



# Monthly Executive Summary September 2010

City of Spokane  
Leroy Eadie  
Director of Parks and Recreation  
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### **Department highlights for the month include:**

- It is great to go out to the Dwight Merkel Sports Complex on a Saturday morning and see all the activity. The Parks and Recreation “Merkel” crew is doing a great job.
- Have made request to the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office for extension of the grant we have received from them for the Whitewater Park. Resolutions from both the City Council and the Parks and Recreation Board have given renewed support to move forward on realizing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for development of a Whitewater Park Environmental Impact Statement.
- The first phase of the Cannon Hill Pond Water Conservation project is completed by bringing clean storm water from Lincoln Street to the pond allowing us to be less reliant on the drinking water keeping the pond full. Parks and Engineering Services is now working together to release a RFP for sealing the pond.
- Parks and Recreation and SpokAnimal are closer to an agreement to operate a dog park at High Bridge Park. Once both parties agree the lease agreement it will be taken to the Park Board for approval.

### **Finance:**

- Presented proposed budget to Park Board Finance Committee and Full Park Board. The budget contains a 5% reduction in many programs and services.
- Submitted 2011 Proposed Budget to Budget Office by September 8 deadline.
- Tested the processing of Park documents in the latest version of the Financial Management System, which will go live in November.
- Responded to State auditor questions regarding the 2009 fiscal year, particularly regarding Aquatic Center cashiering.
- Received positive results from connectivity tests for Golf Point of Sale Upgrade.
- Started early, due to timely submission of paperwork, terminating temporary and seasonal employees. This was due to the closure of the Aquatic Centers, Riverfront Rides and the end of summer.

### **Golf/Administration:**

- All of our courses have completed their aerification for the fall. Although the process effects play at each particular course for a few days the process is extremely important to the long term care of our greens. It is important to complete this process while there is still enough warmth for the turf to recover. We are getting tremendous compliments regarding our courses, especially our greens which are helped by this process.
- This is a very busy time of year for clean up from the fall weather. Although beautiful, the changing trees create quite a lot of work for staff.

### **Marketing/Communications:**

- Fifteen News Releases Issued August 24 – September 24, 2010 including: Merkel Complex Update; Trail at Merkel Now Open; Be One of the First to See the Fall-Winter Program Guide; Moore Turner Home Garden Tour; Public Notice - Franklin Sports Complex Scheduling-CHANGES; New Fall Riverfront Park Hours of Operation; Friends of Manito Present the CHILDRENS RENAISSANCE FAIRE; Support Urban Forestry via Utility Bills; Camp Sekani Trail Run 2010; Riverfront Rotary Fountain Closes for the Season; Staking the Route for the Merkel Perimeter Trail; National Carousel Convention Coming to Spokane; Update on Trails at Merkel; Riverfront SkyRide Closed Sept.27 -October 1; Check Out These New Fall Programs at the Northeast Youth Center
- 11 e-Newsletters were issued in September including: Aug 24 Wellness Programs e-Newsletter - Try ZUMBA for Exercise in Disguise; Aug 24 Outdoor e-Newsletter - Get Ready for Bicycle Wine Tours with Spokane Parks and Recreation; Aug 31 Outdoor e-Newsletter - Enjoy a Labor-Free Labor Day with Spokane Parks and Recreation; Sep 8 Outdoor Program e-Newsletter – Fun to Last all Weekend with Spokane Parks & Rec; Sep 8 Sports & Fitness e-Newsletter - Try Volleyball - Fitness Classes - Youth Sports; Sep 9 Adult & Family e-Newsletter - Spend Your Time Wisely - Invest in Yourself - with Help from Spokane Parks & Recreation; Sep 14 Outdoor e-Newsletter- Join us for the Kayak and Canoe Poker Paddle; Sep 16 Outdoor e-Newsletter - Relax with Some Carefree Canoeing; Sep 21 Outdoor e-Newsletter- Last Weekend for a Canoe

- Trip; Sep 22 Sports & Fitness e-Newsletter - Free Your Chi - with Spokane Parks and Rec - seriously!; Sep 28 Outdoor e-Newsletter - Celebrate the Warm Weather with Spokane Parks and Recreation - still time to kayak, bike & canoe
- The October “Walk in the Park” program will feature Angel Spell and the Urban Forestry program with an emphasis on utility bill contributions, and Craig Butz interviewing Carl Strong with an update on Merkel & Youth Baseball fields renovation.
  - Park Board President’s Highlights for the month included:
    - The new Fall-Winter Recreation Activity Guide is now available online at our web site, [www.spokaneparks.org](http://www.spokaneparks.org).
    - Contributions to Urban Forestry can now be made via your utility billing. It’s quick and easy. Just look for your City of Spokane Utility Bill, check the box labeled “URBAN FOREST” and write in the amount you wish to contribute.
    - The Highbridge Park Overlook on Coeur d’Alene Street in Browne’s Addition just west of Coeur d’Alene Park has been completed.
    - Friends of the Moore-Turner Heritage gardens will conduct their fundraising garden tour on September 18.
    - The new unpaved trail at Dwight Merkel Sports Complex, approximately 1-mile long is now open, providing outstanding views of the Spokane River perfect for mountain biking, hiking, trail running or walking your dog.
    - August 28<sup>th</sup> was the last day of swimming for the 2010 season.
    - 16 splash pads throughout the City are scheduled to close September 12<sup>th</sup>.
    - The 2010 Sekani Trail Run takes place Saturday, October 16<sup>th</sup>. It features a 5k and a 10k, and is 100% dirt trail run above the Spokane River with great views of the city and surrounding area. Cost is \$17 if you register by October 13. After that the run costs \$22. Final registration closes on Thursday, October 14<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m.
    - The following are upcoming events: Fall Leaf Festival, 16-Oct; Ice Palace Opens 20-Oct; Japanese Garden closes 31-Oct; “Holiday Lights” on display December 10 – 19.

**Planning/Project Management:**

- The CD projects turned out well. There will be some change orders on other the Ben Burr and Coeur d’Alene overlook due to site conditions. New methods of applications for tree protection and preservation methods must be made available to architects, contractors and nursery supply sources so we have a consistent standard for all construction situations concerning new and established trees.
- Waiting to see what the final decision for the Corbin Lighting Project. The contractor is very eager to get going on the original plan. Staff is reluctant to have the contractor lay the conduit based on the original standards selected as the space will change according to the light head distribution differences and affect the over glare problem which we have specifically been asked to limit.
- Field review of the Ball Fields resulted in staff’s opinion that the contractor selected to do the actual field renovations and the interfacing of the new development against existing Park conditions has done an excellent job. Staff is expecting a good solution for the shade shelters at the various pools sites that have been scheduled for rework.
- The CD projects under construction and nearing completion are looking fine and have been successful in providing design issues identified. Garret Jones has had a very productive opportunity by experiencing the rare exchange of being responsible for site supervision and acting as liaison for contractors and the Department. This is a skill experience that is not normally available to a recent Landscape Architect graduate.
- The Peaceful Valley River Walk project is nearing the seeding stage of river bank and ground restoration. There will be a change order presented to correct the large amount of clear gravel that was buried on site as part of the site’s past uses. Top soil was used to cover the deposit site and provide a reasonable seed bed for the native grasses.
- A resident of the Peaceful Valley Neighborhood contacted the State regarding the possibility of being eligible for a grant that would provide the restoration of the native river bank areas. Grant funding may include funds for temporary support of the plantings with a system and permanent utilities. The design firm has already been hired to provide the design and permit work for the River Walk will be aiding Parks staff in development. Neighborhood input as prescribed by the grant application will be included. The Agency is eager to get a project for consideration and if the grant is approved, constitution would be completed by June 2011. There are some eligibility

questions that need to be understood and if the requirements are reasonable considering the potential of required formal matching and the long term care of the newly planted material.

### **Recreation/Entertainment Services:**

- **Pig Out in the Park** had an outstanding year. Event promoter Bill Burke successfully re-designed the event layout and the changes were well received. Considering the cooler weather Riverfront Park beverage sales were the *second best in the past five years*. Additionally, the *Sugar Shack* and *Blvd. Bistro* both hit *best sales records over the past 5 years*. Parking lot revenue grossed \$15,968.47 that compares to \$14,012.77 in 2009.
- **The Outdoor Program** has finished the 111 mile journey down the Spokane River with the *Spokane River Forum*. The two organizations have worked together organizing 17 trips down the entire length of the Spokane River. Many local residents and visitors have taken advantage of these trips, learning about local history, environmental issues and access points. The Outdoor Program supplied all kayaks, guides and transportation for these trips.
- The **Recreation Fall Activity Guide** came out the first week of September.
- The first **Oktoberfest** was held in Riverfront Park on September 24-26. This event was produced by the *Washington Beer Commission* and an estimated 3,500 people attended.

### **Urban Forestry:**

- Two appointments were made to the Citizen Advisory Committee, Gary Lauerman, representing Historic Preservation, and Richard Burris, representing community Assembly. Two vacancies remain on the committee; both are Member-at-Large positions.
- A citizen's appeal to the Urban Forest Tree Committee was successfully resolved.
- Content for the new policy *Guidelines for Infilling Street Trees in Spokane's Residential Areas* has been finalized by the Interdepartmental Discussions committee and is undergoing legal review and graphic design before publication.
- Each staff member took some amount of vacation time in September to restore sanity and a positive perspective.
- Attended the Sustainable September Kick-off Luncheon – September 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Visited and spoke at the following Neighborhood Council meetings:
  - Browne's Addition – September 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - Five Mile Prairie – September 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Rockwood – September 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Spoke at the Inland Northwest Business Alliance luncheon. – September 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Staff Arborists attended the Tree Climbing Training day presented by Vermeer Rocky Mountain and Sherrill Tree – September 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Staff Arborists attended the Pacific Northwest ISA Training Conference in Tacoma, WA, September 26-29, 2010.
- Officially joined Community Canopy, a tree care education and partnership of the cities of Coeur d'Alene, Hayden, Post Falls and the Spokane County Conservation District, with assistance from the University of Idaho Extension and Washington State University Extension. Their goal is to have healthy and sustainable community forests to provide maximum environmental and visual benefits.
- Met with the Lands Council and established an initial agreement to collaboration on the Education Grant Project and the Low Impact Development (LID) Project.
- **Upcoming Events:** Community Canopy's *Volunteers in Pruning (VIP)* training program: October 9<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 a.m. at the Spokane County Conservation District; *Fall Leaf Festival*: October 16<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., at Finch Arboretum; *Spokane's Urban Forestry Program – Inland Northwest Green Industry Series*: October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Spokane County Conservation District.