SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES

Monthly Parks Commission update – November, 2020

Stories

Restoration often feels like a daunting job, but days when I can join in community to teach, share, collaborate, and help plant a few hundred native trees in the process, keep me inspired in this work. Not only was it fun and impactful to work with volunteers throughout the day - not a small feat to organize during Covid - but the event allowed conservation partners in the Intervale to connect and collaborate. In the few spare moments between volunteer shifts, we were able to discuss different techniques to manage for deer browse at restoration sites (deer are becoming an increasing threat to ecological integrity across the state), opportunities for collaborative stewardship at McKenzie Park and elsewhere, and ways to support native enhancement plantings to add structural and functional diversity to these projects down the road. Not bad for one day! This is the kind of synergistic, creative, and nimble management that nature is requiring of us right now, and I look forward to continuing to work with the City at McKenzie Park and beyond.

-Annalise Carington, Conservation Specialist, USFWS and Intervale Center

What are the top issues on your mind?

- Bike Path – Maple to College realignment
- Winter recreation planning and meeting the needs of the community

Department accomplishments and notable staffing developments since the last report?

- Welcome to Olivia Wolf, our new Bike Path Maintenance Specialist! Olivia worked several years for us seasonally, and showed her strengths and aptitude as she filled a temporary position as Conservation and Trails Manager while we were on hold filling the full-time position.
- Congratulations to Chris Beaudry who is now officially our Facilities Maintenance Manager after serving in an interim role for almost one year. Chris has worked for BPRW for 32 years! Chris showed his ability to step into a Manager’s position and move the Facilities team forward.
- Congratulations to Paul Morris, Grounds Maintenance Manager for successfully passing the Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) exam. The City, under Paul’s leadership, has invested over $50,000 in FY20 and FY21 to bring all of our playgrounds up to standard.
- Joanne Putzier, Melissa Cate and Cindi Wight attended the virtual NRPA conference in October. All three were able to receive 1.3 CEU’s to maintain certifications.
- The Facilities team was able to keep the City Hall Park fountain open through the last weekend in October and then was trained on winterization. We look forward to a full season in 2021! Thanks to Jake Hornick and Bruce Campbell from the facilities program for being certified pool operators (CPO) and taking a lead role with the fountain.
- The Trees and Conservation teams wrapped up a stellar season planting trees throughout the City. We reached our annual goal of planting 1360 tees in total; 410 trees planted in our ROW and developed parks and 1266 restoration trees in our urban Wildways.
- Staff from four divisions came together to carve pumpkins for the Halloween Howl event. It was a nice chance to spend time together.

**COVID-19**

- The updated recreational sports guidance released late October and impacts us in the following ways:
  - **5v5 basketball** is allowed but we have less access to schools. We will run our basketball program at Miller and the Boy’s and Girl’s Club and try to serve as many youth as possible.
  - All recreational games must be played in VT against VT teams or quarantine is required. The impact to this one is felt by the Lumberjacks, junior hockey program, based at Leddy Arena.
  - Our ski program can continue but we will be taking 20 kids to the mountains for each session rather than 80. There are three sessions rather than two and every child will have the opportunity for one session. We have tightened up age groups to 10-15 rather than 9-17. It will be a chilly ride to the mountains as several windows on the bus must be opened during the ride.

**Major upcoming events:** [http://enjoyburlington.com/events/](http://enjoyburlington.com/events/)

Stay tuned for upcoming events!

**Recreation and Recreation Facilities Update**

- We anticipate filling one Recreation Specialist position by January. The individual will program Leddy Arena, provide outdoor programs and we hope bring creative virtual programming ideas.
- We welcome Scott Yaros back to Leddy in November as Scott works half the year with the Parks Facilities team.
- Emma Allen, Events Coordinator, is assisting at Leddy Arena filling in the gap of no programming staff at Leddy after the move of staff in May and October.
- Leddy Arena is heavily booked with a strong demand this season for ice time. Staff is scheduling a month at a time in order to remain consistent with changing guidelines. Arena user groups were not impacted by the Covid outbreak related to hockey and broomball at the Montpelier rink.
Miller Center gym is booked solid with several new user groups, due to the unavailability of local school gymnasiums. BSD continues to offer childcare on Wednesdays, Sara Holbrook Teen Center has programming every week day and evening and pickleballers have returned to daytime play!

The Miller Center served as a ballot drop off location in November and will host the November 3 election.

The Center of Recreation & Education (CORE) at ONECC continues to support the Burlington School District by providing space for several BHJS programs while BHS is still offline.

Our Recreation Programming team continues to find creative ways to safely offer programs during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Examples of this work are our Youth Basketball and Bolton Ski & Ride Programs being offered this winter but with dramatic changes to ensure the safety and well-being of participants and staff.

Emma Allen led a Department-wide effort to produce a successful Halloween Howl event at North Beach on October 24th and Halloween Bike Ride on October 25th.

Over 250 people participated in the Halloween Howl. Members of our Grounds Crew and Waterfront Crew using tractors, pulled three separate hay wagons with two families per wagon through a haunted North Beach campground. Wagon rides were scheduled every half hour between 2:00-6:00pm. By spreading out these tours we were able to offer a safe event to families during these difficult times. At no point during the day were more than 50 people onsite for these hayride tours. All participants were required to wear masks and families were assigned to waiting areas separated by signs spaced fifteen feet apart. ALL FAMILY HAYRIDES SLOTS WERE FILLED ONLINE IN LESS THAN A WEEK.

Waterfront Updates

The Waterfront staff has moved into winter operations and will focus on the following projects over the winter:

- Streamlining parking systems throughout our waterfront parking lots. This may include a partnership with DPW.
- Revamping the Seasonal Boater Waitlist and bringing the option to renew annually online.
- In partnership with the Planning Division, continue to improve North Beach Campground, according to the Master Plan. This includes the removal of the Maintenance Barn, and addition of a new Dump Station on the Exit row.
- Catalog all of our mooring systems utilizing GIS mapping techniques.
- Improve the Perkins Pier Seasonal mooring field by removing the old equipment and updating it with the safer Hazelett mooring systems, to better allow us to adapt to our changing climate, which has produced far more powerful and destructive storm events.
o Wrap-up the North Beach Cottage project, which served to greatly improve the North Beach Office and hub for customers and Waterfront staff. This project stabilized a failing building, improved efficiency with new HVAC units, moved the entrance to the east side for safer access, created ADA access into the building where previously there was no accessible entrance and creates meeting space for the Waterfront Division.

o Work on a local and statewide level to strategize how events may take shape in Summer 2021.

o Issue an RFP for North Beach Concessions and select a concessionaire to serve food items at North Beach from the Bathhouse.

Park Division Updates

- Winter Services Plan and on-call staff schedule was distributed to union staff, with an update this year to City Hall Park (new park, new plan, new snow blower/etc.).
- Grounds, Facilities and the Tree team were instrumental in the completion and preparation of City Hall Park for the opening and continued care of the space.
- The Grounds program is closing out sports fields for the fall, picking up and mulching leaves, and will be mowing our seasonal mow areas in early November as well as planting some grass seed that will come up in spring (dormant seeding).
- Paul Morris, from the grounds team, will be starting to build MOU’s with athletic programs that use our fields. This is a historical move forward to formalize the relationships with the groups and provide clarity on expectations.
- Facilities team is nearly completed the month-long process of pulling in docks, shutting down water systems, removing water-side signage, buoys, boats, floats etc. Very efficient year thanks to their hard work and experience.
- Custodial/Facilities crew continues to work around the clock to keep buildings open for staff and the public. Increased training is planned to keep everyone as safe as they can be in the COVID environment. They’ve been very responsive and brave throughout the pandemic.
- The tree team will transition to installing tree protection downtown and initiating tree trimming with BED as well as responding to calls from residents.
- Conservation closed out another successful year of the community garden program. This program was able to open during the height of the pandemic thanks to the planning and effort of Meghan O’Daniel, Dan Cahill and Ben Rogers.

Project updates

- Completed 2020 projects:
  o Lakeview Cemetery Section 8 design
  o Leddy courts reconstruction
  o Starr Farm dog park fence replacement
  o Calahan Tennis Courts resurfacing
  o North Beach office renovations
  o North Beach campground small bathroom floor renovation
  o City Hall Park renovation
  o FitLot installation at Miller Center
  o Greenway Soft-Shoulder Renovations from Waterfront Park to Winooski River Bridge
- Projects due to complete in 2020:
  o Bike Path rehabilitation from Perkins Pier to just north of Flynn Avenue
    ▪ Paving of Harbor Watch area likely in the spring
  o Schmanska Park renovations
- Sprinkler/Fire Alarm system
- New exit doors
- Updated water systems
  - Appletree Park walkway lighting improvements
  - Leddy Park Softball Field Scoreboard Installation
- Projects started in 2020 to wrap-up in 2021:
  - Bike Path realignment – Perkins Pier to College Street
  - Arms Forest trail improvements
  - Perkins Pier siting study
  - Champlain St Park playground design and renovation
  - 311 North Ave roof replacement
  - 127 Path Crack Filling and Sealing (25% Completed to date)
  - Greenway Line Striping
  - Leddy Park Stairs
  - North Beach Pump Out and Turnaround
  - North Beach Building Demolition
  - Boathouse/Dock Gangway Installation

More Stories

"What I loved most about this event is that it pulled together people from different generations to tackle climate change through a proven nature-based climate solution, tree planting. It was exciting to see such enthusiasm from many busy people who truly understood the value of the work they were doing. Kudos to Dan Cahill and his team for expertly pulling together this event which will provide benefits for generations to come."

I was really jazzed by the event Dan. Great people, super well organized including the materials you sent out in advance. People truly seemed to enjoy themselves. For example the UVM students I worked with had loads of questions about the value of tree planting, the trees selected etc. It made me want to come up with a one pager that would complement your materials showing the CO2 that will be sequestered over 40 years and annually from your efforts in that area. It's probably already been done but if not and it's of interest, I'd be happy to help on this front. I just did something similar for our land in Shrewsbury with the help of UVM grad students and Ali Kosiba. It may help put things further into perspective. Just a thought.

Finally, here's a link to my new website in which I aim to make carbon storage and sequestration more relevant to landowners in Vermont using the excellent work of Bill Keeton, Tony D'Amato and others. Needs lots of additional work but one step at a time.

Stay safe tomorrow. And again, thanks for your successful efforts last week.

Cheers, Tim
I brought a group of homeschooled high schoolers to Mackenzie Park to plant trees, and it was such a hopeful, wonderful project! The volunteer orientation was extremely well-coordinated and efficient, our understanding of the benefits of the tree planting enhanced our study of strategies to mitigate climate change, and it was a joy to be together, working physically and chatting, safely and with purpose. I’ve so enjoyed getting to know different facets of the important work happening at our own Intervale! It was so satisfying to arrive to an empty field, and leave with the sight of over 100 healthy little cottonwoods, black willow, and silver maple trees that we planted with our own hands!

- Valerie Wood-Lewis

**Future Commission topics**

- Capital Plan update (December)
  - FY21
  - FY22-26
- Master Plans
- Oakledge playground update (December)