
NEW SELF-GUIDED OLMSTED LEGACY HERITAGE TOUR NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

Via ongoing work by Spokane City-County Historic Preservation Officer Kristen Griffin, a brand new Olmsted Legacy Heritage Tour is now available online on the City of Spokane web site.

<http://www.historicspokane.org/HeritageTours/olmsted/olmsted-legacy.html>



Take a self-guided tour of Spokane's Olmsted-designed park system beginning with an overview of The Olmsted Legacy...

“Just over one hundred years ago, the city of Spokane owned less than 200 acres of land for public parks. This small area provided insufficient public space for the rapidly increasing population of the city, and civic leaders agreed to take swift action to prevent Spokane from becoming a victim of industrialization.”

On the Olmsted Legacy Tour you'll find a timeline as well as milestones related to formation of the first Park Board, passage of the first Parks improvement bond and detailing the Olmsteds' work from 1906 – 1918.

All of this in a very few short years resulted in Spokane hailed in newspapers as "park city..."

"The Spokane Daily Chronicle wrote in 1913: "Spokane leads all cities in the United States in number of parks...To Spokane belongs the title of being the Park City of the United States." At the time, the city owned proportionally one acre of park land for every 58 inhabitants, which compared to Portland's acre per 414 residents. Both the Chronicle and the Spokesman-Review praised the success and popularity of the parks, with headlines stating: "Spokane Takes its Supper under Trees in the Parks" and "Spokane is Grecian in love for outdoor recreation." Such positive public indicates that the Park Board was successful in implementing the Olmsted plan in an effort to beautify the city."

For more information:

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About the Olmsted Brothers

"In 1907, the newly created Spokane Park Board hired the nation's premier landscape architects, the Olmsted Brothers, to prepare a detailed, written report of recommendations. In 1908, John C. Olmsted visited Spokane. His report, with accompanying maps, was completed later that year and published in 1913 by the Board of Park Commissioners. The Olmsted Report proposed extensive parks and connecting boulevards. Such improvements, they argued, needed to happen quickly before available and inexpensive land disappeared. Aubrey L. White, Spokane's first park board president, followed the Olmsted's recommendations enthusiastically. He led the planting of 80,000 trees along Spokane streets, persuaded voters to approve a one-million dollar bond issue in 1910, and encouraged real estate developers such as Jay Graves to donate land to the city. The significance of the Olmsted report on guiding major land use decisions in Spokane cannot be underestimated and ultimately resulted in the marvelous park system residents enjoy today.

"The Olmsted Brothers completed numerous high-profile projects, many of which remain popular to this day, including park systems, universities, exposition grounds, libraries, hospitals, and state capitols. Notable commissions include the United States Capitol and White House Grounds, Great Smoky Mountains and Acadia National Parks, Yosemite Valley, New York's Central Park, Atlanta's Piedmont Park, and entire park

systems in cities such as Seattle, Boston and Louisville.” – Used with permission of HistoryLink.org

Spokane Parks and Recreation Today

City of Spokane Parks and Recreation is responsible for the professional management and prudent caretaking of more than 4,100 acres of developed parks and conservation land. The Golf Division maintains and operates four championship municipal golf courses, including Indian Canyon, Downriver, Esmeralda and the Creek at Qualchan. Park Operations has responsibility for the maintenance of all park land and park facilities in the City of Spokane including Riverfront Park, Manito Park, Gaiser Conservatory, the many city-wide gardens, and Finch Arboretum. Urban Forestry staff manages 50,000 street trees and another 28,000 trees on developed park land within the City of Spokane. The Recreation/Entertainment Division offers classes, special events, athletic leagues and activities for youth, teens, adults, seniors and persons with physical and mental disabilities. It also operates Riverfront Park attractions, activities and events, and provides support for community centers, senior centers, the Northeast Youth Center, Corbin Art Center and six outdoor aquatic centers. All facilities and programs are managed by a talented and energetic staff of 88 full-time employees, augmented with several hundred dedicated seasonal workers. For more information please visit www.spokaneparks.org

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