



TO: Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Yvette Bowden, Director, Parks and Recreation
Therron Dieckmann, Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation
Jeff Haley, Parks Planning Manager, Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT: Consent Agenda

DATE: July 27, 2015

A. Minutes Approval of minutes from June 22, 2015

B. Parks and Recreation Development Update

Planning

The following projects are currently in the planning process that involves research, alternatives development, public involvement and development of planning documents to guide decision making and future capital improvements:

- **Asset Management:** The department has been working on a multi-year process to create, teach, and implement an Asset Management Plan (AMP). This plan will help to provide data and support to all facets of the department and foster decision making based upon factual data and prioritized resources. The AMP is an initiative under the 2014 Master Plan Theme 2: Taking Care of What We Have. The AMP objectives include:
 - Cataloguing and electronically capturing all major assets of the system;
 - Identify criteria for prioritizing maintenance and capital improvement using asset management best practices; and
 - Provide economic strategy for life cycle and priority funding to inform the CIP and R&R processes.

Staff has completed or is near completion on the following items:

- The acquisition and installation of GIS based Asset Management Software for pilot trial- the intent is to have the first group of field staff using this beginning in fall 2015;
- An inventory of all major assets throughout the system (not including buildings) – data was captured and classified into the GIS database to input into the new software;
- Current asset value and deficiency figures by major asset type; and
- Cost Estimating protocols and Project Management Approach for future projects.

The AMP, in conjunction with the recently completed General Maintenance and Management Plan, the Facilities Strategic Plan, Urban Forest Plan, and other strategic practices will help the department to have a comprehensive understanding of the system inventory/needs, maintenance and replacement requirements, resource allocation, asset prioritization, commitments for future projects among other strategic practices. The plan is fully implement the Asset Management Plan by the next year's round of CIP and Budget cycles.



- **Facilities Strategic Plan:** The Facilities Strategic Plan is a multi-departmental effort between Parks and Recreation, Facilities and Asset Management and Human Services. All three departments will be contributing to the funding of the plan. For the Parks and Recreation Department, the need to complete the Facilities Strategic Plan was highlighted in the 2014 Master Plan as an initiative under Theme 2: Taking Care of What We Have. Objectives for the plan include:
 - Assessing the condition of existing facility systems and operations;
 - Determining the needs developing a capital investment strategy; and
 - Developing a maintenance and management plan for the facilities.

The Facilities Strategic Plan will provide data and recommendations that will guide departments in how to effectively manage the facilities in terms of regular improvements, on-going preventative maintenance and major repairs based on conditions and life-cycle of assets. This plan will also inform the departments of recommended upgrades that will encourage community use and provide amenities comparable to other communities.

The plan is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2016. The PRAB will be updated periodically throughout the plan development process.

- **Nature Play Symposium:** The department hosted a free two-day Nature Play Symposium with Robin Moore and Louise Chawla, Ph.D. in June. Mr. Moore is a world-renowned nature play educator from North Carolina State University and Dr. Chawla is a professor at CU Boulder's Environmental Design School and works with Growing Up Boulder (GUB). They shared their expertise on the importance of nature play opportunities in the urban setting during public and staff workshops, a lecture and a panel discussion with local experts.



The lecture and panel discussion was aired live on Channel 8. A [full recording of the lecture and panel discussion](#) as well as the [Nature Play Symposium Final Report](#) are available.



- **Valmont City Park Concept Plan Update:** After a year-long planning, design and community outreach process, in February the PRAB approved an update to the concept plan for Valmont City Park. The process for updating the concept plan for the city park included extensive discussions with surrounding neighborhoods, stakeholders, sports user groups, the PRAB and others. The feedback directed the selection of program elements, their proportions and their siting.

The [final approved concept plan for Valmont City Park](#) consists of the following areas:

- *Unprogrammed Passive Parkland:* Areas that are dedicated to non-programmed activities that are more passive in nature, including open turf areas, multi-use trails and paths, areas and facilities for picnicking
- *Reserved Acres:* Areas of the park that are dedicated to providing transitions between some uses and adjacent park properties, such as buffers and other setbacks, and road system
- *Programmed Athletic Fields:* Fields that accommodate a variety of programmed diamond and rectangular field activities. Primarily practice fields. Fields would be programmed to also allow for unscheduled, open use and would consist of one natural turf rectangular field, three natural turf diamond fields, and synthetic



turf field sized to accommodate two rectangular fields with an overlay for one diamond field for high school baseball and other activities.

- Disc Golf Area: A professionally designed 20.75 acre course including mounds, trees, and other ‘hazards’ for an enhanced playing experience. The 20.75 acre area would be primarily for disc golf use. However, it includes approximately two acres of ‘flexible’ area that can accommodate opportunities for Nordic skiing and cross country running at specified times.
- Unprogrammed Active Recreation: Areas of the park that facilitate a variety of active recreation opportunities that are unprogrammed and unscheduled. They accommodate opportunities for nature play, traditional playgrounds and universally accessible playgrounds, and opportunities for a running track, skate park, emerging sports, and court sports.
- Community Facilities and Parking: These areas provide a wide variety of community related facilities such as, an aquatics facility with outdoor water play, community buildings, restrooms, concessions and other food services, a nature education center, and neighborhood commercial.



Design

The following projects are currently in the design phase involving the community in developing final plans for critical improvements to park amenities:

- **University Hill School Play Yard Grant:** The department partnered with University Hill Elementary School on a \$100k grant from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) that was approved for improvements to the school play yard and opening it to the public outside of school-use hours. The project was kicked-off in fall 2014 with a volunteer project where CU students helped to build a new pathway.

The project has been delayed and an extension request was approved due to a bond approval for BVSD. There is concern that the bond projects will conflict with the grant approved plan. The project is delayed until both BVSD bond improvements and the GOCO grant project may be coordinated efficiently and appropriately. The revised schedule would delay construction until summer 2016.



Construction

The following projects were recently completed or are under construction and anticipated to be completed by late spring 2015:

- **Burke Park / Horizon K-8 School Play Yard Grant:** Construction at Burke Park / Horizon K-8 playground was completed in fall 2014. The playground is now open to the public when school is not in session. The completion of the project represents over a year of planning, design and working with a wide cross section of the community including Horizons K-8 School, Growing Up Boulder, CU students and staff, GOCO, and others. The final report and request for reimbursement of the \$100k grant has been submitted to GOCO.



- Columbia Cemetery:** The Columbia Cemetery has had several bond projects progressing over the past three years. This spring, the projects were brought to a conclusion with the renovation of the historic maintenance shed. Working with the State Historical Society, the shed was renovated by removing the exterior plywood and other materials that had been installed in the 1980s. The shed was lifted off the ground in order to pour a concrete floor slab and then lowered back onto the new floor. The original wood panel siding was renovated along with the installation of a new double wide door and roof. The structure was painted to match the original building color. Other projects in the Cemetery included installing a new ornamental metal fence along the west property line with the adjacent school, installing a new irrigation system, repairing damaged grave markers and filling sunken grave sites.



- Crestview Park:** The renovation of Crestview Park in North Boulder is now complete. New improvements include a new playground, a picnic shelter, four new benches, bear resistant trash and recycling cans, bike racks, new ADA concrete sidewalks, a soft surface walking trail, new turf and natural grass areas and several new trees and irrigation. The department will celebrate the re-opening of this voter-approved Bond Initiative project on August 5th.



- Eben G. Fine Park** – Final flood damage repairs are complete at Eben G. Fine Park. Repairs included slope stabilization with rock rip rap and a new 36” storm pipe from the toe of the slope to under the multi-use path and out to the creek. Additionally, turf and irrigation installation is complete.



- **Evert Pierson Memorial Kids’ Fishing Ponds:** The Evert Pierson Memorial Kids’ Fishing Ponds were heavily damaged in the 2013 flood. Working with both FEMA and city funding, the ponds have been revitalized and will reopen to the public on August 1st. Prior to reopening, over 500 trout will be stocked in the pond. The ponds have been reconstructed in such a way to ensure continual water flow through from the creek to help improve the water quality and temperature for the fish and overall environmental health.

The soft path around the pond has been improved along with new fishing piers, bridge and overlook. Additional large boulders have been installed around the ponds along with a stepping stone path across the pond at the west end. Several new trees have been planted and irrigation installed. A re-opening celebration of the ponds will occur in late August, including a thank you to the city’s long-standing and supportive partners of the ponds.



- **Harlow Platt Park Restroom and Shelters:** Work on this project will begin at the end of July and will focus on the construction of two new picnic shelters, a playground shade cover and a restroom at this heavily used park site. In addition to the new shelters, the warming hut at the edge of the lake will be removed as this structure was deemed to have surpassed its useful life. The new shelters will be located outside of the wetland buffers.

The new restroom will provide a much needed asset near the picnic shelters and playground. Work is anticipated to be completed by late fall 2015.

- **Knollwood Tennis Courts:** The Knollwood Tennis Courts located at 289 Spruce Street were heavily damaged in the 2013 Flood. It is one of the final remaining FEMA related projects. FEMA will assist with some funding for this project along with city funds. The intent of the project is to raise the tennis courts two feet higher than the current level and install a post tension concrete slab court with new fencing and equipment. Raising the courts will provide an improved drainage system that will help protect the adjacent neighbors. A low concrete wall will be installed along the south edge to prevent water from draining into the adjacent property. A concrete swale and drainage pipe to the adjacent creek will also be installed. Additionally, a new ADA accessible walkway ramp and stairs will also be installed to make access to the courts easier. This project is currently out to bid with proposals due in late July. Construction on this project is anticipated to start in late August and be completed by late fall 2015.
- **Pearl Street Mall Irrigation:** The Pearl Street Mall irrigation system underwent a renovation project to enhance and ensure the long-term health and viability of the Pearl Street Mall. Improvements on the 1400 block of Pearl Street include a new irrigation system to provide better water service delivery for more efficient use of water resources with upgrades including water saving components and a centralized computer program. Other aesthetic improvements include the replacement of distressed trees, addition of new soil and replacement of old tree grates to address tripping hazards and tree health.



- **Youth Corps:** The Parks and Recreation Department is working with the Boulder County Youth Corps this summer on a number of projects. The goal of working with the Youth Corps is to teach participants (ages 14-17) leadership skills and working skills. It is an excellent opportunity for the youth as well as city staff to work together to



accomplish projects that benefit the community. The projects include building wood crib steps at the Valmont Disc Golf Course to help prevent erosion on hillsides, constructing a new small picnic area at the Boulder Reservoir, filling in sunken gravesites and reseeding at the Columbia Cemetery and removing noxious weeds at various sites. Each project also includes an educational aspect and learning for the youth.

Urban Resources

The following initiatives are currently underway:

- **Birds of Special Concern Closures** – An annual effort to protect nesting sites of bird species listed by various local, state and federal agencies as species of concern.

The program has seen its best year in volunteer participation and reporting and is in addition to our returning volunteers like Gary Rabourn who visits the Boulder Reservoir almost daily and is highlighted in the *Summer 2015 Volunteer Spotlight*.

Despite various closure violations and some failed nesting attempts including the osprey near the model airport along Dry Creek and a harrier nest in Little Dry Creek, there have been successes such as bitterns in each closure, a successful osprey nest at Little Dry Creek/Windsurfer's Point and a new harrier nest on OSMP's section of Little Dry Creek at Boulder Valley Ranch. A lot of other bird activity has also been reported by volunteers at the Boulder Reservoir. A [summary of nesting success and species](#) documented was provided to the volunteers and is attached.

- **Other Species of Special Concern** – An annual effort to protect breeding sites of species listed by various local, state and federal agencies as species of concern.

The field crew began monitoring frog species early in the season at the various wetland locations throughout the department's system. Chorus frogs (native) and bullfrogs (non-native) were identified at that time. As field staff became busy with numerous prairie dog projects and compliance with the state weed law, monitoring for frogs was impacted and staff has been unable to monitor lately or positively determine the presence of Northern Leopard Frogs (a native species of concern). Staff has maintained the barrier around the previous Northern Leopard Frog location in hopes of their presence and in order to maintain the habitat for future years.

A spiny softshell turtle was reported at Coot Lake and confirmed by the Conservation Ecologist this month. In discussing with Boulder County Wildlife and Colorado Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (COPARC) staff, it was determined that records for this species in this area are "sparse and rare" although the species is native to Colorado. Staff is working to determine appropriate management actions that include the possibility of trapping and tagging. More information on the species can be found at: <http://www.coparc.org/spiny-softshell.html>.

- **Prairie Dog Management** – An annual program to monitor populations, manage colonies and minimize impacts to the species and to the department assets while working within the city’s Urban Wildlife Management Plan and ordinances.

There are currently eight developed or semi-developed priority sites in the system where prairie dogs are presently, or have the potential to become, in conflict with existing or planned site use. These priority sites are: Valmont City Park, East Boulder Community Park, Foothills Community Park, Gerald Stazio Ball Fields, Tom Watson Park, Pleasant View Soccer Complex, the Boulder Reservoir south shore and dam buffers, and Holiday Park. Each of these sites has fencing in place to deter movement and the field crew monitors the sites for encroachment and maintains these barriers at least monthly from May through October.

Prairie dog activity is often cyclical based upon many factors. Currently, colonies seem to be active with an increase in movement. Due to breaches at many of our sites, staff has increased monitoring, barrier maintenance efforts and has been performing passive relocation under permits from the Urban Wildlife Coordinator. The dam face buffers at the Boulder Reservoir have also seen increased activity that has resulted in an increased use of lethal control per the Urban Wildlife Management Plan. Staff is performing an assessment of the sites and barriers to determine priorities for replacement of vinyl with metal and areas where new barrier may need to be installed.

Staff has also been working with consultants to determine necessary steps for prairie dog management as it relates to the future development of Valmont City Park.



Department staff also manage prairie dog colonies in the natural areas at Area III and the Boulder Reservoir (western, northern and eastern sections). All of these sites are mapped annually and an annual census of the Boulder Reservoir colonies is performed each summer.

- **Foothills Prairie Dog Relocation** – A joint Parks and Recreation and Open Space and Mountain Parks Department prairie dog relocation project. Staff finalized a post-relocation plan that outlines the monitoring protocols, next steps and restoration of the site throughout 2015. In March, department staff noted approximately three prairie dogs on department land. Per the post-relocation plan, the area was lethally controlled. While that area is currently inactive, staff has continued to

monitor and recently identified multiple areas on OSMP property with prairie dog activity. Staff is currently working with the city's Urban Wildlife Coordinator and assisting OSMP with next steps which, per the plan, would involve lethal control.

- **Thunderbird Lake Monitoring** – An annual effort to manage the lake conditions. Biohabitats Inc. was hired to evaluate water level data and will provide a short report later in the year updating the current conditions of the lake and next steps to long term maintenance per Council's recommendations. No water has been purposefully added or released in 2015. Ottertail Environmental Inc. continues to add microbes to the lake to deter algal blooms and to monitor lake conditions. In June, the aeration system malfunctioned resulting in a fish die off. Staff was able to order and install new parts and get the system running. Staff has been working with Colorado Parks and Wildlife on fish population management.
- **Integrated Pest Management** – An annual effort to restore native areas, control noxious weeds and comply with regulations.

The Urban Resources group remains committed to complying with the Colorado Noxious Weed Act and providing quality natural habitat throughout the system. An integrated approach (biological, cultural, chemical and mechanical) is utilized to maximize effectiveness while working within the city's ordinances and programs. Staff has worked with other work groups, departments, agencies and volunteer organizations to accomplish these objectives. For state listed species such as Dyer's weed, myrtle spurge and mediterranean sage, which are spring/summer bloomers, staff has completed the first round of control over all of the department's nearly 1200 acres of land. Staff will continue to monitor and control for the species since it will bloom again within the same season. Staff will then work to control state listed species that are summer/autumn bloomers such as hairy willow herb and purple loosestrife.



An example of the integrated efforts for 2015: The natural area at the Pleasant View Fields Sports Complex consists of multiple acres of wetland and a riparian area along Four-Mile Canyon Creek as seen on the map below. This area was impacted by the 2013 flood. As predicted, several weed species were promoted due to the disturbance including various state listed species. Urban Resources staff



coordinated with Open Space and Mountain Parks and Greenways staff to determine restoration activities. The site has been grazed by goats (biological control) and will likely have another autumn grazing. It has also been planted with various native seed species and plugs of five native species of sedge and rush (cultural). It has been chemically treated for invasive species such as crack willow and mechanically treated for other species. The site is already showing improvement with many native species present.



C. Parks and Recreation Operations Update

- **2015 Star Spangled Splash Results**

The “Star Spangled Splash” event at the Boulder Reservoir continues to evolve as a community building effort. Over the past three years, the department has continued to program the family-friendly activity seeking ways to enhance awareness, affordability and link to the department’s other services. Responsive to PRAB’s suggestion, pricing for 2015 was adjusted. In addition, the department secured notable local talent, a promotions partner, in-kind and cash sponsors, partnered with the PLAY Boulder Foundation to offer on-site “cool zone” alcohol beverages by local brewery, FATE, and offered discounting for pass holders. Just over 1,500 people attended (excluding staff, sponsors and vendors) with the vast majority being children who were admitted for free. The “price per car of 5 passengers” proved highly popular. The event did slightly better than break even financially (a \$22K

improved performance over 2014) and garnered prominent coverage in the Daily Camera. It should also be noted that we enjoyed high visitation at both Spruce and Scott Carpenter pools that day.

- **Events Management and Community Outreach**

The department is enhancing its practices related to events management and community partnerships. In addition to bringing on Teresa Jackson (Events Manager) and Margo Josephs (Manager of Community Outreach and Partnerships) earlier this month, the department is developing a comprehensive Communications and Engagement Plan for 2016. The plan, intended to improve the impact and efficiency of departmental events, enhance internal and external system-wide messaging, and heighten community partnership ability, is directly linked to our Master Plan “Community Building” objectives. The plan will also seek to support and align with the city’s new Neighborhood initiative and further inform the department’s relationship with the Boulder PLAY Foundation.