



Monthly Executive Summary March 2010

City of Spokane
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Director of Parks and Recreation
April 16, 2010

Department highlights for the month include:

- The City Council accepted the use of Conservation Futures Funding to purchase the YMCA property. The YMCA building will be removed the site restored to open space.
- Angel Spell was hired as Spokane's new Urban Forester.
- Parks staff continue to meet and work with Andy Dunau and the River Forum group to explore improved Spokane River access.
- Parks Director continues to meet and support the efforts Lori Kinnear and her Community Gardens group.
- Leroy and Carl Strong met with all the Neighborhood Councils that have youth baseball improvements in their neighborhood. Leroy and Carl also met with the youth baseball user groups.
- The Park Board approved a contract with First Tee to run an exciting youth golf program out of the Qualchan Golf Course.
- Parks staff met with the Park Bond Citizen's Advisory Committee to give them an update on the Park Bond Projects and plan for the August 7th bond completion ceremony.

Recreation/Entertainment Services:

- The new BMX Bike Association (primary user group for the new track at the Merkel Sports Complex) has elected a citizen board and has begun working on by-laws and getting 501c3 status. Staff is working on contract and opening procedures. The work dates have been set for the end of June with the ABA and everything is moving forward and is on track.
- Lynn Mandyke, Corbin Art Director is coordinating *Artfest* "Make It Art" activities with a division subcommittee. This group met to begin to outline the work "shift" schedule and discuss marketing and promotion opportunities.
- Corbin Senior Activities Center put on the 6th Movin' & Groovin' Fair. There were 70 exhibitors and over 300 attendees. WE offered free screenings for glucose and cholesterol, free massages, and free H1N1 shots.
- Riverfront Park Ice Palace closed for the 2009/2010 season with a record breaking year for revenue which can be attributed to a good product, great weather, interest generated by the 2010 US Figure Skating Championships and Olympics plus *Magner Sanborn's* second year of marketing for the department.
- IMAX Hubble opened on Friday, March 19th. A special screening took place at 7pm on opening day. Activities included: An informative talk and slide presentation on "Hubble's Legacy" by Richard Stevens, professor of Physics at Whitworth University. The Spokane Astronomical Society set up a great looking display in the IMAS Lobby with lots of giveaways and coordinated a post-show star gazing activity in Riverfront Park.

Golf/Administration:

- Report not available.

Finance:

- Report not available.

Marketing/Communications:

- Twenty-two news releases including: Outrageous Pink Barbie Party at NEYC; Paws & Poles Nordic Ski & Snowshoe Event; Swim Fee Community Committee; Citizens Advisory Committee Seeks Member at Large' Dog Park Fundraising Gets Underway; Don't Feed the Ducks; Hubble Blasts Off at Giant Screen IMAX; Corbin Kids Spring Break Camps; East Central Middle Eastern Dance Program; Hubble Special Screening; NEYC Promises Eggs-tra Fun; Riverfront Open for Spring – Special Hours; Bread is Bad for Ducks; Camps at NEYC; Hubble Entertainment Weekly 6 of 10; KIX 96 Hoses Annual Egg Hunt in Riverfront Park; Riverfront Spring Break Hours of Operation; Riverfront Dims Lights for Earth Hour; Don't Abandon Easter Pets in Park Ponds; Vote for Rose Hill; Japanese Garden Opens April 1st for the Season; Try a Fitness Class.
- All four web sites which are all involved in the redesign project are now live: Parks and Recreation, live December 1, 2009, www.spokaneparks.org; Riverfront Park, live as of March 7, www.spokaneriverfrontpark.com; Golf, live as of March 7, www.spokanegolf.org; Urban Forestry, live as of November 18' 2009, www.spokaneurbanforestry.com.

- The April Walk in the Park program features athletics with staff Carl Strong and Adriano Eva, and an overview of the Dwight Merkel Sports Complex and new Field Procedures with staff Craig Butz and Carl Strong.
- Ribbon cutting ceremonies and tours of the last two new neighborhood aquatic centers constructed with 2007 Parks Improvement Bond funding will be held: Witter Aquatics Center, Wednesday, May 12, 10:00 a.m., 1300 E. Mission (E. Mission & Upriver Drive); Liberty Aquatics Center, Wednesday, June 9, 2010, 10:00 a.m.; 1300 E. 5th Ave. (5th & Pittsburg)
- All 17 splash pads city-wide will open Memorial Day weekend.
- All six aquatic centers will open to the public on June 14th.
- Dwight Merkel Sports Complex will hold its grand opening on Saturday, August 7th.

Park Operations:

- A portion of our seasonal staff has been hired and the park raking crew has started up. The goal is to get all parks raked in preparation for spring. This is made easier by a productive round of raking last fall. Some high winds late in the month created a little bit of havoc and tore out some tree branches, adding to the debris to be cleaned up, however.
- Mild weather has encouraged significant park use. Litter and garbage pick up has increased in frequency. Tennis courts have been put back in usable condition. There are many requests coming in to use parks for special events. Easter egg hunts are obviously very popular this time of year. Unfortunately, there has also been an increase in graffiti, some of which has been very difficult to remove. Staff has been researching a promising new piece of equipment that utilizes dry ice pellets to blast away the graffiti.
- Irrigation staff has started getting park water systems up and running. This process can often take eight weeks or more and we are off to a slow start with two of the four irrigation employees recovering from injuries. Staff has met with Spokane Public Schools and their design firm on separating and transferring maintenance and operation of Shadle Park athletic field irrigation to the school district. Staff has also met with the baseball field renovation design firm on irrigation issues.
- Staff has been working on a number of contracts for services including noxious weed control, security system monitoring, nuisance animal control, and Central Business tree care through the Downtown Spokane Partnership. Staff also met with the Spokane Lawn Bowlers Association regarding their lease renewal.
- There have been a number of conversations with a group of street performers who feel our park rules prohibiting solicitation are unconstitutional. A low key demonstration was held in Riverfront Park, although this issue affects other park areas as well. Staff has also had discussion with the City Attorney's office as well.
- Interviews were held to fill a Laborer I positions that became vacant due to a promotion. A candidate has been selected and should be in the position in two weeks.
- The annual Arbor Day Celebration will be Saturday, April 24, 2010, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the John A. Finch Arboretum. The City of Spokane will be presented the National Arbor Day Foundation Tree City USA award for the seventh consecutive year. A Growth Award will also be presented in recognition of improvements in the Urban Forestry program.

Planning/Project Management:

- The Baker property house demolition is closer to being raised via a controlled blaze tended to by local Volunteer Fire Station 10. The date has been narrowed to late April. The target date is also in condition with a general neighborhood clean up of Palisades Park. The Department of Ecology has been contacted requesting information and process for sealing the two decommissioned wells and a well driller is currently looking at the wells. The City Office of Environmental Concerns has been contacted and Taylor Bressler has been investigating water runoff from shallow soils and general erosion concerns. A contractor will be preparing an estimate for the removal and disposal of remaining building materials such as metal and concrete from the Palisades Park area. Additional work at the site will include the relocation of a locked gate from its present relocation south to the juncture of Houston Road so there will be no dead end road into Rimrock Drive south.

- The new Aquatic Center Signs and Building Plaques are out for pricing. The sign manufacturer has been also asked to finalize the medallions (replacement logos on the existing Parks signs) for cost and application process.
- The Corbin Park Lighting project is being priced out by Avista. The Corbin Neighborhood and Corbin Homeowner's Association has been notified about the project and have been asked for input by April 19th.
- The Cannon Park Shelter is closer to being punch listed. The Neighborhood will get the BBQ(s) and use of the temporary tables as long as the tables stay in the park. A good deal has been found on some bulk bench parts that Park crews could install this summer.
- The North Bench project is back on track and staff has had two meetings the Neighborhood and the architect. There is a question of hassle free placement of the structure based on high water and proximity to sensitive areas needing the approval of Cultural interests. Two architects/designers have been consulted for input on appropriate design.
- Three Community Development projects are being bid, permitted and passing the CD requirements for process and proper contract language. All three of these projects, the Coeur d'Alene Overlook, the Ben Burr Trailhead and Peaceful Valley River Walk will be constructed this season.