



CITY OF MERRILL

Parks & Recreation Dept. - Smith Center

1100 Marc Drive - Merrill, WI 54452

Rec. Dept. Telephone (715)536-7313 * Smith Center (715)536-6187

Fax (715)539-2790

MAY MEETING NOTICE

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission will have a meeting on **Wednesday, May 1, 2019 at 4:15 p.m.**, at the **Smith Center**.

Voting members of Commission: Kate Baker, Jean Ravn, Brian Artac, Kyle Gulke, Dave Sukow, Joan Tabor and Dan Novitch

The following items will be included on the agenda:

1. Approve minutes from previous meeting.
2. Approve claims.
3. Public Comment
4. Elect City Plan Commission Representative
5. Discuss idea of potential pedestrian path to connect Prairie Trails to the River Bend Trail. (From 2005-2006 Riverwalk notes)
6. Continued review/discussion of 2020 Capital & Operating Budgets.
7. Monthly reports.
8. Set date for next meeting.
9. Public comment
10. Adjournment

Submitted by

Dan Novitch

Dan Novitch, ^{Chair}Chairperson

Parks and Recreation Commission

The Smith Center is accessible to the physical disadvantaged. If special accommodations are required, please contact the Smith Center at 536-7313.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

April 3, 2019

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission met on Wednesday, April 3, 2019 at 4:15 p.m. at the Merrill City Hall.

Members Present: Kyle Gulke, Joan Tabor, Brian Artac, Dave Sukow, Kate Baker, Jean Ravn and Dan Novitch.

Members Excused Absent:

Department Staff Present: Dan Wendorf and Dawn Smith

Visitors: City Administrator Dave Johnson, Ron Liberty, Mayor Derek Woellner, Judy Sukow, Bradly Gulke and MP3:

***Motion by Baker, seconded by Ravn to approve the minutes from the March meeting.

***Carried unanimously.

***Motion by Ravn, seconded by Baker, to approve the claims from March.

Sukow questioned how much the lights costed at Athletic Park stating the paper had a number in there that didn't sound correct. Wendorf stated that there was a \$45,000 grant through Baseball Tomorrow Fund and a \$5,000 grant through WPS Foundation. Wendorf stated that there is LED lights that were put in and the cost on savings will make up for the cost of the project. Novitch questioned how old the poles were that were in there. Wendorf stated 50 plus years old. Artac stated the cost to Cesa 9 was for the help in writing the grant. Artac stated that it was a mis quote on how many night games are played at Athletic Park, Ravn stated that all the money used to purchase the Easter candy was through donations.

***Carried unanimously.

Public Comment:

Ron Liberty from the Merrill Lions Club stated that they will still have the BBQ Chicken Dinner and the duck races on August 8 at Stange Park.

Bradley Gulke, 1504 Jackson Street, stated that the Disc Golf courses at Kitchenette Park and Stange Park are in need of putting the poles in with a concrete base so they are a little more stable. Gulke stated that they are planning on running some tournaments this summer and would like to have the courses expanded. Gulke stated the last event they had they raised some money for the food pantry.

The next item on the agenda was to elect Chairperson/Vice Chairperson. Wendorf stated that they will need someone to make a nomination for a Chairperson. Gulke stated that he would like to nominate Artac, stating that he has been doing a good job. Artac stated that he did not want to be Chairperson.

***Sukow made a motion, seconded by Baker, to nominate Novitch for Chairperson for the Park and Recreation Commission.

***Carried unanimously.

***Gulke made a motion, seconded by Tabor, to nominate Artac for Vice Chairperson for the Park and Recreation Commission.

***Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was to review/approve the bids for Smith Center Dehumidifiers. Wendorf stated they received one bid from Mechanical Inc. for \$52,900.00. Wendorf stated that the bid was well under budget and that one bid was not out of the ordinary because they are specialized pieces of equipment.

***Motion by Sukow, seconded by Novitch, to approve the bid from Mechanical Inc. for \$52,900.00.

***Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was continued discussion on 2020 Capital & Operating Budgets. Wendorf stated that he enclosed a copy of the some the ideas from the 5 Year Plan from the Park and Recreation Department. Gulke questioned who was responsible for the canoe portage on the RBT. Wendorf stated that WPS is so any repairs would need to be done by them. Baker would like to see the lines repainted at Ott's Park Tennis Courts for Pickle Ball. Wendorf stated that they repaint them every two years, so they will be painted this year. Wendorf stated that if anyone ever has any questions or ideas to please call him.

The next item on the agenda was monthly reports. Wendorf asked if anyone had any questions. Novitch questioned if Oak wilt is in Lincoln County yet. Wendorf stated it was not in our area. Ravn stated that the date for the History Hunt was misquoted in the monthly report. The History Hunt is April 27th. Wendorf also stated that the dog show is this weekend at the Smith Center.

***Motion by Sukow, seconded by Ravn to approve the monthly board report given by Wendorf.

***Carried unanimously.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 1, 2019 at 4:15 p.m. at the Smith Center,

Public comment: none

***Motion by Sukow, seconded by Baker to adjourn at 5:00 p.m.

***Carried unanimously.

Dawn Smith
Recording Secretary

		APRIL			
ACE HARDWARE	GLAD BAGS	3/26/2019		\$9.99	55200-03-40000
ACE HARDWARE	EZ START TAPE	4/12/2019		\$41.52	55300-03-10000
AMERICAN WELDING GAS	CYLINDER RENTAL	3/31/2019	6239082	\$50.81	55200-02-15000
AMERICAN WELDING GAS	CYLINDER RENTAL	3/31/2019	5239620	\$68.79	55300-03-41500
APPLIED	FIELD PAINT	4/10/2019	97054645	\$768.90	55200-03-40000
ATCO	CENTURION/COOL BREEZE	4/16/2019	10528153	\$251.00	55400-03-50000
BAUERNFEIND	COPY MACHINE	4/9/2019	84855	\$136.96	55300-03-46000
BAUMGART WASTE REMOVAL	WASTE HAULING	4/2/2019		\$148.00	55400-02-23600
BEACON ATHLETICS	SPARKLE/ INFIELD MIX	4/9/2019	0503023-IN	\$2,277.20	55200-08-91000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS	3/21/2019	4018599544	\$143.39	55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS	3/28/2019	4019001595	\$71.87	55200-03-46000
CINTAS	MOPS/RUGS	4/11/2019	4019904360	\$174.19	55400-02-23250
CINTAS	UNIFORMS	4/4/2019	401944117	\$83.19	55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS	4/11/2019	4019904438	\$83.19	55200-03-46000
FASTENAL	SUPPLILES FOR SHOP	3/26/2019	1072444	\$82.78	55200-03-40000
FASTENAL	SHOP SUPPLIES	3/29/2019	107294	\$3.72	55200-03-50000
FERGUSON ENTERPRISES	PARTS FOR SHOP	4/16/2019	105637	\$110.35	55200-03-50000
FERGUSON ENTERPRISES	PARTS FOR SHOP	4/17/2019	49999626	\$93.11	55200-03-50000
HARDWARE	FASTENERS	4/24/2019		\$7.44	55400-03-50000
HEARTLAND COOPERATIVE	RYEGRASS	4/2/2019	13219131	\$62.68	55200-08-91000
JUMLINE	BARLEYFEST WEBSITE	4/1/2019	73785	\$123.40	BARLEYFEST
LAMERS BUS	MILWAUKEE ZOO TRIP	4/1/2019		\$1,395.00	55300-03-41500
LAMERS BUS	MILLER PARK	4/1/2019		\$1,525.00	55300-03-41500
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	BULBS	4/5/2019		\$125.90	55400-03-50000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	TRASH CAN	4/9/2019		\$49.98	55200-08-91000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	STNDRD BATH TISSUE	4/10/2019		\$153.93	55200-08-91000
MERRILL DISTRIBUTING	TISSUE	3/18/2019	308201	\$62.60	55200-03-40000
MERRILL DISTRIBUTING	URINAL BLOCKS/GLOVES	4/10/2019	1482989	\$249.40	55200-03-40000
MERRILL FOTO NEWS/COURIER	ADVERTISING	4/1/2019		\$1,776.00	55400-03-41000
MERRILL FOTO NEWS/COURIER	ADVERTISING	4/1/2019		\$159.24	CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Replace Infield dragger	3		\$25,000										
City Forest Main Road/parking re-construction	3				\$75,000								
Replace Park Entrance Signs	3							\$35,000					
Replace existing park lights with LED	3					\$75,000							
Replace Parks Dump Truck #2	3				\$50,000								
Replace Zero Turn Mower	3			\$25,000				\$20,000					
Construct Curling Facility at Smith Center	3					\$1,000,000							
Construct Trail from Prairie Trails to RBT	3										\$750,000		
Outdoor Recreation Plan	1				\$7,500								
Install trail lights on MARC Trails	3							\$50,000					
Disc Golf Initiative Continued	2				\$10,000	\$10,000							
Complete Re-inventory Street Trees w/GIS Over	2				\$35,000								
Replacement 3/4 ton pickup truck	2	\$45,000											
Construct concrete skate park (design)	3	\$15,000											
Dog Park agility amenities	3							\$15,000					
Dog Park Water lateral	3					\$10,000							
Granite for trail rehab	3			\$10,000				\$10,000				\$15,000	
Riverside Park Road rehabilitation	1	st. dept											
Smith Center Rubber Flooring	2	\$5,000											
Smith Center Office flooring & upgrades	2		\$25,000										
Construct meeting room above community roo	3							\$150,000					
Replace docks at Riverside and Ott's	2	\$15,000	\$15,000										
City owned dumpsters for parks & facilities	3			\$25,000									
Tree Planting	2	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000							
Gravel Planting Beds for Tree Staging	3	\$10,000											
Dormers over Smith Center entrances	3			\$30,000									
Replacement decking for Prairie trails fishing pi	2	\$8,000											
Additional picnic tables (RBT/Stange)	2	\$10,000											
Smith Center LED Interior Lights (non arena)	1		\$15,000										
Solar Power for Smith Center	2		\$50,000					\$50,000					
Solar Power for Bierman Fam Aquatic Center	2				\$50,000								
Lights on MARC Varsity Ball Field	3			\$150,000									
Lions Park Field Improvements	3							\$15,000					
MARC Parking Lot Sealing	2				\$35,000								

City of Merrill - "Green Circle Trail"

2005-2006 Notes

8' paved/gravel/universally accessible trail to encompass the City. - Focus on our 2 rivers in town

Potential Partners/Ideas

- Service groups ^{Businesses} donate \$ for period of time to help develop/maintain a section of trail (Adopt-a-trail program)
- Rails-to-trails program - matching funds?
- Municipal expenditures - matching funds for grants, money to get rolling & maintain
- T.I.D & T.I.F money - also run trail through those districts
- Street Dept. cooperation - equipment & manpower
- Airport - new developments - trail around fence ↑ exposure for airport - rustic area for trail
- ⇒ Private donations / memorial trail designations (can use this for signage & amenities)
- Ad-hoc Committee to help get ball rolling, make presentations, see project through, make recommendations, ideas, secure funding

Route Potential

Try to tie in with existing trail systems @ Prairie trails, MARC, Council Grounds, Stanges TIF districts, Prairie/Wisconsin Rivers.

✱✱ Alternate Route would take trail to Stuart Smith Annexation if occurs up 64 East to Hwy W to South towards former ITC

2005-2006 Notes

- * From Prairie Trails parking lot to Hwy 6 to east to Church Mutual through their property to south towards 3rd Co. to T.F. district by Sewage Treatment follow River St to West to K-Center Ave Bridge up to Main Street through downtown to West behind fire dept towards Park shop - Now Rails to Trails area to follow behind Hurd, Weinbrenner to State Street (do want to use 2 rail bridges?)
 - Run State 1 block to North to 64 west into 6th Ward/out to Otts - circle around sence
 - Other loop would take you from State Street to Cottage Street North to Grand Ave/107 out to the MARC

- * From Prairie Trails follow 1st loop to west towards Fm Ent. follow south bank of river all the way to 3rd St bridge by PRMS then Cross over to Stanges Park follow through ϵ over 2 arch bridge behind library ϵ link up with 64/107/Grand Ave to each of above mentioned areas

→ Put this on City Map - Mark out

2005-2006 Notes

* 2005/2006 Rough Estimate

↓
Approx # \$25,000/mile cost w/out amenities

9 miles

\$ 225,000 - just physical trail

Project

Construction of approx: 3 miles Rails 2 trails, 3 miles river walk (along prairie), 3 miles trail along W. River
Remainder of trail system will use existing Roads/sidewalks - but need to be delineated physically.

** Note ** Any future road projects/improvements I would like to be ^{have} considered for bike/pedestrian lanes
this puts us on the pro-active for future participants & users of the trail/etc.

1st phase would be Riverwalk from Prairie Trails to Kitchenette
- that is all new trail construction

2nd phase would be Rails to Trails along south portion of city - abandoned railroad corridor from behind shops to /through 6th Ward

3rd phase would be tying in existing Roads/sidewalks esp. north end of town to complete "loop" of entire trail

4th phase would be amenities throughout trail system i.e.: benches, maps, kiosks, markings, waste receptacles, water fountains, plantings, site hardenings, trail lights
convenience

2005 - 2006
Notes

Objective(s)

Encourage/provide

Safe & alternative transportation routes throughout our city.

We wish to incorporate safe modes of transportation that support an active lifestyle & healthy living for all ages & abilities. All routes ^{will} have a purpose - whether to get to business district/downtown, schools, places of employment, parks, etc

This City wide trail / River walk will be part of a joint trail system that will someday join Wausau to Tomahawk

This will ultimately lead to a healthier ^{safer} community by cutting down on vehicular traffic & encouraging/providing these alternative routes.

Issues this will address

- Aging population, childhood obesity, global warming, ^{environmental issues} car accidents, fitness/healthy lifestyle (all ages), Bike friendly community, gas prices, pedestrian safety, parking, family bonding / togetherness/values

→ Partnerships

- local businesses, service organizations, non-profits, City / County schools, churches, residents, non-residents, scouts, environmental groups,

2005-2006
Notes

Riverwalk

Rails to Trails

- Start Location - Prairie Trails - follow prairie river all way to Wisconsin River - encompass entire City

Key Points - need a name

- Need to be part of entire trail network (multi purpose) serve as "link" to/from residential to parks & business districts
- Need to incorporate "Bike Friendly" theme and get buy in from city for existing & new roads bike/pedestrian lanes
- Rails to Trails needs to be utilized for south portion of corridor
- May need to organize into "Loops" with one central meeting point
- • Land Acquisition is key issue along river and railroad
- Sponsorship - businesses for sections of trail to be developed
- Bridge to cross @ least once
- • • Ad Hoc Committee to help make decisions throughout process
- Portions will need to be paved, others granite, others marked on existing roadways
- Need maps & signage for information & out-of-towners
-

"Green Circle Trails"

2005-2006 Notes

Key Points

- Land Acquisition Along Prairie (
- Land Acquisition along Wisconsin
- Land Acquisition Railroad Corridors (exempt only) also R.O.W.'s

- Trail section sponsorship (Service Orgs, businesses)
They help fund project, ad rights along trail responsible for clean up on their section ^{or 1 mile}
(Cost would depend - must purchase min. 1/2 mile)

- Trail must be universally accessible and have design allow for easy expansion & connection to other trail systems (Tomahawk/Wausau) West & East ^{Also}
- Lighting along "non street lit areas" should rely on solar potential on hard to reach areas

- Partnership is crucial due to funding & staffing

2005-2006 Notes

Costs to be considered

• Land Acquisition - R-o-w, easements, etc, private

• Engineering/Architectural - design

• Consulting Fees - design

• Construction/Development - grading, excavation, fill/materials, construction, bridges

• Legal fees - land issues, R-o-w, acquisition

• Amenities - (benches, lights, waste receptacles, signage, kiosks, fitness stations,

• Administrative - office work, paper, supplies, postage, copies, research

• In-kind services - Park Dept, Street Department (manpower & equipment, volunteer hands-on help)

2005-2006 Notes

Econ: Benefits of Parks & Trails

- Rails-to-Trails
Rhonda Border-Boose - Regional Direct

Walk and Bike for Life website → .org

rhonda@rails-to-trails.org

↓
Landowners
opposition - info
boilerplate info
to deal with
this issue

* Trail users -

- purchase hard goods - bikes, helmets, etc
- soft " - water, ice cream, sandwiches
- ↑ use of local accommodations

Historic Preservation

- Revitalize existing business
- ↑ Property values - Res. & Commercial

* Rail with trail
new push
→ dave.burche@bonestoo.com
→ email for presentation

"Active Transportation" New push "2010" more infrastructure
5.5-17% Nations health care due to obesity

↓ vehicle use through urban planning, trails, mass transit

CASE STUDY

West Bend - Prop vals ↑ 10.4% adjacent to park/trail
Wauk - 12% , Brookfield - integral part of Cities Vision

OHIO
\$72,000/mile
\$15,000/mile
in WI

How measure

Statistics, health & econ. cost benefits, industry standards,
bonestoo.com, * rails-to-trails.org, smart-cities.net, tpl.org,
* rails-to-trails.org
good stats & info

Lincoln County Public Access Land Records Viewer



Author: Public
Date Printed: 4/5/2019



The information depicted on this map is a compilation of public record information including aerial photography and other base maps. No warranty is made, express or implied, as to the accuracy of the information used. The data layers are a representation of current data to the best of our knowledge and may contain errors. It is not a legally recorded map and cannot be substituted for field-verified information. Map may be reproduced with permission of the Lincoln County Land Services Department. Errors should be reported to Land Services Department, 801 North Sales St, Merrill, WI, 54452. Copyright © 2015 Phone (715) 539-1049.

Lincoln County Public Access Land Records Viewer



Author: Public
Date Printed: 4/25/2019



The information depicted on this map is a compilation of public record information including aerial photography and other base maps. No warranty is made, express or implied, as to the accuracy of the information used. The data layers are a representation of current data to the best of our knowledge and may contain errors. It is not a legally recorded map and cannot be substituted for field-verified information. Map may be reproduced with permission of the Lincoln County Land Services Department. Errors should be reported to Land Services Department, 801 North Sales St, Merrill, WI, 54452. Copyright © 2015 Phone (715) 539-1049.

Lincoln County Public Access Land Records Viewer



Author: Public
Date Printed: 4/5/2019



The information depicted on this map is a compilation of public record information including aerial photography and other base maps. No warranty is made, express or implied, as to the accuracy of the information used. The data layers are a representation of current data to the best of our knowledge and may contain errors. It is not a legally recorded map and cannot be substituted for field-verified information. Map may be reproduced with permission of the Lincoln County Land Services Department. Errors should be reported to Land Services Department, 801 North Sales St, Merrill, WI, 54452. Copyright © 2015 Phone (715) 539-1049.



Protect oaks from oak wilt by waiting to prune

Posted on April 1, 2019

By Don Kissinger, urban forester, 715-348-5746, don.kissinger@wisconsin.gov and Paul Cigan, forest health specialist, 715-416-4920, paul.cigan@wisconsin.gov

To protect oak trees from the often-fatal oak wilt disease, don't prune, cut or injure oak trees from April through July.

Pruning and cutting oaks in spring and early summer leaves them vulnerable to oak wilt, which rapidly kills trees in the red oak group and weakens those in the white oak group. Any damage during this time, including broken branches caused by

Search...

GO

Categories

[Division of Forestry News](#)

[Forest Health News](#)

[Forest Products News](#)

[Northern State Forests](#)

[Private Forestry News](#)

[Reforestation News](#)

[Urban Forestry News](#)

[Wildland Fire News](#)

Tags

storms, exposes living tree tissue beneath the bark and provides an opportunity for the oak wilt fungus to infect the tree.

Sap-feeding beetles introduce the disease by carrying oak wilt spores from infected trees or firewood to fresh wounds. Healthy oaks can become infected in as little as 15 minutes after the creation of a wound.

Awards

Best Management Practices

Black River State Forest

Buying seed

Care for your
woods

Central WI Forest

Health

Certification

Did you know?

Disease

East Central WI

Forest Health

Economy Emergency management

Events

Events; Wood utilization

Financial help

Fire season

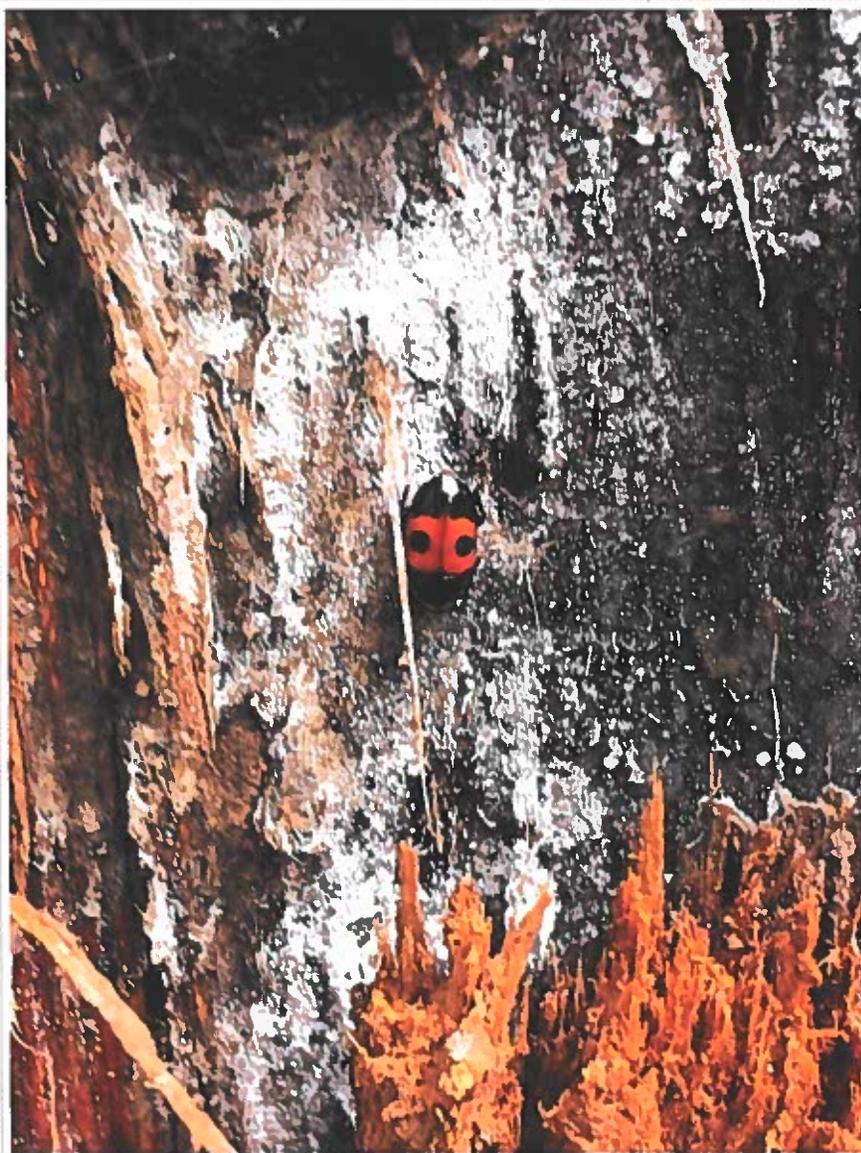
Firewood

Forest benefits

Foresters Forest products

Insect Invasive plant

Inventory Northeast



Sap-feeding beetle on diseased oak tree in Sawyer County.

The trees most likely to die from oak wilt infection are in the red oak group, including northern pin oak, northern red oak, red oak and black oak. The white oak

Northeast WI
Forest Health
Northwest WI
Forest Health
Partners Pest
Pesticide
Preparing for wildfires
Preventing wildfires
Publications Research
Silviculture
South Central WI
Forest Health
Southeast WI
Forest Health
Statewide
Forest Health
Taking action
Technical assistance
Training
Tree seedling sales
Urban wood

West Central WI forest health Woodland owners Wood utilization

Archives

April 2019
March 2019
February 2019
January 2019
December 2018
November 2018
October 2018
September 2018
August 2018
July 2018
June 2018
May 2018
April 2018
March 2018
February 2018
January 2018
December 2017
November 2017
October 2017
September 2017
August 2017

group is more likely to survive infection and includes bur oak, swamp white oak, white oak and English oak.

Tree paint or wound dressing is not normally recommended on pruned or wounded surfaces, but for damaged oaks an immediate light application of these products may be the only defense against oak wilt infection from April through July.

Pruning in spring can be damaging to any deciduous tree because their energy reserves are low as they produce new buds and leaves following the winter months. In general, the best time to prune is in winter when trees are dormant.

As of January 31, oak wilt has been found in all Wisconsin counties except Ashland, Iron, Forest, Taylor, Door, Kewaunee, Calumet and Manitowoc counties. Several of these counties contain the highest abundance of healthy and productive oak forests in the state. Taking recommended precautions will help keep them that way for years to come.

Oak wilt and other diseases move easily on or in firewood logs year-round, so keeping firewood local, or purchasing Wisconsin-certified firewood, is another important component of protecting trees and keeping forests healthy. Visit the [DNR firewood page](#) for more information and a directory of certified firewood vendors.

More information, including a recently released oak wilt video, is available at the [DNR oak wilt page](#). Additional information about proper pruning techniques is available from community foresters or through DNR resources such as this [tree pruning poster](#).

(Visited 153 times, 1 visits today)



Trees proven to connect people and build community

Posted on April 11, 2019

Trees help build stronger neighborhoods. Residents in areas with more trees and other greenery know their neighbors better, socialize more often, have a stronger sense of community, and feel safer and better adjusted.

Research at a large public housing facility in Chicago shows that the formation of neighborhood social ties largely depends on informal interactions that occur in common spaces. An attractive, inviting space has a positive influence on the quantity and quality of these social interactions. Improving common spaces by planting trees and other vegetation is a particularly effective tool in helping encourage these interactions and create a greater sense of community.

Search...

GO

Categories

- Division of Forestry News
- Forest Health News
- Forest Products News
- Northern State Forests
- Private Forestry News
- Reforestation News
- Urban Forestry News
- Wildland Fire News

Tags



Researchers linked social survey data with socioeconomic, neighborhood layout and green space data. They found a positive relationship between the amount of tree canopy and the amount of social capital and connection.

Having access to nature and the outdoors is considered therapeutic; this is especially important for older adults. However, many of them do not use outdoor areas. One study looked at why these areas are underutilized by measuring how the landscape impacts outdoor usage. It found that older adults in assisted living facilities who have more exposure to green common spaces report a stronger sense of unity among residents within their local neighborhood. A variety of plant materials and good views were two factors that doubled their time spent outdoors. Not only increasing their socialization, but their overall health.

Trees are a relatively inexpensive and easy way to enhance the strength of social ties among neighbors. April 26th is Arbor Day; get outside to plant a tree and build a community.

For more information and links to published research, visit the Vibrant Cities Lab.

Article written by: Olivia Witthun, WI DNR Urban Forestry Coordinator, 414-750-8744, Olivia.Witthun@wisconsin.gov

(Visited 57 times, 1 visits today)

Awards

Best Management Practices

Black River State Forest

Buying seed

Care for your woods

Central WI Forest

Health

Certification

Did you know?

Disease

East Central WI Forest Health

Economy Emergency management

Events

Events; Wood utilization

Financial help

Fire season

Firewood

Forest benefits

Foresters Forest products

Insect Invasive plant

Inventory Northeast



May 2019 Parks & Recreation Director's Report

Parks: Once again the weather has been dictating what we can and cannot accomplish from an external maintenance standpoint. We were getting very close to having things ready before the mid/late April snow storm, followed by well over a week of below average temperatures that really set us back to right now. We did have some fairly significant flooding on April 18-20th. Some of our most heavily impacted areas included Stange, Riverside, Lions, Athletic, Ott's, and Prairie Trails. We were fortunate to not have any damage associated with the flooding, but we did close a number of those parks for citizen safety. We didn't have any real damage to speak of related to the flooding, just saturated grounds that we couldn't work in or on. We have been working very closely with MAPS for their spring sports schedules to make sure we can get fields set up as soon as possible and accommodate games when we are ready. It will most likely be quite a bit like last year with double headers for baseball/softball and additional days on their schedule to get caught up. But the good thing is that by the time you read this, we should be ready to play on the fields. All we need is for the weather to level off to average and we can finish making sure everything is set up for the seasons. At the same time we have been trying to get parks and park facilities up and running. By ordinance, our parks are "open" on May 1st and we were able to get that accomplished. Luckily we encountered very few issues with our facilities as we un-winterized them and that helped us get through that task efficiently. We would also like to thank Merrill Area Housing Authority who donated a refrigerator and oven to our new shelter at Stange Park and an oven to the Agra Pavilion. They have been remodeling Park Place and were replacing appliances so we are thankful for their generosity. We have been using an employee from the Street Department who has been on light duty and it has been working out great for both of us. We have been using this person to continue to chip away at our never ending park clean up and it allows our guys to continue with field work and facility work. From this point until we get all of our summer help, our crew has their work cut out for them with having to maintain the athletic fields, parks/park facilities, and mow grass very soon. We are fortunate because our two guys are tremendous employees and always find a way to get it all done. The River District Development Foundation has informed me that they are intending to be completed with the Agra Pavilion and will have a key turn-over ceremony on June 7th mid/late morning. Commissioners are invited so if you would like to be in attendance it would be great to see you all. We are all very thankful for the wonderful accomplishments that the RDDF has provided our entire community with. The River Bend Trail and related amenities have added a tremendous amount of excitement throughout our City and beyond. The Bierman Family Aquatic Center is scheduled to open on June 7th at 3:30 p.m. We are going to open after the school day lets out and will continue to keep those weekday hours the following week as well, because of the added MAPS cancellation days. The weekend hours will be normal (12-7pm on Saturday and Sunday). We have all of our hiring done for the Aquatic Center and have been making all of the arrangements for start-up, concessions, supplies, etc. There is a lot of work that goes into getting that facility ready, but it is all worth it to see people come from all over to visit our beautiful facilities and community. Our season pass sales have been very good again this year so we are hoping for great weather and big crowds! Our new truck (and plow) is scheduled to arrive first week in May so we will get it all set up and ready to use right away.

Forestry: The Street Department has been catching up on tree prunings and removals throughout the city that we had fallen a little behind on with road construction and other projects. I have been trying to stay out in front of them when time allows to inspect and mark additional trees that need work done. We need some more sunshine and some warmer weather to let the trees break buds and leaf out so we can see if there are any lasting effects from the extreme winter conditions we all endured this past winter. We will see if there any issues after leaf out and some concerns will be directly related to the amount of sand/salt that was utilized with all of the snow. I recently attended a webinar on the effects of sand/salt on urban trees and ways to potentially lessen those impacts. It was very informative and something we will take into consideration with future plantings (species, location, design, etc.). We are going to be hosting our Arbor Day/Tree City USA Celebration Planting on May 16th, at 10:30 a.m. at Ott's Park. We are fortunate again this year to have wonderful financial contributions from American Transmission Company and Wisconsin Public Service to pay for our trees that we are planting for Arbor Day/Tree City USA. We are also going to plant more street trees this year and in order to do that we are going to do some plantings this summer while we have seasonal staff. It is great but these trees need cooperation from the homeowners to water them so we will make sure to make contact and work with neighborhoods to ensure survival and begin to plant more trees this year and into the future (as funding allows). We are also going to be working on setting up our gravel beds this year so we can begin staging our potted trees and encourage fibrous root growth and increase survival rates/growth rates immediately after they are planted into the ground.

Recreation: Our 2019 Summer Recreation Programs have been out for a while now and registrations have been going very well. We had our first chance sign-ups for Summer Playground at our Children's Festival at the end of March and actually filled our entire Playground program. We set up a waiting list for those who didn't sign up in time. We set a limit of 80 this year so that we can run a more effective all around program. Most people have been very understanding about our limit and we will evaluate how it goes this summer with the more manageable numbers of participants. All other program registrations have been filling in nicely and our summer full of activities is looking to be very fun filled once again this year. Bus trips are filling up as well and we will hopefully be sold out of all of them by the time we hit the end of the month.

Smith Center: We hosted another very successful Paper Cities Kennel Club Dog Show over the weekend of April 5-7 here at the Smith Center. They had very big crowds in attendance and a lot of participants showcasing their dogs and related skills/services/items. The organization was once again very pleased with the way we accommodated them and are already looking forward to returning next year. For the new Commissioners, we hosted their event last year for the first time and they liked it so much that they committed long term to making the Smith Center their home. We are pleased to continue our relationship with them in helping them continue to make their event one of the largest in the entire state. I have ordered our new dehumidifiers from Mechanical Inc., and they should arrive within the next few weeks. We will work on installation for a time that we can start and finish without having to work around an event. We will have this finished in plenty of time to have them up and running for the next ice season. I have also had some conversations recently with some new potential events for inside the arena. We do have a number of dry floor events coming including a Circus and June Dairy Breakfast.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan Wendorf
Parks & Recreation Director