

Parks and Recreation Division Report

April 2024

PROGRAMMING

Adult Volleyball League

The winter session of Parks and Recreation's Adult Volleyball League finished on March 17. Ten teams competed in the seven week regular season, held Sunday nights at the Washington Center Gym, followed by a one week playoff. This session's winning teams were Getting Diggy With It for division 1, and Spikological Warfare for division 2.



Getting Diggy With It



Spikological Warfare

55+ Programs

A St. Luke's nurse offered a Hospice 101 class at Portman Community Center. This program discussed the different types of hospice programs and how to find which option is the best fit.

Seniors Get Savvy is a recurring drop-in technology support program hosted by Parks and Recreation staff. Seniors can get help with general technology support and questions. Examples of questions participants have asked include, "How do I write a letter and print it?" and "How do I delete my Facebook account?"

Parks and Recreation hosted another holiday-themed BINGO party for St. Patrick's Day at Evergreen Senior Center.



Spring Equinox Hike

One Wednesday, March 20 from 7-8 a.m. we welcomed the changing of the seasons with a sunrise equinox hike on the Lakewalk from the lighthouses to Leif Erikson Park. Attendees received seed packets for attending and were encouraged to bring a warm beverage to start their day.



Youth Indoor Recreation

The final month of Homeschool Gym Time welcomed full sessions of 16 kids each week to play games, exercise, and stay active together during the winter months at Washington Center Gym.

Our expanded Toddler Playtime activities continue to provide families with young children free options for weekly indoor play at Morgan Park, Washington Center, and Portman Community Center. These activities will take place through April.

OPERATIONS

PERMIT TYPE	Jan	Feb	Mar
Park & Building Rentals	65	65	73
Commercial Operator Permits	1	1	2
Busker Permits	0	0	9
Alcohol Consumption Permits	2	5	5
Total	68	71	89

PROJECT UPDATES

Duluth Golf – Spring Meeting Date

The Spring Meeting for Duluth Golf will be held on Wednesday, April 24 at 5 pm at Enger Park Clubhouse. The agenda is in development and will include updates on Enger operations in 2024 concurrent with ongoing irrigation system installation.

Athletic Venues Reinvestment Initiative (AVRI) Action Plan

A Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit professional consulting services to develop an Athletic Venues Reinvestment Initiative (AVRI) Action Plan closed on March 22. Three proposals were received. Currently, the proposals are being evaluated and scored by a review committee, including a representative from the Indoor Athletics Venues Task Force. In the coming weeks, based on the evaluation and scoring process, a recommended firm will be brought before City Council for approval. The selected firm will be charged with conducting an athletics facilities needs assessment, developing and facilitating comprehensive community engagement opportunities, and providing prioritized investment recommendations for key athletic facilities in Duluth.

Gary New Duluth Skatepark

On March 25, City Council authorized a contract with Grindline Skateparks, Inc. for \$945,416 for the final phase of construction of the Gary New Duluth Recreation Area skatepark (Resolution 24-0180R). Project funding has been formalized under a collaborative funding agreement between the City and the GND Development Alliance, which includes support from St. Louis County economic development fund, 2024 hotel-motel and food-and-beverage tourism taxes, St. Louis River Corridor Initiative funding, Athletic Venues Reinvestment Initiative funding, and donations, pledges, and other grants awarded to the GND Development Alliance. Construction is expected to begin this spring, with skatepark completion expected this summer.

Norton Park

A community engagement event will be held on Tuesday, April 30 from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. at Norton Park United Methodist Church, located at 436 North 79th Avenue West. Attendees will have the opportunity to share what is most important to them, their family, and their neighborhood when it comes to future improvements at Norton Park.

Duluth Parks & Recreation

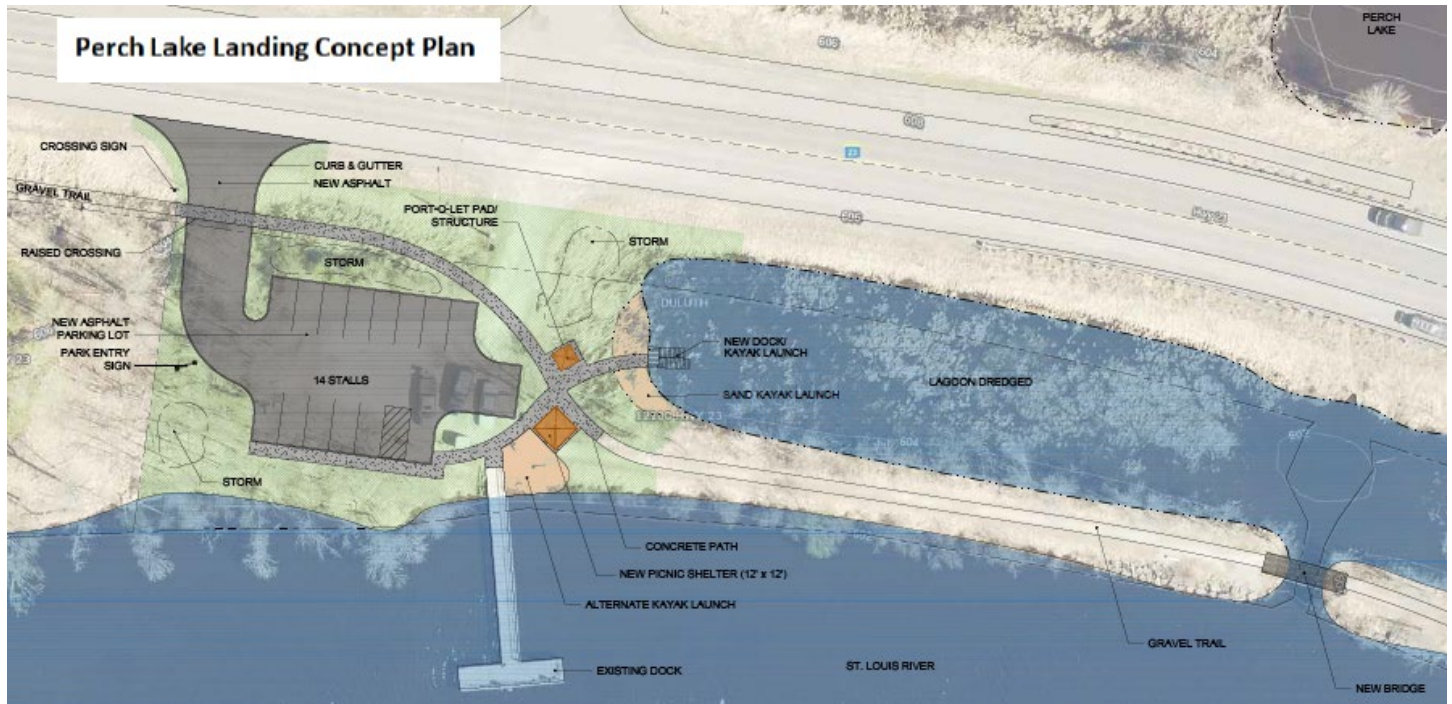
NORTON PARK COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION

**Tuesday, April 30
6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Norton Park United Methodist Church
436 N 79th Ave W**

On-site activities for youth ages 3+ will be provided for parents/guardians attending the session. Please register your child in advance by calling 218-730-4300 or emailing parks@duluthmn.gov.

Perch Lake Landing

The City has accepted a subgrant of \$156,600 from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) through the MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to support future access improvements at Perch Lake. The DNR received a GLRI grant to implement restoration of deep-water habitat within Perch Lake and channel connectivity between the Lake and St. Louis River to improve water quality. The restoration work is well underway and the subgrant to the City will allow the City to implement site access improvements so that the community and visitors are able to enjoy the restored area. The funding will support the purchase of a new accessible paddle launch and final design for future implementation at the landing. Following is a concept plan for the future landing:



Lester Park Recreation Working Group

The Lester Park Recreation Working Group is a group of community members who is forming at the request of Mayor Reinert to evaluate and inform the administration on year-round recreation opportunities in Lester Park. The Working Group will be facilitated by Tim Meyer and Dennis Isernhagen. Over 100 people self-nominated to serve on the Working Group. There will be discussions and opportunities for nominators to sign up for sub-groups to evaluate recreation opportunities at Lester, pursue fundraising, evaluate nonprofit and alternative management models, and discuss a path to some operational golf at Lester for the summer.

Wade Stadium

A resolution authorizing an agreement with AstroTurf Corporation for replacement of the brown-shaded artificial turf at Wade Stadium will go before City Council on April 8. The brown infield turf has reached the end of its useful life and is in need of replacement to enable continued play in 2025. The cost of replacement is \$261,836, and will be paid for using Athletic Venues Reinvestment Initiative funding.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Buckthorn Removal at Hartley Park

Community Action Duluth (CAD) has been clearing buckthorn at Hartley Park to support the future installation of stormwater treatment infrastructure by St. Louis County. The stormwater infrastructure will be constructed in the northeastern portion of Hartley Park adjacent to Woodland Avenue and will treat runoff from Woodland Avenue and the Woodland neighborhood. The area was heavily infested with invasive buckthorn and CAD has made significant progress. When buckthorn is cut, the cut material cannot be removed from the site due to the invasive nature of the plant. Instead, it must be burned or chipped on site to prevent the spread of the plant. This spring, the timing of the late winter snow worked well to increase moisture on site to allow for the safe burning of cut brush piles.

Park Point Wind-Blown Sand

Beach nourishment is a process where additional material is brought onto the beach area to address the eroding shoreline. The last time the Park Point beach was nourished, it used fine dredged material that, unfortunately, is blowing into people's yards at a high rate. Some property owners along the northern portion of Park Point near the Aerial Lift Bridge are facing an excessive build-up of sand. While there is a longer-term Section 111 study in process with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the City is taking an interim step to support property owners facing the excessive sand build-up. The City is working with the Park Point Community Club and property owners to install fencing to help mitigate the wind-blown sand. The City is also working with the MN Department of Natural Resources to determine options for allowing private property owners to permit the removal of wind-blown sand from their properties.

St. Louis River AOC Celebration of Progress 2024

On Tuesday, April 23 between 5:30 – 7:30 p.m., the St. Louis River Alliance will host a Celebration of Progress for the St. Louis River Area of Concern (AOC) at Clyde Iron Works. There will be presentations by agencies completing work on the River, a virtual tour, and social time. The event provides attendees with an opportunity to learn more about the successfully completed and in-progress remediation projects that are contributing toward the future delisting of the AOC.

PARK MAINTENANCE DIVISION UPDATES

16th Annual Clean Yer Creek

Staff are looking forward to supporting this year's Clean Yer Creek on Saturday, May 4 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This volunteer initiative is dedicated to removing trash and debris from our urban creeks. Two additional creeks were added to this year's cleanup, bringing the total to five: Keene, Merritt, Miller, Chester, and Amity Creeks. For more information and to join the volunteer event, please visit: www.eventbrite.com/e/16th-annual-clean-yer-creek-tickets-846532771307

Raising of the Roses

Park Maintenance, in conjunction with the Lake Superior Rose Society, will host the annual Raising of the Roses on Saturday, April 20 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and Monday, April 22 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Rose Garden. The open, community event is an all ages, no experience needed activity. Groups, families, and individuals are invited to participate. Expert rose raisers will be on hand to teach volunteers about the Minnesota Tip Method, a process that protects tender roses from the harsh conditions of Duluth's winter.

Winter and Spring Projects

Winter looked a little different than last year allowing staff able to tackle an array of projects:

- Staff partnered with Public Works and Utilities to remove a pedestrian bridge over the Lester River that had been damaged beyond repair in the floods from November 2023. The bridge had been closed since the floods and the structure had begun impeding the river by catching floating branches and debris. Through successful planning and coordination, the bridge was successfully removed.



- Continued removal of illegally dumped abandoned waste.
- Replaced damaged signs and ongoing graffiti removal in park spaces.
- Cut and removed brush and encroaching trees along both sides of the DWP trail corridor for a 4-mile stretch.
- Removal of ash trees damaged by the emerald ash borer (EAB) has resumed, the photo below shows the bark damage and branch brittleness that is evident when EAB has infested a tree.



DWP Brush Clearing



EAB Damaged Tree Removals

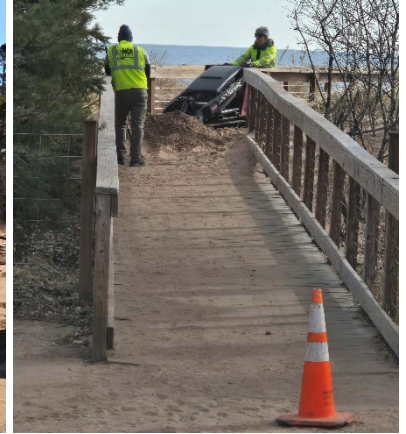
- Removed a dilapidated ramp and railing at the Park Point Beach House for replacement later this spring with a more accessible and functional ramp.
- Cleared snow from Wade Stadium, park spaces and sidewalks, and groomed the cross-country ski trail systems on March 29th after the late season winter storm brought a whopping 16-21.6 inches of snow across Duluth over the three days.
- Cleared 10 cubic yards of wind-swept sand from the 12th Street beach entrance.
- Removed trees near the Bayfront Family Center to create an improved picnic space next to the building.



Wade Snow Removal



Park Point Beach House Ramp Replacement



Beach Access Clearing