

Parks and Recreation Division Report

November 2023

PROGRAMMING

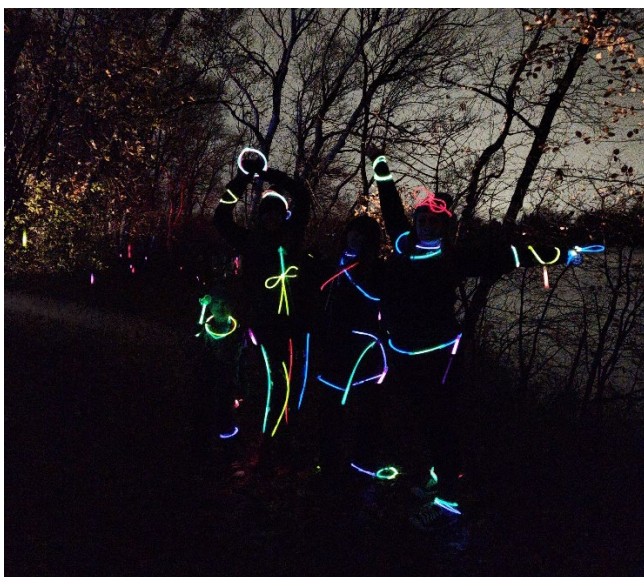
Community Events

October is a fun month for Duluth Parks and Recreation events! We started off the month with Pumpkin Palooza on Saturday, October 7 at Harrison Park. This partner program includes a pumpkin-themed story-time with the Duluth Public Library and pumpkins for carving and painting donated by the Duluth Whole Foods Co-op. This annual event saw 125 community members enjoying the park on a brisk fall day.



The second annual Glow Hike took place once again at Indian Point Campground on Friday, October 27. More than 300 people came out to hike a half-mile loop around Waabizheshikana, lit up by glow sticks. Many showed up with their own glow sticks, lightsabers, light-up shoes, and other glow-in-the-dark decorations.

Howl-o-ween at Keene was another successful dog park event. Dogs and even some owners showed up in costume to take a photo in our photo booth, play at the park, pick up a treat bag, and three lucky dogs went home with a new toy from a prize raffle. More than 30 people and dogs enjoyed the park together during this event on Monday, October 30.



Youth and Family Programs

Fifty-four people participated in a Parks & Rec archery program in the month of October. Participation continues to be high across our archery programs, with more classes coming this winter.

Parks and Recreation partnered once again this year with UMD's Environmental and Outdoor Education (EOE) program to help coordinate Outdoor Ed Day, an afternoon of activities for local youth groups to learn about nature and spend time outdoors over the MEA break. UMD EOE students led activities for more than 60 youth including birding, canoeing, aquatic macroinvertebrates, and knots/shelters. Youth organizations that attended included Family Freedom Center, Little Y, Chester Bowl Fall Camp, and more!

55+ Programs

Trail Trekkers is an ages 55+ hiking program that takes place at different trails throughout the year. The nine-week fall hiking series wrapped up on October 31 at Hawk Ridge, and involved two participants who were ages 84 and 85!

Halloween Bingo at Evergreen Senior Center was a great event with costumes and prizes. We are looking forward to the rest of the holiday season, including the annual Senior Holiday Party, which will take place on December 8 this year at Morgan Park Community Center.



Athletics

This fall season brought huge numbers for our six-week NFL Youth Flag Football program. We had 312 participants in grades K-8, which was an increase of 120 from last year, along with 48 volunteer coaches and eight referees to make this season a great success.

Adult leagues have been gaining in popularity as well. The third season of an adult Kickball League at Wheeler Athletic Complex had eight teams, which amounted to 100 people participating in the seven-week season. The adult Ultimate Frisbee League, which we started offering two years ago, has been increasing in participation, with 59 people joining the eight-week league at Chester Park this fall.

Each year, Parks and Recreation hosts several holiday-themed free ice skating events at Heritage Center. We kicked off the season with Boo Bash on October 25. This Halloween-themed event saw 125 people attend for some skating, a costume contest, and music provided by Sounds Unlimited Entertainment.

Hiking the Superior Hiking Trail: The Duluth Edition

Parks and Recreation wrapped up Hiking the Superior Hiking Trail: The Duluth Edition, on October 22. This hiking series consisted of ten hikes starting in the Fond du Lac neighborhood and following the entire Duluth portion of the SHT in sections, ending on Martin Road. Each hike met the maximum of 13 participants, and eight hikers were able to complete the entire series over the course of the summer and fall. This was a well-loved program, and people are looking forward to it again next summer.



The Adventure Book Club

The last Adventure Book Club of the year met together on October 12. Six participants joined at Chambers Grove to discuss the book *An Immense World*, by Ed Yong. The morning began with an hour-long discussion of the book while sitting around the fireplace with a roaring fire, and then after putting out the fire we took a great hike through the interpretive trail at Chambers Grove and further up the Duluth Traverse Trail. Parks and Recreation is planning on offering this successful program in partnership with the Duluth Public Library again next summer.

PERMITS

PERMIT TYPE	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct
Park & Building Rentals	37	43	69	71	96	178	186	206	157	88
Commercial Operator Permits	3	1	3	7	8	6	2	1	2	2
Busker Permits	0	0	10	1	9	4	6	1	0	0
Alcohol Consumption Permits	2	8	3	9	6	12	18	7	1	1
TOTAL	42	52	85	88	119	200	212	215	160	91

PROJECT UPDATES

Barry Family Memorial Project at Chester Park Playground

Loved ones of the Barry family, in cooperation with City staff, have come together to coordinate a memorial project at the Chester Park playground. Family, friends, and community members raised \$22,000 to support adding a new spinner element and an accessible swing, converting the fall zone from sand to engineered wood fiber, incorporating an accessible pathway to the playground, and installing a bench in remembrance of the Barry family. A memorial dedication event for the playground improvements was held on Friday, September 29 at Chester Park.



Kitchi Gammi Park (Brighton Beach)

Progress continues at Kitchi Gammi Park (Brighton Beach). Completed components include the shoreline restoration and landscape plantings, vault toilets, pavilion refurbishment, concrete pad installation, and preparation for site amenities. The contractor is buttoning the site up for the winter. Construction of the road will begin in 2024. Installation of remaining site amenities, such as memorial benches, will likely happen in the spring.



Enger Park Golf Course and Fall Golf Meeting

On Wednesday, November 1, City staff, golf staff, and members of our golf community met at Enger Park Club House for an end of season wrap-up. About 13 members of the public attended. Topics discussed included how the season went, improvements around the course including a new driving range machine, clubhouse roof repairs, and the irrigation system project. Golfers shared that they were pleased to hear that the City has put together a funding package that will enable all 27 holes of irrigation to be completed in this phase of work, not just the 18 that were funded as of the spring meeting earlier this year. With the season now closed for 2023, looking ahead to the 2024 season, golfers can anticipate a minimum of 18 holes and the range open at all times throughout the season. Attendees also were reminded about the Lester Golf Course Wooden Memorial Bench Distribution on Thursday, November 2.

Total funding for the 27-hole irrigation project at Enger: \$7,386,415

1. ARPA (Revenue Replacement): \$2,500,000
2. Abatement Bonding: \$2,000,000
3. AVRI ½ & ½ Tax: \$1,700,000
4. Other City Funding: \$1,186,415
 - a. 2024 Tourism Tax: \$500,000
 - b. General Fund Reserve: \$500,000
 - c. 2021/2022 Net Income from course operations \$186,415

Lester Golf Course Wooden Memorial Benches

Thanks to Friends of Duluth Public Golf for serving as the non-profit recipient of Lester Park Golf Course wooden memorial benches. The FODPG was then able to offer the benches to the general public for pickup and transport for private ownership. Eight benches were taken home by members of the public during the two-hour pickup time on Thursday, November 2. Many smiles and stories were shared as individuals loaded benches into their vehicles, signed paperwork, and thanked those coordinating the distribution event for the opportunity to receive the benches.

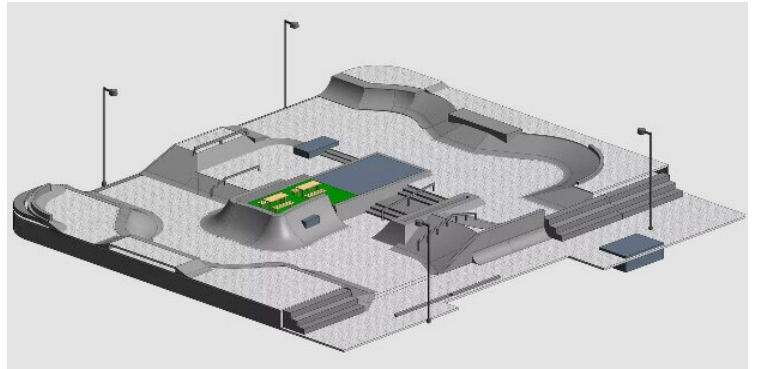


Friends of the Lakewalk Annual Meeting

Senior Parks Planner, Cliff Knettel, and Trails Coordinator, Matt Andrews, attended the annual Friends of the Lakewalk membership meeting on Thursday November 2. This annual meeting is an opportunity to provide updates on all the amazing work happening along Duluth's coastline, including Kitchi-Gammi Park, the Baywalk/Harbor Drive/Seawall project, and the Lakewalk itself. The Friends of the Lakewalk nonprofit is a longtime supporting partner of the City's initiatives, and Parks & Recreation staff look forward to continued collaboration with its members.

Gary New Duluth Recreation Area Skate Park

The City and the GND Development Alliance will be entering a funding agreement to pursue completion of the skate park at the Gary New Duluth Recreation Area (GND REC). The project will be put out for bid and a contractor will be selected to complete the final phase of the skate park. The project was identified for \$300,000 in funding from the AVRI. Additional funding for the project will come from the Alliance's award from the hotel-motel and food and beverage tourism taxes, a previously awarded economic development funding from St. Louis County, and donations and grant funds awarded to the Alliance. The project is anticipated to be complete in 2024.



Lincoln Park

A reopening celebration and ceremony acknowledging the commemorative naming of the stone pavilion in honor of former City Councilor Renee Van Nett took place on October 17, 2023. The celebration was an exciting opportunity to recognize the significant investment and improvements that transformed the park.



2023 Great Lakes Outdoor Summit

The Duluth Area Outdoor Alliance (DAOA) is a collaborative effort between many local non-profits, outdoor recreation advocates, educators, adventurers, and land managers. Member organizations & businesses include: Superior Hiking Trail Association, Cyclists of Gitchee Gumees Shores, Duluth Area Horse Trail Alliance, Duluth Climbers Coalition, Ski Hut, Continental Ski & Bike, Minnesota Land Trust, Northern MN Track Club, Duluth Cross Country Ski Club, St Louis River Alliance, Chester Bowl Improvement Club, ROMP Bags, Bent Paddle Brewing, Duluth Coffee Company, and many more!

This year's outdoor summit, hosted on Friday October 27, saw nearly 200 attendees, and included six informational sessions ranging from environmental stewardship, inclusivity, marketing, volunteer recruitment, working with land managers and an introduction to Minnesota's new state agency: The Outdoor Industry Partnership.

Wi-Fi in Community Centers

Over the last four years, Parks and Recreation has been working at getting Wi-fi into community centers and park spaces. Thanks to a partnership and grant with the Duluth Public Library and City of Duluth Departments of IT, Property & Facilities Management, and Planning & Economic Development, a number of parks and community centers now have Wi-Fi! A more detailed information press release will be going out soon; watch for more information. The following parks and community centers are included in this project:

- Bayfront Park – Family Center
- Central Hillside Community Center
- GND Recreation Center
- Harrison Community Center
- Lafayette Community Center
- Morgan Park Community Center
- Piedmont Community Center
- Portman Community Center
- Washington Community Center
- Wheeler Athletic Complex (near skate park and sport court)
- Woodland Community Center

This has truly been a collaborative effort, and Parks and Recreation appreciates the hard work of our colleagues at the City for helping to advance Wi-Fi access in park spaces.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hartley Pond and Tischer Creek Feasibility Study

The City is working with the Minnesota DNR on the Hartley Pond/Dam and Tischer Creek Feasibility Study. The purpose of the Study is to assess the feasibility of proposed options to improve the aesthetic value and recreation opportunities in Hartley Park, while also mitigating the temperature and sediment impairments that are negatively impacting downstream trout.

Two public informational updates have been held thus far, and a third is scheduled to take place from 6:00-7:30 pm on Tuesday, November 21 at Hartley Nature Center. The upcoming meeting is intended to share the results of the Feasibility Study with the public.