireplaces
 - Water trees and flowers when needed
 - Controlled burns
 - Mulch
 - Maintain trails
 - Established groups create a master plan and monthly projects (non-established groups need more guidance with this).
 - Volunteers do this work because the City doesn't.

- What do you like most about being a Madison Parks volunteer?
 - Visible results
 - Community! Parks bring people together and they are enjoyed by all.
 - More maintenance = reduced vandalism, crime, litter, trash = better space for our community
 - It's fun to volunteer and I feel like I am a stakeholder in my community.
 - We are appreciated by Madison Parks.

ANN

- How do you like to be informed about volunteer opportunities? Posting on our website? Monthly email? Inform volunteer of the City of Madison My Account information.
 - In order of most votes:
 - Personal email
 - Parks monthly email
 - Facebook post (MAMGA-Madison Area Master Gardeners Association has a dedicated Facebook page and will share volunteer opportunities.)
 - Website
 - Do year-round updating so there is always accurate information published.
 - Create a page volunteers can log into and update their volunteer opportunities themselves. United Way does this.

- How would you like to be recognized as a Madison Parks volunteer? Public recognition on our website or social media? Annual recognition banquet event/picnic at a Madison Park. Thank you memento?
 - Annual banquet
 - Volunteer Dinner at Olbrich

- Slide show
- Spokesperson from each group that shares park highlights for the year
- Expert speaker at event
- Walking or biking tour of parks that volunteers maintain
- Plaque
- Recognize Friends groups as ‘official park stewards’ – this gives the group responsibilities and the park expectations of the group, as well as recognizes the group. The County and DNR both do this already.
- Have a kick-off event for volunteers to meet one another and share info about their park. (Maybe we do this instead of a wrap-up meeting).

JACOB

- Would you like to be a part of larger volunteering efforts/events like a quarterly clean-up day or do you prefer small group volunteering opportunities?
 - More large group clean-up days to help with initial clean up, mid-year help, and prep for Winter, but then utilize small groups for monthly clean-ups.
 - Invite locals from the neighborhood to participate in Neighborhood Volunteer Days. This creates a “neighborhood feel” rather than just random large groups participating.
 - Non-friends groups prefer quarterly large group events. Extend Earth Day Challenge programs to other times of the year.
 - Connect large groups or set up semi-large events to help with specific projects from small groups.
- How can Madison Parks be more helpful to our volunteers?
 - Post “work parties” on social media.
 - Have more tools available.
 - Provide trainings (ex: chainsaw).
 - Connect Master Gardeners with groups and volunteer organizations via listserv.
 - Need money for flowers and plants. Parks can help get the word out on supplies and services requested.
 - Collaborate with Dane County Parks.
 - It’s a struggle to get permission to do plantings and new projects. Better guidance and/or a go-to contact would be helpful.
 - There should be a liaison between large groups and Friends groups.
 - Market the bequeath program for specific parks.

TRACEY

- Volunteer Forms are necessary when volunteering in Madison Parks. Have you filled out a form? Do your volunteers fill out the forms?
 - Volunteers need reminders to complete the forms.
 - Update forms.
 - Simplify forms.
 - Create an online “fillable” form like a Google Doc.
- How likely are you to continue to volunteer for Madison Parks?
 - Yes, they’ll continue to volunteer, but they are ‘aging out’ and will need younger volunteers to step in and commit to the group.

CHARLIE

- What suggestions do you have for the Madison Parks volunteer program in 2016?
 - Need more City staff involved to recruit volunteers. Many volunteers are older and “aging” out. Attract fewer numbers of volunteers, but more volunteers that are committed.
 - It would be helpful to have a volunteer database that groups could access and request additional volunteer assistance when needed.
 - Inform volunteers when staff has plans when a project or major work will be going on in their park. Ex: Wexford Ash trees cut down – Volunteers found out as they were being cut down, not prior to that.
 - Provide basic tools like gloves and hand tools.

- Comments or Suggestions welcomed
 - How can we attract more people into our parks? Example: There is snowshoeing at Hoyt Park but not many people know about it.
 - There should be separate garbage and recycling bins at each of the parks to be more ‘green’.
 - How do other groups fundraise? Some groups may benefit from grants through Dane County Community Partners or the Besadny grant.
 - Provide more rules. What kind of fertilizer can we use? How much mulch? When can they help at parks? Can they maintain the facility? What do we do with hot charcoal? Where do we take seeds at the end of the year?
 - How do we get young families/adults to volunteer? This could be an educational program and leadership development opportunity for boy/girl scout groups, schools, neighborhood festivals.
 - Add gift shops and concessions at park shelters.
 - Resist the urge to fill in the whole park. Green space is okay.
 - Do we put small volunteer signs in app beds? Can we have a volunteer trailer like in Mecklenburg County, NC? 3 trailers?
 - Hire a volunteer coordinator.
 - Every Park needs help. Park volunteers could assist with events in their parks.
 - Give more publicity to Parks volunteer opportunities and events.
 - Define tasks between what volunteers are responsible for versus Parks crews.
 - Push along an Adopt a Park program.
 - Define levels of volunteering to help with facilitation and responsibility.
 - Have more meetings between volunteers and Parks staff to stay connected.