

Parks and Recreation Director's Report

June/July 2023

Crew Management

- The Buildings and Grounds Crew has been diligently working to keep up with routine maintenance and special projects. In the absence of a Buildings and Grounds Supervisor, each of the full-time staff have accepted a leadership role in a particular aspect of the department including: cemetery & burials, tools & equipment, MISSDIG & special projects and pathways.
- Worked with crew to support the July Fourth parade and festivities.
- Learning a tremendous amount about the day to day demands of the crew.

Outreach/Partnerships

- Attended the West Michigan Conservation Network's Annual Meeting where Ginny Wanty received the Conservation Leadership Award for her amazing contributions to protecting West Michigan's natural resources.
- Attended Ada Townships Parks, Recreation and Land Protection Committee monthly meeting to learn about their upcoming acquisitions, pedestrian bridge and wayfinding project.
- Met with Wil Miller from Calvin College and his crew and Rich Lakeberg, Communication Specialist, to capture the tick surveillance occurring at Burton Park. Also, discussed future research projects.
- Wrote a \$500,000 RAP grant through the Right Place to support the construction of Friendship Park.

Volunteer Program

- Worked with Kent Conservation District, Ginny Wanty and Jeanine Heibel to redesign Burton Park workday since very few climbing invasive bittersweet vines remain. The majority of the bittersweet requires foliar herbicide treatments which Kent Conservation District is conducting.

Committees

- Working with Thornapple SAD to contract the removal of large debris from the Thornapple River.
- Worked with PLM to conduct aquatic nuisance plants treatments on the Thornapple River.
- Working with Pathways Committee to design the pedestrian bridge over the Thornapple.
- Met with Mike Reese and Sabo consults to discuss a potential parks millage.

Park Updates

- **Burton Park**-Kent Conservation District and Jeanine Heibel are conducting foliar herbicide treatments on invasive bittersweet. Hosted a volunteer workday in an area that was discovered to have uncommon prairie plants and the highest quality forest.
- **Cascade Park**-Working to address several maintenance issues. Ordered the trees for installation next month as part of the DTE grant.
- **Tassell Park**-continuing to address numerous issues within the park.
 - Working with Spalding Dedecker Engineering to address drainage issues within the restroom building before remodeling.
 - Benches and signs in the process of being painted.
 - Numerous stairways are being repaired.
 - A mason is repairing numerous stone structures throughout the park.
 - LED bulbs have been installed in all of the parking lot fixtures. The trail lights will be converted to LED soon.
 - Everything has been powerwashed.
 - The replacement plants for the landscape have been ordered and will be installed in August.
 - Waiting on survey before putting out an RFP for a riverfront design.
- **Wycliffe Trailhead Park**-Wanty surveyed the tree of heaven. She reported little growth within park property.
- **Peace Park**-Crew have discussed the process of installing water bars. Installation will begin as soon as possible. Autumn olive removal workday is scheduled for August 10, 2023. All are welcome!
- **McGraw Park**-no updates at this time.
- **Memorial Park**-I will be meeting with the volunteers of the museum to discuss maintenance issues within the museum. Currently, a specialized carpenter has been secured to make the repairs. Once the repairs are complete, the museum will be repainted.
Sue Aagard of M.S.U. Master Gardner program is working with Wanty and me to select plants that are appropriate for the historical museum to replace the dying plants and weeds within the landscape.