

PARK MANAGER'S REPORT, January 28, 2020

PARK PLANNING

- Parks Planning is working with the Ann Arbor Rotary Club to develop play-based nature education signage for the Gallup Universal Access playground. The project is generously funded by the Ann Arbor Rotary Club and installation is expected this summer.
- Parks Planning is exploring accessibility improvements to the Farmer's Market restrooms and Veterans Park Bleachers.
- Park Planner provided input on the Lowertown Mobility Study as it relates to the Border-to-Border trail and non-motorized connections to nearby parks including Riverside Park, Island Park and Plymouth Parkway Park.
- Park Planner is coordinating with the committee developing lighting standard specifications for City-owned fixtures.
- Park Planner is participating in the Downtown Streets Design Team to review and provide input on street-related projects within the DDA district.
- Park Planner attended the American Society of Landscape Architects conference this November which included educational sessions and tours on topics such as nature-based playgrounds and outdoor learning environments, parks equity, inclusive design, and metrics to capture the social impacts of public spaces.
- Park Planner will participate in a public engagement training session this winter and spring.

NATURAL AREA PRESERVATION

- NAP hosted 34 workdays with 833 volunteers which included these highlights:
 - a. First-ever workday at Buttonbush Nature Area
 - b. 134 LDS youth group volunteers at Mary Beth Doyle Nature Area
 - c. 70 seventh and eighth graders from Greenhills School did trail maintenance at Miller Nature Area
- NAP attended or hosted 10 events to educate the public about the importance of native plants, our work, and to recruit volunteers. We talked with over 503 members of the public at these events.
- NAP received a \$250 grant from the Michigan Community Service Commission to purchase tools and supplies for the National Day of Service and Remembrance workday
- NAP received a donation in excess of \$1300 from the Sunset Brooks Neighborhood Association
- Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator, Tina Stephens, did a radio interview on WEMU about our controlled burn program
- NAP hosted our annual Volunteer Appreciation Potluck attended by 70 volunteers

- NAP partnered with 8 other agencies and non-profit organizations to offer the Conservation Stewards Program. This is a volunteer leader training program for those interested in learning science-based ecosystem management principles and sharing this knowledge with others. We have recruited 3 new park stewards out of this year's cohort
- Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator, Tina Stephens, assisted the Office of Sustainability and Innovation in facilitating an "Equity Foundations" training for ten city staff and two community partners. This training focuses on the basics of racial equity in a sustainability context and was created on a framework from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity
- NAP recruited a new Park steward at Cedar Bend Nature Area
- NAP, along with Park Maintenance and Golf Course staff, gave a presentation to the Environmental Commission in December on the City's IPM (Integrative Pest Management) Program.
- NAP Stewardship Specialist, Michael Hahn, gave a presentation to the Men's Garden Club of Jackson on the use of herbicides within the parks.
- NAP hosted a volunteer event to search for red-backed salamanders at Black Pond Woods and Leslie Park. This species is an indicator of healthy deciduous woodlands. Over 40 individuals were found in a short amount of time. This species was also re-discovered this year at Stapp Nature Area, where it hadn't been seen in 11 years.
- NAP staff retrieved protective boxes from 12 turtle nests around the city and found that at least 2/3rds of the nests successfully hatched. The remainder of the nests will likely hatch next spring.

PARK OPERATIONS

Park Operations coordinated numerous recreation facility and park improvements, including:

- Cleaned and rebuilt BMX Course at Bandemer
- Replaced the roof on the Island Park shelter
- Installed drainage in Elsworth park
- Cleared brush in Riverside, Gallup and Island Parks
- Replaced the heater in the Furstenburg restrooms
- Installed rope fencing at the UAP playground at Gallup park
- Installed memorial benches at the Farmers Market
- Installed new flooring in the upstairs meeting room of the Senior Center
- Painted the interior of the Senior Center
- Re-shingled the Eberbach roof
- Installed new decking on the Dolph Nature Area dock
- Weather-proofed the irrigation shed at Huron Hills Golf Course

Tree Care:

Certain tree species (Oaks, Crabapples and Elms) need to be dormant when pruned to minimize the risk of fungal infection of the tree. Davey Tree has gone back and pruned these trees in parks they had visited earlier in the year. Routine parks tree pruning continued at:

- Cobblestone
- Gallup
- Hanover
- Allmendinger

Mowing and fall leaf cleanup concluded for the season in all of the parks. Our daily activities now turn toward preparing for snow and ice clearing as well as interior projects at the facilities. We have also installed the boards for the outdoor ice rinks at Northside and Burns parks. With colder temperatures on the way, we hope to start filling the outdoor rinks and have them open soon.

RECREATION FACILITIES

Liveries

- We've seen an increase in the number of Gallup Park Meeting Room rentals scheduled in the fall and winter months.
- The Leslie Science & Nature Center has also been using the Gallup Park Meeting Room and the Livery building lobby for their offsite nature programming while their site is closed.
- In 2019 during the months of October through December there were 74 meeting room rentals with a total of 1,850 people.
 - During the same period of time in 2018 there was a total of 844 people who attended events in the Gallup Park Meeting Room.
 - The Gallup room has been rented for a wide variety of events such as weddings, funerals, birthday parties, work meetings, concerts, graduation parties, driver's education training, yoga classes, home school groups and more.
- Repairs to the Gallup dock are underway.
- Better tube and kayak storage is being constructed at the Argo boat yard.

Veterans

- The Vets Swim Team had 145 swimmers this year, which was the 3rd largest team in Vets history.
- New Adult Hockey Skills and Drills class in the early morning has drawn 50 participants.
- Had 1,925 skaters visit during the two weeks of additional holiday public skating times.

GIVE

- Organized the MLK Jr. Day Skate and Tribute event at Veterans Ice Arena
- Assisted the Office of Sustainability and Innovation in facilitating an "Equity Foundations" training for ten city staff and two community partners. This training focuses on the basics of racial equity in a sustainability context and was created on a framework from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity.

Buhr

- Had 2,051 skaters visit during the two weeks of holiday skating.

Mack

- The swim team had 135 swimmers and placed 3rd in the SMSL Championships

Cobblestone

- Staff are cleaning up CivicRec accounts in preparation for February 3rd registration for Spring/Summer programming.

Market

- The Farmers Market hosted a special holiday celebration in December that included hot roasted chestnuts, bonfires and s'mores roasting, free hot chocolate, and xylophones playing Christmas music for the kids. Santa even made an appearance to play some songs.
- Preparing for our spring programming which includes a workplace CSA pickup at City Hall, CSA day at the market, Flower Day on Memorial Day weekend, and Food Truck Rallies, Kids Activities, and Chef Cooking Demos that start in May.

Senior Center

- Bridge Games on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays consistently bring in 30-40 participants, and we are offering a full array of Bridge Classes: Defense, Play of Hand, and Bridge for Beginners.
- We are starting some fun new programming: the Burns Park Women's Circle, Bag Lunch Bible Study, and a Movie Matinee.
- For music lovers, we have our A2 Community Sing on the first Tuesday of every month and the Blue Grass Jam on the second and fourth Tuesdays.
- Upcoming special programs include:
 - Keeping in Touch with Your Grandkids- Using Video Chat: Friday, January 24 from 10-11 a.m.
 - Life Line Screenings: Saturday, Feb. 22 from 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Huron Hills and Leslie Park Golf Courses

- County / City Stream project at Huron Hills Golf Course: Golf staff is excited to see the stream bank stabilization project come to light. The city and the county are partnering on the stream bank stabilization project at Huron Hills. We are focusing on a tributary to the Huron River to address stormwater management and ecological design on our course. Due to neighborhood runoff and less non-porous ground surface upstream, we are seeing stream banks throughout the golf course eroding, with high volumes of sediment being removed and deposited downstream and in the Huron River. Through careful design with the county drain commission, our stormwater office and HRC engineer's a 2,000-foot-long creek on Huron Hills golf course will be regraded, stabilized and naturalized. This is intended to alleviate golf course flooding,

address the erosion and reduce phosphorus in the Huron River. In addition, there are opportunities to recreate the natural flow path of water, potentially creating wetlands and habitat on the golf course, while making improvements to the playability and aesthetics of the course.

- Fall Events: Leslie Park Golf Course had three fall golf events planned. The first two, the Fall Scramble and Longest Hardest Day had over 130. The last event – the Annual Chili Open had more than 50 golfers signed up. Unfortunately for the second year in a row, this event which is usually scheduled for mid-November was cancelled because of snow.
- Leslie Park Golf Cart Staging Area: In an attempt to better enhance the customer service experience at our courses, golf staff has added a new golf cart staging area. Cart attendants and ease of accessibility will enhance the golfers overall experience at our course.
- Throughout the 2019 season, the golf courses have been working with the national Monarchs in the Rough program to help reverse the decline of the Monarch Butterfly population. The program has received great local and national attention and because of our local effort, we once again have been awarded the opportunity to participate for the 2020 season. Look for an increase of Milkweed and other local pollinators at each of our two golf courses and hopefully coinciding with this, an increase in the butterfly population as a whole in the Ann Arbor area.