

## Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation Calendar Year 2023 Parks Highlights

### **Senior Center:**

The Ann Arbor Senior Center hosted its first, annual Friendsgiving this past November 2023. Ever since reopening after COVID, we have noticed how many new faces have started to participate in our programming, many of which have created friendships outside of the facility. We wanted to show our appreciation to all these members for continuing to come and support our center, as well as help foster the relationships that have been created over the past two years. The event featured a donated meal from Olive Garden, Texas Roadhouse, and Busch's. Kerrytown Market & Shops donated a \$100 gift card that we gave out during a drawing. We offered four different craft stations that were managed by U-M student volunteers, and had Eastern's ECA Students volunteer to serve food, and help with cleanup. Lastly, we had a local photographer offer "Legacy Portraits" for the seniors and/or their families. The event was a huge success, and a wonderful time was had by all that attended. We hope to continue the event for years to come if we are supported with the generous donations that we received this year.

### **Liveries:**

In the 2023 summer season the liveries hosted 686 students with chaperons for school boating field trips at a discounted price. We also had over 750 people register and participate in River-based camps and instructor guided programs. The liveries introduced a Kayaking level three class this season, this class included instruction and guided participants on navigating the Argo Cascades and paddling the Huron in sections that have current to Gallup Park.

### **Farmers Market:**

In 2023, Ann Arbor Farmers Market added the Prescription for Health program, in partnership with Washtenaw County Health Department, to the food assistance programs we take at market. To date, program participants have spent \$1300 on purchasing fruits and vegetables grown by our farmers. In addition, although Fair Food Network reduced the Double Up Food Bucks (DUFb) daily match to \$10 per day for the majority of the 2023 season, we are still on target for >\$100,000 total food assistance sales across our 5 programs (SNAP/EBT, DUFb, WIC Project Fresh, Senior Project Fresh, & Prescription for Health). We continue to be the market with the most food assistance sales in Washtenaw County.

### **NAP:**

NAP worked in cooperation with the Kalamazoo Nature Center (KNC) and the Kalamazoo Valley Bird Observatory (KVBO) to install a [Motus Wildlife Tracking Tower](#) at Huron Hills Golf Course (HHGC). The City's [press release](#) cover more details on this new partnership, and [Michigan Radio](#) published a piece on this exciting addition to the park system.

### **Cobblestone Farm, Field Rentals and Park Rentals:**

This past spring, summer and fall yielded excellent usage of the park system's rental opportunities. From April 1 through October 31, approximately 34 park locations were used 1,930 times by 153,375 people.

**Golf:**

Leslie Park began a 3-year partnership with the American Junior Golf Association (AJGA), as the host golf course for their Ann Arbor Preview event. The AJGA is the premier junior golf tour, attracting junior golfers from all over the world, so it was an honor to host them in 2023, and we're excited for the next two years.

Huron Hills continues to offer quality affordable golf instruction programs. With the continued golf popularity, both the adult and junior golf instruction programs saw even more demand and exceeded their capacity. 159 adults and 189 juniors participated in our programs this season.

*Golf Rounds Summary:*

Leslie Park Rounds = 37,710

Huron Hills Rounds = 29,668

Total Rounds: 67,378

**Greenbelt:**

After a year of planning, the City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt program issued its first-ever Request for Proposal (RFP) over the summer for farmers interested in purchasing conserved farmland at a reduced price via the Greenbelt's buy-protect-sell (BPS) initiative, a new effort to create equitable and affordable farmland purchasing opportunities surrounding Ann Arbor, adding more social benefits on top of continued land preservation.

This first purchasing opportunity was a farm on Nollar Road in Northfield Township being sold in two parts: a 20-acre "North Parcel" and a 34 -acre "South Parcel." Applicants could submit proposals to purchase either parcel, or both. Proposals mostly consisted of a business plan; the sale prices of the parcels were fixed. Six complete, competitive proposals from all local applicants were received.

At their November meeting, the Greenbelt Advisory Commission recommended to City Council to sell the North Parcel to Matt Demmon and the South Parcel to Kristen Muelhauser. Both awardees operate their successful, five-year-old businesses on leased land and have not been able to access the costly land ownership market. Demmon's business, Feral Flora, grows native plants and seed for use in restoration projects and landscaping. Kristen's business, Raindance Organic Farm, grows vegetables and flowers and sells them at the Ann Arbor Farmers Market. Both will now be able to invest in the health of their land, have greater stability, and grow their businesses.

**Veterans:**

Nearly 32,000 people visited Veterans Memorial Park Pool during the Summer of 2023. In addition, there were over 400 individual and group swim lessons, and 120 young people took part in the swim teams at the pool.

**Buhr:**

After being closed for all of 2022, Buhr was finally able to open the tot pool again for public use.

**GIVE365:**

Year end highlights of the program can be found here: [December GIVE Gazette](#). Especially noteworthy, GIVE365 hosted over 250 workdays in 2023 which is a new record.