



PARKS & RECREATION

City of Cottage Grove, MN

2014 Annual Report

Mission Statement

To create and promote policies, programs, and places that enable active living to improve the health, well-being, education and vitality of our community.

Staff

Perhaps the department's best assets are the employees; consisting of 15 full-time staff, 2 part-time and over 80 seasonal. Although separated by six job specific divisions, we work as one department to fulfill our mission and proudly serve the community.

Volunteer Organizations

The Parks and Recreation Department relies on several organizations to deliver our mission, including but not limited to, Rec. Works, Park Rangers, Figure Skating Booster Club, Cottage Grove Athletic Association, Tree Trust, Friends of the Mississippi River, Scouts and religious/community organizations.

"The City of Cottage Grove Parks and Recreation Department connects our community by providing opportunities for citizens to gather, gain knowledge, and influence the future of our city along with constructing an environment for our children to play and grow making it possible to build a better village, together."

*- Andrea Cloutier
Resident*

Recreation

Parks

Ice Arena

Landscape Management

Horticulture

Forestry



Forestry Camp @ Hearthside Park

Ice Arena

The purpose of the ice arena is to keep a clean, safe, well maintained facility that serves the hockey, figure skating, broomball, recreational skating, and dry floor event needs of the community.



Park Hockey

Skating Lessons

The Ice Arena coordinates the Skate School which offers lessons to skaters of all abilities. In 2014, there were over 650 registrations. The Annual Ice Show, "Rock the School House", featured 55 skaters entertaining 600 spectators by exhibiting the skating skills they have learned.



Public Skate

Summer Hockey Academy

In its inaugural year, the Hockey Academy had 140 skaters ages 5-12. Participants were instructed by professional coaches and players for four weeks in June and July.



Consignment Sale

Dry Floor Events

Each year the ice is removed from the West Rink which allows for alternative programming uses on the 17,000 square foot concrete floor. Active Dog Sports Training held their first ever "K9 Nose Work Trials", and the Chamber of Commerce held the "Business Showcase" featuring 70 vendors and 600 visitors. Several athletic groups also used the space for their training needs.

Arena Maintenance

A refrigeration study was completed at the arena in an effort to identify the best options for replacing aging ice systems. The study is a continued effort to improve performance, operation and efficiency. The desired option was to maintain the current system for the next five years, re-evaluate, and begin to budget for a new system prior to mandated regulations.



Halloween Skate

Seasonal Staff

More than 5,000 hours of ice time was scheduled in 2014. To meet the demands, 3 full-time employees and 40 part-time employees manage the daily operations including building maintenance, concession stand operations, janitorial service, minor game officials, event operations and skate school instructors.

Recreation

Our division specializes in developing and implementing policies, programs, leagues and events for the community's enjoyment. In addition, we schedule city fields and recreation facilities while supporting the vision of the of the Parks and Recreation Department, Commission and City Council.

Skating Rinks & Sledding Hills

Warming Houses were operated at six sites in 2014. Over 8,700 visitors came to skate and/or sled from December to March. A new free-rink at Highlands was built to provide residents more opportunities for outdoor recreation this winter.

20th Annual Safety Camp

Our presenters have instilled the importance of safety to over 2,400 campers, age 8-11, since 1994. This collaboration between Public Safety, Recreation and the safety organizations is a priceless investment into our community.

Wizard of Oz Production

Locally Grown Theatre was the first group to use the City Hall Amphitheater; and use it they did! Thirty youth worked for a week to perform for over 300 actors on a Friday night. *Locally Grown Theatre* is a local, non-profit group that produces shows, stand-up comedy, and classes and has been a good partner for Recreation in Cottage Grove.



Safety Campers



Cowardly Lion and Crew

Inclusive Playground

This citizen task force made significant progress in 2014. Woodridge Park was chosen as the preferred site for an Inclusive Playground in Cottage Grove. Landscape Structures helped design the space and fundraising for the 2016 project has begun. When complete, this will be the largest playground in the community and will be a place of gathering and play for all abilities.



Preliminary Design



Peter Thompson Landscape

Park Improvements

Kingston & Peter Thompson

Existing plants and rock were removed at both sites and new plantings, boulders, decorative rock and mulch were installed to highlight the park entries. A small rain garden created near the entrance of Kingston Park also captures water run off to improve water quality.



Gateway North Open Space

Gateway North Open Space

Through partnerships with the Friends of the Mississippi River and DNR, native landscapes are being restored by removing buckthorn, prescribed burns and native seed redistribution. To improve recreational access to all the natural beauties of this space; a parking lot, trails, scenic overlooks and educational signage are currently being constructed.



River Oaks Scenic Overlook

River Oaks Scenic Overlook

The City, along with the Friends of the Mississippi River, are working hard to preserve these parks' native landscapes of oak savanna and dry bedrock bluff prairies. Buckthorn, sumac and other invasive species have been eradicated and native seedlings have be spread.



Hearthside Park Dugout

Pine Glen & Hearthside Ball Fields

With generous donations from the CG Baseball Association, park staff was able to pour concrete bench pads and fence lines. These improvements provide for both aesthetic and maintenance benefits to these high quality baseball fields.

Bike Park

Grant

Competing against five other cities in the Midwest Cottage Grove won, by popular vote, the Bell Bike Helmet grant for \$33,000 to complete the jump line section of the bike park.

Grand Opening

On June 26, the city celebrated the opening at its' first ever bike park. More than 300 enthusiasts enjoyed an evening of riding, demos by professionals, free pizza and a ribbon cutting by the Mayor. The park is located within West Draw Park.

Landscaping

The bike park entrance was made complete with landscaping beds, a raised garden, large shade pergola with picnic tables, donated signature tree, bike repair station and signage.

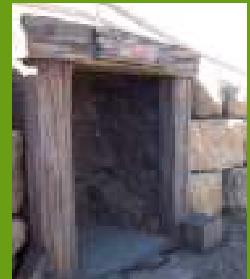


Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on the Bike Park in June

Park Improvements

Cedarhurst Meadows

On the eastern portion of this park an active play area was constructed with a playground, picnic shelter, sensory and edible gardens with a one mile recreational trail around a watershed basin. This is all located in East Ridge Woods and Cayden Glen neighborhoods.



Cedarhurst Mine

Oakwood Park

The 2014 World Amateur Disc Golf Tournament required improved trail surfacing, debris removal, tree grooming, tee pad and hole improvement, course realignment and signage. All of which improved the course not only for the tournament but for all disc golf users throughout the season.



Oakwood Tee Box



River Oaks Golf Course Gazebo

Park Improvements

River Oak Gazebo

Park staff helped River Oaks Golf Course beautify their outdoor wedding venue by designing and installing a new retaining wall, flagstone walk way, landscaped seating area and perennials.

Skateboard Park at Hamlet

To improve safety and rider experience, all surfacing at the Hamlet Skateboard Park was replaced in 2014. This improvement to the park is the first step in what is intended to be a series of improvements to the Skateboard Park over the next two years.

Subdivision Tree Planting

Two subdivisions off 70th Street were lined with tree plantings in 2014. This included 100 trees of diverse species along the boulevards and 50 trees/shrubs in new city parks.

Donations

Field maintenance at Pine Glen Park from the **CGAA: \$1,300**

Set of soccer goals at Kingston Park from the **CGAA: \$2,100**

Set of soccer goals at Kingston Park from the **Jennifer Johnson Family: \$2,100**

Picnic Table at Kingston Park In memory of **Jennifer Johnson: \$600**

Mini Mite Hockey Nets at the Ice Arena from the **CGAA: \$1,000**

Restoration and preservation work at River Oaks Scenic Overlook and the Gateway North Open Space from the **Friends of the Mississippi River**

Safety Camp donations from **3M, LSP Cottage Grove L.P., Northern Tier Energy, Tennis Sanitation, La' Pooch Salon, Super Mom's and more: \$4,555**

Forestry Services

Forestry Camp

Kids at Hearthside Park had the chance to learn from City Forester Steve Bowe about plant identification and how to keep trees growing and healthy. We also viewed forestry equipment and made wooden stilts from a tree branch and walked the small forest at Hearthside to discover the variety of species growing on the site.

Ash Trees

The City continues to manage its large ash tree population for the possible threat of emerald ash borer. The Forestry division removed 100 poorly conditioned ash trees, replanted 110 trees of diverse species, and treated 1,600 ash trees with a trunk injection that will save the tree from damage or death by emerald ash borer.

Urban Forestry Management

Residents submitted over 800 work orders 2014. These requests included trimming, storm damage, removing of dead trees, tree illness related questions, questions regarding contractual work being done throughout the community and more. Our Forester who is a Certified Arborist provides services to the community with an end goal of protecting and enhancing our urban forest.

While protecting our natural areas the forestry division did some soil trenching to help prevent the spread of Oak Wilt in Oakwood Park. We trenched approximately 1400 linear feet along the NE corner of the park where Oak Wilt was discovered in 2013. The trenching will continue to occur as needed to limit the spread of the disease through grafted roots.

Tree Trimming

Park staff trimmed 500 boulevard and park trees while managing contracted services for trimming of over 1,300 trees during 2014. Tree trimming is a necessary service done to improve shape, form, and vigor of each tree. The trimming process removes dead branches, broken branches and crossing branches as well as those branches that are growing into other trees or growing down towards the ground/street. Removal of the lower branches impeding sight lines or drive lanes from the driveway and down the street helps in preventing vehicle accidents and equipment damage to larger vehicles such as fire, trash, delivery or plow trucks. Without tree trimming the life span of a tree is shortened by making it more susceptible to disease, damage and pest infestation.



Tree Produced Products



Tree Trimming

2014 Eagle Scout Projects

Each year the city partners with local youth to improve community parks on their way to achieving Eagle Scout status.



Horseshoe Pits @ Arbor Meadows Park



Swift Bird House @ Woodridge Park



Park Benches @ Oakwood Park



Bike Rack @ Public Works

Parks Commission

The Parks Commission is the 9-seat advisory board that supports the Parks and Recreation Department's mission by providing a continual analysis of programs and services to meet the citizen's needs. The Commission also seeks to protect the local environment in order to enhance the quality of life for both present and future generations in Cottage Grove. Without this group of volunteer support, the Recreational system you see today would not be possible.

Making History...

The PHD Baseball program played the Guinness Book of World Record's Longest Baseball Game at Park High School in August. The game was played for 63 hours and logged 293 innings, 575 runs and more than 12,000 pitches. Recreation and Ice Arena staff teamed up with PHD to coordinate facility usage as well as event marketing. The event was not only successful in attaining the world record, but did so in support of the ALS Association.