

Our Mission

To promote the health and wellbeing of our community, environment and economy by facilitating recreational opportunities and coordinating the enhancement of our parks, facilities and natural resources now and in the future.



Our Vision

Continue to be the central driving force in strengthening the heritage of a healthy, active community for future generations by continuing the path of improving and enhancing our parks and facilities; protecting our natural resources; and developing partnerships to deliver recreation programs and services.

Contents



Letter from Parks Manager	1
Letter from Parks Commission	2
About Us	3
Budget	4

What's New

Hartley Park/Chester Creek	5
Lafayette/Park Point./Morgan Park Recreation Software	6
Chambers Grove/ Ely's Peak	7
DWP Roundhouse/Duluth Traverse New Staff/ GreenCorps	8
Recycling/Lakewalk	
Miller Creek FEMA	9
Quarry Park	10

Community

Volunteer Programs	11
Senior Programming	12-13
Sports and Recreation	14
Youth Programming	15-17
Golf Update	18
Permits & Special Events	19-20
Parks Fund Grant Awards	21
Chester Creek Concerts/ Movies in the Park	22
Zoo Update	23

Parks Planning

Mini-Master Plans/Grant Summary	24
SLRC Update/SLR Natural Area	25

Glimpse Ahead

Lincoln Park/Grand Avenue Nordic Center	26
Cross City Trail/Stewart Creek Bridge/ DWP Infrastructure/Clyde Connector	27
Lower Chester/EAB Grants/ Storm Restoration	28
Western Waterfront Park & Trail	29
Community Action Duluth/ Park Maintenance Documentation/ Lakewalk Mini-Master Plan	30
Park Partners	31



Public Administration Department Parks and Recreation Division

City Hall - Ground Floor • 411 West First Street • Duluth, Minnesota • 55802
218-730-4300 • www.duluthmn.gov/parks/



April 10, 2018

Dear Duluth City Residents,

This annual report highlights many of our great accomplishments in 2017 and those made by our dedicated partners, volunteers, and staff. Our parks are long established and numerous, consisting of expansive beaches, historic sites, campgrounds, nature parks, community parks, and an impressive network of trails. We could not provide quality access to our many locations without the support of our many wonderful community partners!

The offerings within our parks system continue to expand. Within these pages are examples of new assets and resources, and the adoption technology to improve access. We also highlight many longstanding traditions that have become part of our culture, such as the Chester Bowl Concert Series. As well as our senior program, which engaged nearly 18,000 participants in 2017. We also highlight the many efforts of our program staff to provide access to skating, play gym, beach events, flag football, and many other efforts.

Equally important is the stewardship effort conducted by our planning staff to safeguard and restore cherished resources. Park Maintenance staff consistently demonstrate a herculean effort to mow, maintain, and conduct snow removal services on our far-reaching system. I would also like to acknowledge, with heartfelt appreciation, the City's Property and Facilities Management staff who provide expert advice and guide many parks construction projects to successful completion.

Our division bid farewell to staff who are onto new adventures and welcome new additions. Nick Budnik, the Recreation Specialist, and Andy Holak, the Trails Coordinator both excitedly embrace the challenges before us with zeal and determination.

Our year was one of many proud accomplishments and wonderful partnerships, but this is not to say that 2017 was without its challenges. Fiscal realities challenge our staff to be more strategic and innovative. The City's golf program is both a success in providing the affordable access and a challenge to forge a path forward with service level that is practical and sustainable. Of course, there was the gale that struck on October 27th, causing extensive damage along the shoreline.

Looking ahead brings many wonderful opportunities for new parks, programs, and partnerships. We also face challenges, specifically the vastness of our resources and infrastructure. In brief, Duluth Parks and Recreation needs to define a sustainable position with its assets and determine what the community needs from us to be moving forward. All while not losing sight of the many wonderful resources, offerings, and opportunities that have defined what it means to live in Duluth.

Although I had not mentioned it earlier, I am also new to Duluth Parks and Recreation, arriving only in mid-November. I have a tremendous appreciation for all of the wonderful work that has been done by staff and by those who preceded me here. Duluth is a city of both beauty and resiliency; all of us in the Parks and Recreation Division look forward to continuing to make our parks system a shining example of our wonderful community!

I look forward to seeing you in the parks,

William Roche, CPRE



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March 29, 2018

April. Lovingly referred to as "shoulder season" or "mud season" by outdoor enthusiasts, is a fitting time for the City to hold its Parks and Recreation Commission Annual Meeting. We reflect on the past year, celebrate accomplishments, and look to the year ahead.

At our Annual Meeting, Tony Dierckins, author of *Duluth's Historic Parks: Their First 160 Years*, will highlight the history of Duluth's Parks System. This book, and various public meetings over the past year show a community that is passionate about public spaces. This passion is evident in the countless hours we spend building and maintaining trails, cleaning up trash, teaching kids to play baseball, soccer, mountain biking and cross country skiing, and of course enjoying these spaces for our own pleasure. This passion is a great asset for the City, even if it sometimes means four-plus hour Parks Commission meetings! This passion, when translated into service, yields remarkable community results.

Some notable achievements in the past year:

- The Duluth Cross Country Ski Club raised \$500,000 for the new Nordic Ski Center at Spirit Mountain! This was an all-volunteer led effort.
- The Chester Bowl Improvement Club is planning for the update and expansion of Thom Storm Chalet. Each year they break records in the number of season pass holders, while serving over 65 kids a day through their summer adventure program.
- The Cyclists of Gitchee Gummi Shores logged an impressive 5000+ hours of volunteer service building and maintaining over 89 miles of trail.
- Youth-Outdoors Duluth, a collaboration of youth development and outdoor user groups, trained 115 positive adult role models, engaged with almost 750 people at community events, and got almost 65 youth on the rock, on bikes, on a trail or in a boat.

The City and our partners continue to make progress on realizing the vision of the St. Louis River Corridor Initiative to: support environmental restoration; enrich neighborhood quality of life; attract new home buyers; establish new visitor destinations; stimulate appropriate development; and leverage additional funding. This progress was evident at a 2017 City Council meeting, as a number of young professionals testified in support of the Duluth Traverse Mini-Master Plan and their decision to live in Duluth because of our natural spaces and trails.

While there is much to celebrate, substantial challenges remain. Our city-owned golf courses is front and center this year, as we work with Friends of Duluth Golf and other community members to craft a sustainable path forward that addresses capital and operating needs. This spring, we will further assess the October storm damage to the Lakewalk and Brighton Beach. Record high water levels in Lake Superior, the impacts of the 2012 flood, and wetter summer and drier winters show the impact of climate change in our parks system and community. Sustainability has long been a concept imbedded in park plans, and climate resiliency is emerging as a critical element that must also be included.

We celebrate the good work that has happened in the past year and get excited about the work ahead. Together, in partnership, we continue to make our parks places of inspiration and renewal.

Sincerely,

Erik Torch, President
Duluth Parks & Recreation Commission

About Us

Parks & Recreation Staff

William Roche—Manager
Theresa Bajda—Administrative Specialist
Katie Behling - Wedding Coordinator
Nick Budnik—Recreation Specialist
Kraig Decker—Permits Coordinator
Diane Desotelle—Natural Resources Coordinator
Andy Holak—Trails Coordinator
Emily Kamatchus—Project Technician
Lisa Luokkala—Project Coordinator
Theresa Mellinger—Senior Coordinator
Pamela Page—Recreation Specialist
Jim Shoberg—Project Coordinator
Cheryl Skafte—Provisional Assistant Manager/Volunteer Coordinator
Jesse Hennen—Ava Heinrich—Lindsay Bushnel (part-time Recreation Leaders)

Park Maintenance Staff

Dale Sellner—Buildings & Grounds Supervisor
Billy Davis—Lead Worker
Bob Dunsmore—Lead Worker
Doug Rosas—Lead Worker
Jack Schade—Lead Worker
Clark Christenson—City Forester
Larry Abrahamson—Nola Honkala
Robert Bugbee—Kevin Jentoft
Dawn Daniels—Todd Kobus
Jennifer Monroe—Dena Petite
Darin Franckowiak—Tammy Gosline
Benjamin Sosniecki—Todd Halbakken
Dale Stanek—Greg Hanson
Cory Wagner—Joanne Highlan
Wendy Wohlwend—Jessica Schoonover
John Capra—Don Kienholz
John Capra

Property & Facilities Staff

Erik Birkeland—Manager
Danielle Erjavec—Property Services Specialist
Rob Hurd—Construction Project Coordinator

Parks Commission

Erik Torch—President, Community Education
Amanda Crosby—Vice President, Commission on Disabilities
Tjaard Breeuwer—Secretary, District #1
John Schmidt—At Large
Dudley Edmondson—At Large
Dennis Isernhagen—District #2
Britt Rohrbaugh—District #3
Tiersa Wodash—District #4
Dean Vogtman—District #5
Michael Schraepfer—Land Management
Kristin Bergerson—Recreation Professional

Non-voting Members

Em Westerlund—City Council Liaison
Frank Jewell—St. Louis County Board Liaison
Art Jonhston—ISD #709 Board Liaison

To act in an advisory capacity to the Mayor, City Council, the Parks and Recreation Division and other agencies and organizations regarding matters related to Duluth Parks and Recreation programs and facilities.

Urban Forest Commission

Christine Penney—Chair Person
Liz Johnson—Vice Chair Person
Susan Staninch—Commissioner
Mike Pennington—Commissioner
Judy Gibbs—Commissioner
Jim Lemmerman—Commissioner

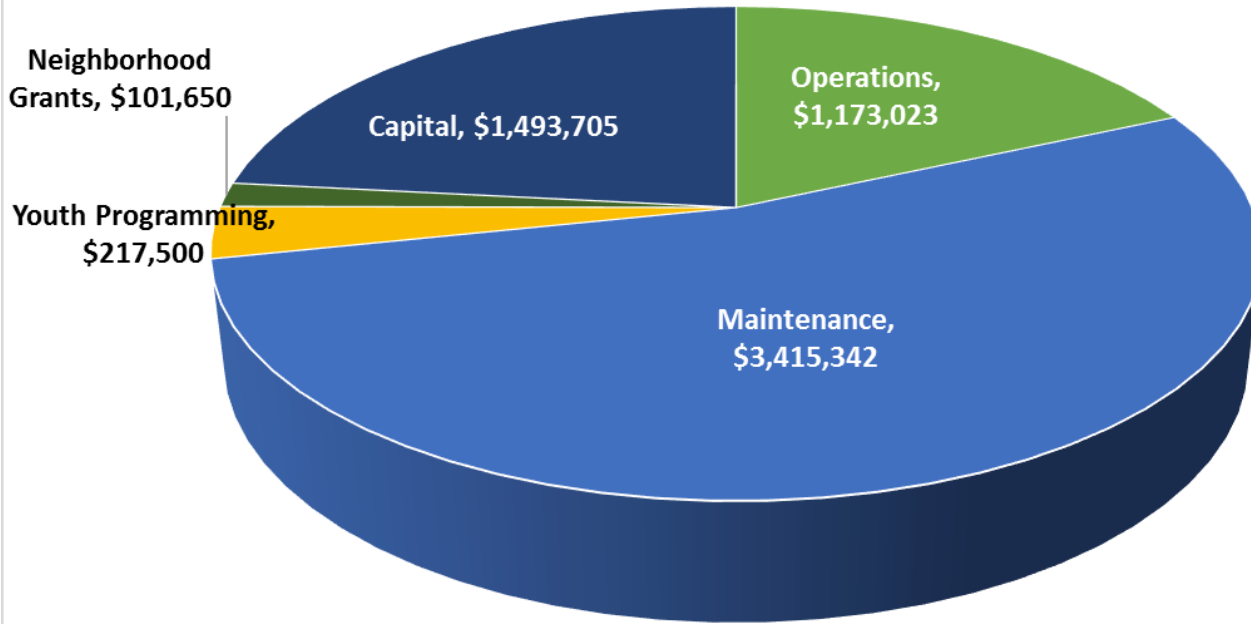
Non-voting Members

Em Westerlund—City Council Liaison

To educate and inform the public and act as an advocate for preservation, protection and promotion of Duluth's urban forest and to advise the City on the management of this forest.

Budget

2017 Parks Expenditures



Operations

- Wages & benefits
- Equipment & supplies
- Marketing & printing
- Vehicles & mileage
- Membership & dues
- Special Events & concerts
- Senior programming
- Training & education
- Parks Commission

Maintenance

- Maintenance Staff
- Cleaning, repairs & maintenance at parks, fields & community centers
- Invasive species removal team
- Training, certifications & licenses

Capital

- Community Center upgrades
- Trail repair & improvements
- Hartley
- Lafayette restrooms

Neighborhood Grants

- Partner with the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation to offer grants to neighborhood community groups in the spring and fall
- Maximum amount per grant is \$5,000

Youth Programming

- Myers-Wilkins Community School-Youth Services Program
- Boys and Girls Club of Duluth - Out of School Youth Programming
- Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation - Grant admin support services
- Duluth Area Family YMCA - Gary New Duluth Out of School Programming
- Duluth Area Family YMCA - After School Youth Programming
- Woodland Hills-NYS - Out of School Time Program
- Valley Youth Center - Out of School Time Program-West Duluth
- YMCA Youth development services

What's New



Hartley Park Improvements

Construction of three parking access areas at Hartley Road, North Road, and Fairmont Street were regraded and paved with new curbs in Spring 2017. In addition, the main parking lot at Hartley Nature Center was expanded by 15 stalls and repaved to accommodate visitors and the programmatic expansion at Hartley Nature Center. A 0.3-mile accessible trail from the Nature Center to the pond on the north side of Tischer Creek was refreshed with packed gravel, and slope adjustments were made allowing for a five-foot-wide accessible trail. In addition, the Rock Knob connector trail and Gazebo Point were rebuilt as sustainable hiking routes using best practices. Three pollinator meadows near the pine stands were established, adding to the biodiversity and reestablishment of native vegetation in Hartley Park. New interpretive signage was added throughout the park, which focuses on the history and ecology of Hartley Park. Lastly, the Duluth Traverse Spine trail was extended from the wet meadow to the Nature Center Parking Lot. The multi-use trails underwent sustainability reroutes at three of the neighborhood connections into the park; Fairmont, North Road, and Marshall Street entrances.



Chester Creek Restoration

The South St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District coordinated restoration of Chester Creek with funding from the Minnesota DNR. In 2017, the dams that were compromised during the 2012 were removed, and creek banks were stabilized using natural materials. The restoration efforts will improve trout habitat and other cold-water organisms by building riffles to oxygenate the water and connect the once isolated populations of trout about and below the dams. Root wads will provide cover and food for habitats, and the planting of large trees in the riparian area will provide necessary shade to keep the water cool. The City of Duluth partnered on this project and will build a new pedestrian bridge near the location of the lower dam in the spring of 2018.

What's New

Lafayette Community Center & Park Point Beach House Improvements

The City is constructing a gender neutral restroom addition to the Lafayette Community Center on the lake side of the building. Construction of the restroom began late summer of 2017, and will be completed mid-January 2018. The Park Point Beach House received a much needed renovation during the 2017 spring construction season. New walls, windows, and siding were installed on the lake side of the building.



Morgan Park Community Center Windows

New windows and doors were installed in November and December 2017, with hopes of future improvements once funding becomes available. Anticipated work for 2018 and 2019 is new metal roofing, increased insulation, removal of the sky lights in the entry, and replacement of the transom windows in the roof.



Reservation Software

Parks and Recreation launched a new online reservation system to the public in March 2017, allowing credit card transactions for the first time. By logging onto the Parks website, customers can browse availability and secure a building permit or park location for their private, wedding, or special event. Athletic field and court rentals are also available online, as well as flag football, adult softball, and the Angel of Hope brick memorial program. This software has streamlined the process for staff and customers, while adding an additional level of customer service. In 2018, staff hope to utilize built in surveys to receive customer feedback, launch online registration for busking permits, and work with community partner groups who wish to utilize the software for management of their rental facilities.

What's New

Chambers Grove Park

The City of Duluth obtained a \$1 million grant through the Minnesota DNR Legacy Fund to restore and improve Chambers Grove Park after the 2012 flood damage. In 2016 Chambers Grove underwent improvements that included a new accessible restroom facility, improved and expanded parking, tree plantings, accessible pathways throughout the park, restored picnic pavilion, and a new playground. In addition, the City will construct a 0.5-mile interpretive trail in the park in 2018, which will highlight the historical and ecological significance of the location. This project also reduces riparian habitat disruption and soil erosion caused by social trails. The park opened in early 2017 to the public, and will be the first to receive new signage in 2018, consistent with the City's Signage and Wayfinding Mini-Master Plan.



Ely's Peak Equestrian Trail

The Ely's Peak equestrian trail loop in Magney-Snively Natural Area underwent significant improvements in 2017. The equestrian trail utilizes existing cross-country ski trails. Improvements included hardening the ski trail to withstand horse traffic in the non-ski season. These improvements also benefit the ski trail. Approximately 2.5 miles of the 3.5 miles long horse trail was completed in 2017. Due to additional financial support from the Duluth Area Horse Trail Alliance and the Minnesota Trail Riders Association, this project was able to add additional improvements to be completed in early 2018.

What's New

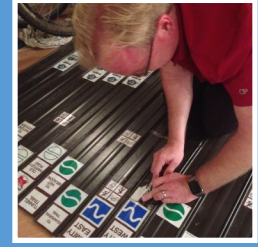
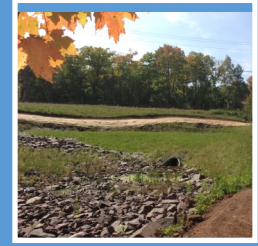
DWP Roundhouse Restoration

The City of Duluth received grant funding from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative through the U.S. Forest Service to protect the St. Louis River. The scope of this restoration project was to improve overall water quality in the streams that flow into the St. Louis River. Soil enhancements in the DWP roundhouse area, a former industrial site, and native vegetation restoration was part of said efforts. 40.8 acres of invasive buckthorn, honeysuckle, and tansy were removed both below and above the DWP railroad tracks to support from Community Action Duluth. Two acres of contaminated lands were capped over two seasons at the brownfield site, utilizing clean fill from dredge operations in the Duluth Harbor. 11,268 native shrubs and trees were planted to increase diversity, improve habitat, and add resiliency.



Duluth Traverse 2017 Updates

In partnership with Cyclists of the Gitchee Gumees and through contracting services, an additional 4.3 miles of trail were added to the 85 existing miles of the Duluth Traverse in 2017, for a total of 89.3 miles. The Spine Trail connection from Chester Park to Central entrance was 85% completed by the end of the 2017 season. The Spine Trail segment in Hartley Park was extended from the Hartley Nature Center Parking Lot to the pond, and from the pond to Rock Knob.



Welcomed New Staff Members

The Parks and Recreation Division welcomed new staff members to the team in 2017. Nick Budnik started with the City in September as a Recreation Specialist, specializing in sports and leagues. Nick brings a great deal of experience and enthusiasm to the position and looks forward to working closely with community groups and partners. Some of Nick's hobbies include rock climbing and ultimate frisbee. The Parks and Recreation Stewardship team welcomed Andy Holak in May as the Trails Coordinator. An avid runner himself, Andy brings a great deal of knowledge to the position. Working closely with community partners, Andy will serve as the lead on planning projects such as ATV and equestrian trails.

Duluth Parks Hosts 2017-18 GreenCorps Member

The City of Duluth Parks and Recreation Division was fortunate to again host one GreenCorps member for the 2017-2018 program year, in partnership with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Alayna Johnson works in the Park Maintenance Division and focuses on park-related waste reduction and recycling improvements. In researching best practices and performing audits of the current waste and recycling system, recommendations were made for improving these systems. Current focus is on the development of educational outreach opportunities, waste collection improvements, and implementation of a volunteer program.

What's New

Recycling in the Parks

Parks and Recreation and Park Maintenance have been working closely to implement a recycling program within our parks. In May 2017, the City received 60 recycling bins from a Dr. Pepper Snapple Grant. These bins were strategically placed throughout our parks system and collection amounts were recorded as part of the grant agreement reporting requirements. In addition to these smaller recycling bins, Park Maintenance installed two larger recycling bins at Lester Park and Enger Park. The feedback and usage has been positive and we hope to expand recycling efforts in 2018



Lakewalk Water Street Segment

Construction of a shared use path on Water Street from 21st Avenue East to 23rd Avenue East was finished in 2017, adding an off-street paved connection to the Lakewalk along Water Street.

Miller Creek FEMA

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) restoration of Miller Creek within Lincoln Park was completed in 2017. The project addressed damages sustained by the 2012 flood. The work focused on stabilizing the existing shoreline to address further high water events by naturalizing portions of the shoreline. In addition, damaged or failing portions of dry-stacked stone walls were rebuilt for future resiliency. The project has altered the look and feel of Lincoln Park, creating a gentler, more approachable slope to the water's edge with new landscaping and visibility.



What's New

Quarry Park

Quarry Park, a park that since its adoption into Duluth's Parks System, continues to draw attention by providing the unique experience of an old industrial quarry now reclaimed as public green space. In 2017, the Parks Division was involved with both trail and recreation infrastructure improvements. In partnership with the Lake Superior Disc Golf Community, an 18-hole disc golf course was nearly completed, with a basket and at least one finished tee pad per hole. Additional tee pads and signage will be added in spring of 2018. Further exploration and design of the ice farming system was conducted by the Duluth Climbers Coalition, and the eastern quarry rim hiking trail was rebuilt by volunteer efforts from Duluth Climbers Coalition, Surly Brewing, and the 321st Engineering Detachment of the US Army Reserve.

What's to come? The Duluth Climber's Coalition was awarded a \$5,000 Parks Fund Grant to help cover 2018 construction costs of an ADA Trail Loop at the base of the quarry, which will create better access for all park visitors. Cyclists of the Gitche Gumees Shores (COGGS) will be lending a hand in 2018 to build the western rim multi-use trail that will connect to the larger Duluth Traverse and Superior Hiking Trail system.



Community

Volunteer Programs

2017 Clean and Green Accomplishments

Litter - it's a never-ending battle. Through the City of Duluth's Clean and Green service initiative, hundreds of volunteers gave thousands of hours of their time during 2017. Groups and individuals helped remove unwanted trash from our parks and trails, and contributed to beautification projects like weeding in the Rose Garden and mulching trees in various neighborhood parks.

- 3,594 reported hours of service
- 8,789 pounds of bagged garbage collected



2017 Duluth Invaders Accomplishments

Invasive, non-native plants can be devastating to native plants, trees, and wildlife habitat. The Duluth Invaders service initiative is committed to addressing the influx and growth of invasive plant populations in our community. Through community education, mapping and tracking efforts, as well as eradication events and treatment efforts, we are taking on invasives.

- 778 reported hours of service
- 40+ R2ED team members recruited and trained



Recreation

In 2017, volunteers contributed over **118 hours** to recreation programs and offerings. Volunteers help Duluth Parks and Recreation offer opportunities like skating at the Heritage Sports Center and other special events.

Trails

In 2017, volunteers contributed **1,052 hours** to trails projects. Working with project partners, including the Cyclists of Gitchee Gumme Shores (COGGS), Duluth Cross-Country Ski Club (DXC) and the Duluth Climbers Coalition (DCC), the Parks Division assisted in completion of trails at Lincoln Park, Quarry Park and Chester Park.

2017 Edible Duluth Accomplishments

Promoting, growing, and developing public edible landscapes are the focus of the Edible Duluth service initiative. Partnering with programs that advocate for food access and equity, Duluth Parks and Recreation is excited to be exploring the role that we can have in this issue.

- 103 reported hours of service



2017 reLEAF Accomplishments

A healthy urban forest is an important community resource. The reLEAF service initiative works to promote volunteer engagement in protecting our urban forest, educating the public on the importance of our urban forest and hosting service activities that include tree planting and restoration projects.

- 346 reported hours of service



2017 Adopt-A-Spot Locations

Duluth Park's Adopt-A-Spot program invites individuals and groups to care for and maintain public lands for the benefit of the community. The partners listed below have formally adopted the listed spot.

- Dan Proctor adopted Chester Creek Trails
- Carla Melandar & Lutheran Social Services adopted Ordean Courtyard Gardens
- Jill Kimball and Family adopted Fond du Lac Edible Duluth Orchard and Garden
- Dick Gould adopted Park Point Mutt Mitt Containers

Community

Senior Programs

Senior programming offered through the Duluth Parks and Recreation Division provides a gathering space at three different facilities where seniors can visit and socialize, enjoy meals, and participate in fun activities. Popular events taking place at Evergreen, Morgan Park, and Portman Senior Center are card games, bingo, arts and crafts, educational seminars, and special parties such as the Senior Appreciation Day and Halloween Party.



100 Year Birthday Party

The Parks and Recreation Division sponsored the 100 Year Birthday Party Celebration during the 2017 Northland Senior Expo at the DECC. In partnership with AEOA, North Shore Estates, and Age Well Arrowhead, six centenarians were honored. Dan Hanger with Fox 21 emceed the event and read a short biography about each guest. Mayor Larson presented each guest of honor with a special certificate and guests were invited to enjoy birthday cake with Duluth's 2017 celebrated centenarians: Martha Westlund (102), Marian Rotondi (100), Ann Maloney (101), Irene Swallow (100), Molly Doboszinski (100), and Thelma Kortkamp (100).



Senior Center Participation 2017

Evergreen: 8616

Morgan Park: 4029

Portman: 5072

Senior Appreciation Day: 39
(despite a snow and ice storm)



Community

Senior Holiday Party

2017 was an exciting year for the City's senior programming, as we hosted three Holiday Parties, versus the large Senior Banquet at the DECC as in previous years. Guests enjoyed a catered meal and dessert, live entertainment, and door prize drawings. Each location saw great attendance this year.

Evergreen : 114

Morgan Park: 98

Portman: 84



Many thanks to our financial sponsors AEOA Senior Dining, North Shore Estates, Arrowhead RSVP, and Trips & Tours for making these celebrations possible. The Parks and Recreation Division would like to extend a special thanks to the following local businesses and individuals that donated prizes or volunteered their time and talent at each event:

- Walgreens (gift cards and staff volunteers)
- Chester Creek Café (gift cards)
- Black Bear Casino (gift card for free hotel stay and dinner buffet)
- Ted Plys (wood crafts)
- Naughty Knitters (knitted door prizes)
- Perkins Restaurant East Duluth (gift cards)
- Gleensheen Historic Estate (free tours)
- Sue Majewski (volunteer pianist)
- Morgan Park Senior Club (cash prize)
- Portman Senior Club (cash prize)
- Evergreen Senior Club (cash prize)
- Parks Commission Volunteers: John Schmidt, Dennis Isernhagen, Amanda Crosby
- UMD Honor Student Volunteers: Anders Brown, Jacob Hages, Miranda Rice

Community

Sports & Recreation

Event	Attendance
Bayfront Skating	1123
Bayfront Family Center (summer)	1220
Learn-to-skate (DAHA)	150
Champions Building Champions	200
Art Kit & Equipment Rentals	1280
Ultimate Frisbee	57
Flag Football	139
Play Gym	1260
Valentine's Skate for Your Heart	190
DECC Family Skating Parties	400
Boo Bash	250
Gobbler Glide	125
Santa Skate	175
Sandmodeling Contest	450

Washington Center Rentals

Gym	553
Conference Room	63

Adult Softball Leagues

Teams	50
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2017 Flag Football

The 2017 season offered youth in grades 2nd through 5th an opportunity to get together for weekly flag football games. There were 139 participants and 12 teams. The weather was favorable this year, with only one game day rescheduled due to rain. Parks and Recreation is thankful for the many parent volunteer coaches that assisted youth in developing their skills, while learning the importance of teamwork. The season ended with a participation trophy awarded to each participant. Parks and Recreation looks forward to the 2018 season and hopes to add a 6th grade division.



Community

Youth Programming



The Parks and Recreation Division offers year-round programming and activities for families, youth groups, and community organizations. Bayfront Family Center provides outdoor recreation gear and games free of charge during the summer and winter season. Parks and Recreation continued free weekly indoor skating at the Essentia Duluth Heritage Sports Center in 2017, as well as four special holiday-themed parties for families through collective sponsorships with: Altec, Alerus, Michaels, 148th Fighter Wing, Enbridge, Whole Foods Co-op, Minnesota Power, Duluth Children's Museum, Boys & Girls Club of the Northland, and UMD figure skaters. Play Gym at Duluth Heights Community Center continued to provide preschoolers and parents an indoor space with lots of fun equipment free of use. In 2017, Parks and Recreation offered two weekly Play Gym sessions.



AmeriCorps Member Parks and Recreation

In 2017, a full-time AmeriCorps member was assigned to the Parks and Recreation Division for the summer season. This member's assignment was to improve access to and build recreational opportunities for youth and families by upgrading Parks recreational equipment and art kits, increasing awareness about these opportunities, and facilitating their use. Equipment was made available at Bayfront Family Center and non-profit youth groups and community organizations in Duluth. Allowing rental of the equipment increased use by approximately 30%. We appreciate the hard work, collaboration and fresh perspective Lindsey Bushnell brought to this position. In the winter, staff hosts open skating times all week long and coordinate a weekly outdoor bonfire on Friday evenings, while also offering skates, snowshoes, and snow sculpting tools rentals.



2017 Recreation Staff

In 2017, Parks and Recreation employed two 13.5 hour a week employees to assist with recreation at Bayfront and Duluth Heritage: Jesse Hennen and Ava Heinrich.



Community

Youth Programming

Duluth Parks and Recreation continued financial support of local youth programming in partnership with the following agencies in 2017:

Boys & Girls Club of the Northland (Lincoln Park)

Duluth Area YMCA True North AmeriCorps (Citywide)

Duluth Community School Collaborative (East Hillside)

Neighborhood Youth Services (Central Hillside)

Valley Youth Center (West Duluth)

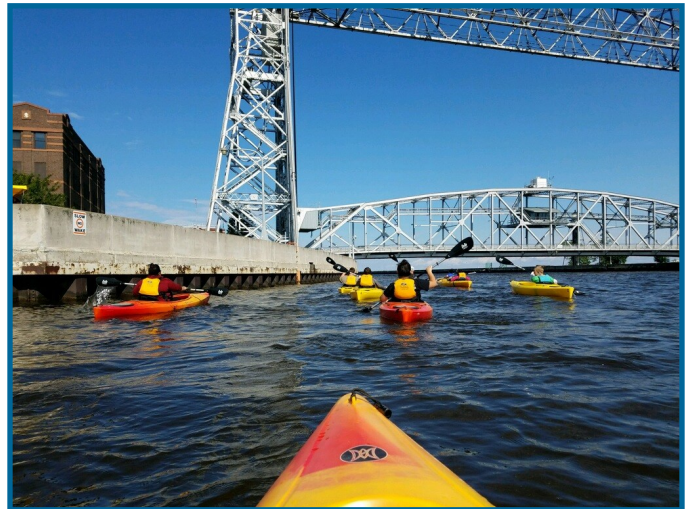
Valley Youth Center/Duluth Area YMCA (Gary New Duluth)

In 2017, these youth programs reached over 4,000 youth. True North AmeriCorps members (45) served at various Duluth sites, including ISD 709 elementary schools, local charter schools, YMCA Girl Power, Girl Scouts, Duluth Community School Collaborative, Harbor Highlands Community Center, Valley Youth Center, and Neighborhood Youth Services. Beyond academic support, programming also focused on engaging youth in cultural activities, outdoor recreation and nature-based play.



Academic Support

The Duluth Community School Collaborative provides out-of-school time programming to youth at Myers-Wilkins School through their Academic and Cultural Enrichment Programs. In 2017, the Collaborative served 345 students. In addition to trained staff and instructors, they also have 66 ongoing adult volunteers and work-study students who provided 2,569 hours of mentoring and tutoring to students. Students in the COMPASS program at Myers-Wilkins received academic assistance and skill development, with 78 percent of students receiving 75 or more hours of support. True North AmeriCorps provided 45 members in schools and after-school programs, documenting 46,457 hours of tutoring and mentoring to 1,286 students enrolled in the program. Over 76 percent of students who completed the TNAC program, meaning they had 40 or more sessions with an AmeriCorps member, showed improvement in terms of academic engagement.



Community

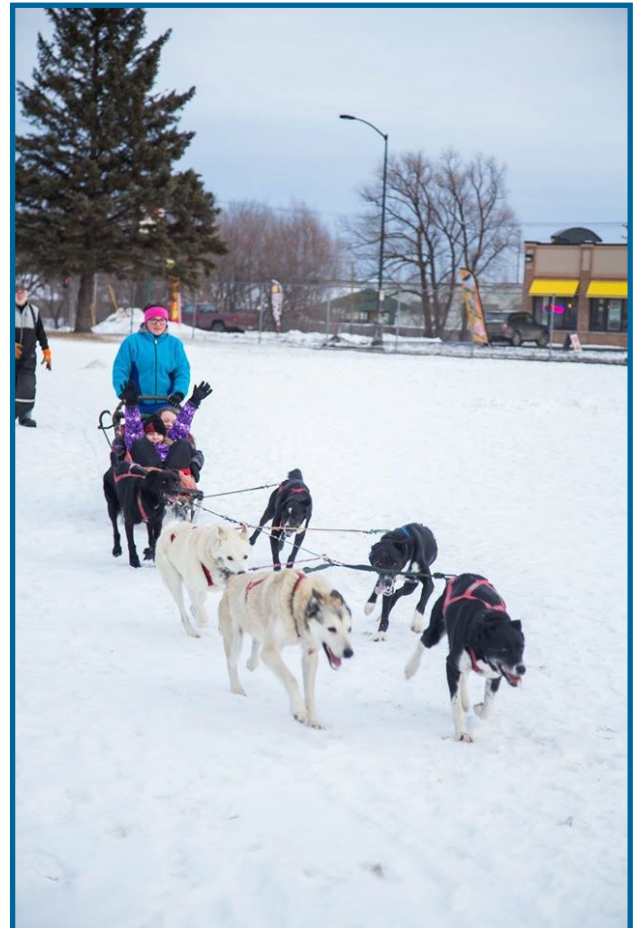
Cultural Activities

Neighborhood Youth Services redesigned and reinvigorated their Young Men's Group in 2017. The group is led by a NYS staff member and a volunteer. The purpose of the Young Men's Group is to provide a safe space for youth who identify as African American/Black to talk about issues and concerns facing the youth. NYS reports that youth "welcomed having two adult role models that looked like them." The Duluth Community School Collaborative, through its COMPASS program at Myers-Wilkins, hosted a two-week unit on Ojibwe Culture and Dance. In addition, they hosted a soccer club that integrated Spanish language and culture. Youth used Spanish vocabulary as they played and learned soccer.



Outdoor Recreation

In 2017, the City of Duluth Parks and Recreation continued our agreement with True North AmeriCorps to provide high quality youth development in local schools and through community based neighborhood youth agencies. One important change was the integration of youth development and outdoor recreation throughout the True North AmeriCorps program. Youth development and outdoor recreation principles have been adopted at TNAC sites through staff training, program development, and program evaluation in partnership with the Youth Outdoors—Duluth collaborative. In 2017, Youth Outdoors-Duluth served over 200 youth and programmed over 18,000 hours of outdoor recreation activities, nearly a 55 percent increase in documented outdoor time from 2016. AmeriCorps sites were also eligible to access the Gear and Curriculum Library, a collection of equipment and lesson plans for outdoor education. The Valley Youth Center engaged 102 youth in 268 hours of outdoor nature based activities including fishing, climbing, archery, paddling, hiking and swimming.



2017 Highlights

- ◆ True North AmeriCorps members provided 46,457 tutoring and mentoring hours
- ◆ 78% of students in the COMPASS program received 75+ hours of academic assistance
- ◆ Neighborhood Youth Services engaged 123 youth from across the city in their Hillside Basketball Program
- ◆ Over 110 hours of homework help was provided to students at Gary New Duluth Community Recreation Center.

2017 Golf Update—Enger & Lester Park Public Golf Courses

Season Passes	# Sold
Unlimited	138
Senior	333
Young Adult	121
Junior	55
Family	27
Skyline Pass	1,761
Total	2,435

Miscellaneous	Sales (\$)
Driving Range	\$77,574
Merchandise	\$168,547
Food & Beverage	\$347,290
Other Rentals	\$1,648
Total	\$595,059

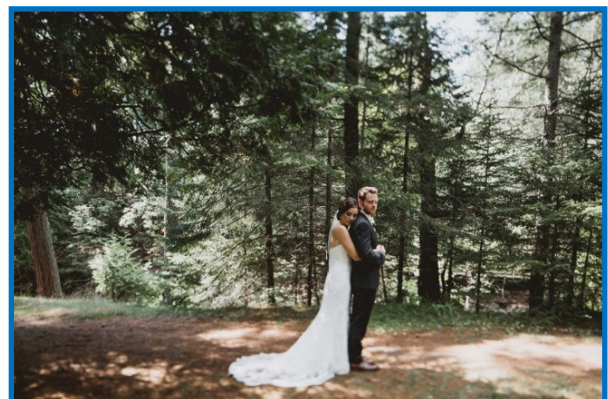
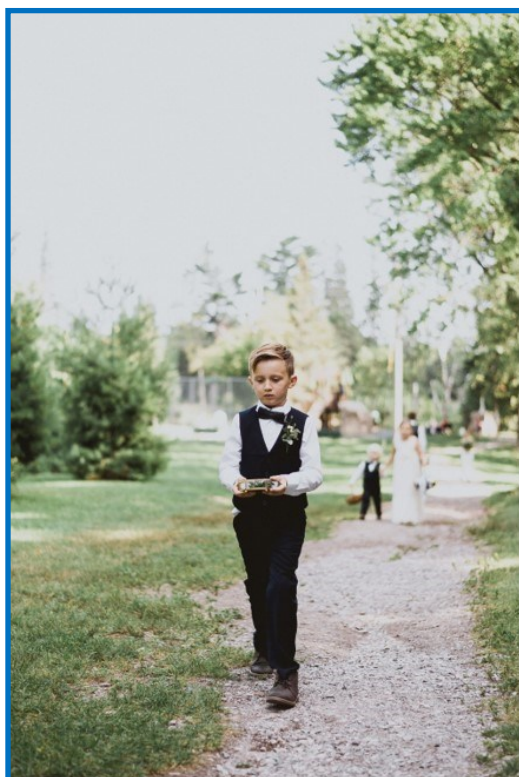
Daily Fees	# Sold
18 Hole	9,847
9 Hole	11,031
18 Hole (Sr/Jr)	3,152
Outings	4,643
Twilight	7,462
18 Hole Special	5,855
9 Hole Special	1,123
Total	43,113

Cart Rentals	# Sold
18 Hole	28,331
9 Hole	12,192

Community

Permits & Special Events

Park Name	Private Event Permits	Wedding Event Permits
Brighton Beach	19	9
Chester Park	9	3
Enger Park	22	27
Leif Erikson Park	0	11
Lester Park	47	5
Lincoln Park	4	0
Rose Garden	0	26
Misc.	38	8
Totals	139	89

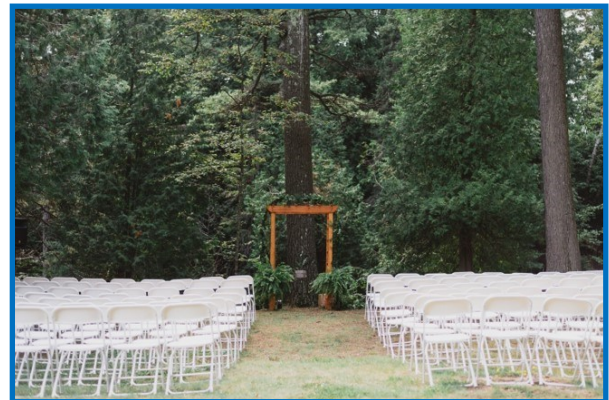
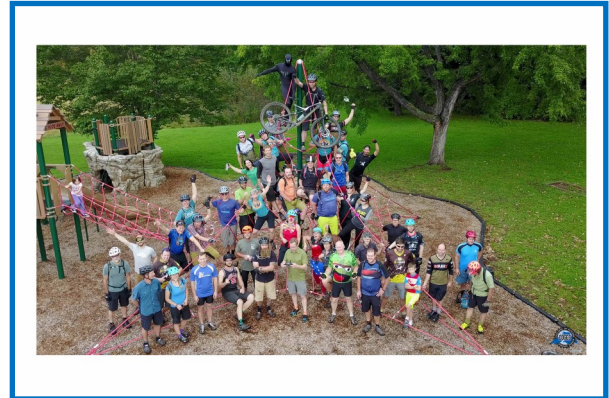


Community

Permits & Special Events

Location	Building Permits
Duluth Heights	91
Evergreen	70
Morgan Park	36
Portman	66
Piedmont	5
Totals	268

Type	Permits
Special Events	101
Alcohol Consumption	75
Busking	25



Community

Community Parks & Recreation Program 2017 Grant Awards

In partnership with the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, the City of Duluth provides funding for neighborhood-based parks enhancements and recreation services on Duluth's parks, recreation, and trails system. Annually, the Parks Fund grants up to \$100,000.

Organization	Project	Spring 2017
Chester Bowl Improvement Club	Support for summer adventure program	\$5,000
Cyclists of Gitchee Gumees Shores (COGGS)	Duluth Traverse trail maintenance	\$5,000
Community Action Duluth	Mechanics that mentor event	\$5,000
Friends of Dog Parks	Benches at Observation Park	\$1,500
GND Development Alliance	Rec Center sport court	\$5,000
Northland Paddlers Alliance	Community family & youth paddling events	\$4,000
Portman Recreation Association	Portman hockey rink improvements	\$5,000
The Hills Youth & Family Services	Hillside basketball program	\$5,000
Western Duluth Little League	Little league enhancement fund	\$5,000
Wheels on Trails Organization	All may experience Duluth outside	\$5,000
Woodland Amateur Hockey Association	Upper rink boards	\$5,000
YMCA – Duluth	Youth Outdoors Duluth Adventure series	\$5,000
Organization	Project	Fall 2017
Chester Bowl Improvement Club	Chairlift slip tester and 10 radios	\$5,000
Duluth Area Horse Trail Alliance	Trail signage along Ely's Peak loop	\$5,000
Duluth Climbers Coalition	Quarry Park ADA trail loop construction	\$5,000
Ecolibrium3	Purchase/installation of interpretive kiosks at Lincoln Park	\$1,500
Morgan Park Smithville Community Club	Purchase new lawnmower	\$5,000
Northern Expressions Arts Collective	Community potlucks at Harrison Park	\$1,500
Piedmont Heights Amateur Hockey Association	Kitchen renovations	\$5,000
St. Louis River Alliance	SLR Estuary Water Trail map development	\$5,000
Superior Hiking Trail Association	Create and install informational and directional signage along SHT loops	\$3,150
The Hills Youth & Family Services	Presentation equipment and bike rack at Washington Center	\$5,000
Welch Center	Expansion of winter programming activities	\$5,000

Community

Chester Creek Concert Series

The Chester Bowl Concert Series, a joint program with the Chester Bowl Improvement Club and the City of Duluth, celebrated its 35th season with an awesome lineup of bands. Concert attendance averaged over 500 people each week, with 5,220 guests attending over the course of the summer. Rock, Bluegrass, a full horn section; the Chester concerts featured a wide variety of music. This free, family friendly event had another successful year and we look forward to season 36 in summer 2018!

2017 Schedule Recap:

June 13 – A Band Called Truman

June 20 – Pot Bellied Stallions

June 27 – Fish Heads

July 11 – Crescent Moon

July 18 – Listening Party

July 25 – Boku Frequency

August 1 – Breanne Marie &

The Front Porch Sinners

August 8 – Emily Haavik & Friends

August 15 - Mary Bue & the Holy Bones

August 23 - Plucked-up String Band



Movies in the Park

The City of Duluth and the Greater Downtown Council hosted another great Movies In The Park Series in Leif Erikson Park; showing eight movies over the course of the summer.

2017 Attendance:

July 7th Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them: 3,000 visitors

July 14th Over the Hedge: 2,500 visitors

July 25th Secondhand Lions: 250 visitors

July 28th Jurassic Park: Over 3,500 visitors

August 4th Secret Life of Pets: Over 1,500 visitors

August 11th Marley & Me: 1,700 visitors

August 18th Alvin & the Chipmunks: 1,200 visitors

August 25th Sing: Over 2,000 visitors



Community



2017 LAKE SUPERIOR ZOO ADMISSIONS REPORT

Paid Admissions	Price *	Number Sold
Adults (13 yrs. and older)	\$10.00	28,053
Adults (Group Rate)	\$9.00	1,235
Adult (1/2 off reciprocating member)	\$5.00	2,249
Adult, Military	\$9.00	413
Seniors (62+)	\$9.00	2,475
Seniors, Military	\$8.00	72
Seniors (1/2 off reciprocating member)	\$4.50	88
Children (3-12 yrs.)	\$5.00	12,443
Children 3-12 (group)	\$4.00	3,691
Children, Military	\$4.00	126
Children (1/2 off reciprocating member)	\$2.50	1,335
Boo at the Zoo (gate ticket purchase)	\$10.00	3,226
Boo at the Zoo (advance ticket purchase)	\$9.00	2,709
Bulk ticket & pre-paid admissions	Varies	659
TOTALS	N/A	58,774
Gratis Admissions	Number	% of Total Admissions
Lake Superior Zoo Members	13,728	16.8%
Other Members (excluding 1/2 off reciprocating)	1,833	2.25%
Free (children 2 and under)	5,921	7.27%
Volunteers	1,282	1.58%
TOTAL	22,764	27.9%
TOTAL Paid Admissions	58,774	72.09%
TOTAL Gratis Admissions	22,764	27.91%
GRAND TOTAL ADMISSIONS	81,538	100%

*Prices listed are general admission prices. Actual amount paid may vary due to coupons, specials, events, etc.

Parks Planning

Mini-Master Plan Progress

Completed in 2017

Duluth Traverse
Cross City Trail
Signage, Wayfinding, and Gates
St. Louis River Estuary National Water Trail

PROGRESS IN THE PARKS

Visit the Duluth Parks website for updates on project status

<http://www.duluthmn.gov/parks/parks-planning/progress-in-the-parks>

In progress 2017

Lower Chester
Western Waterfront Park and Trail

Grant Summary : 2017 Project Implementation

Duluth Parks was the recipient of many general state and federal funding grants in 2017, providing financial support for Mini-Master Plan and project implementation, also leveraging matching funds from the City of Duluth.

- US Forest Service – Funds will support Western Waterfront Trail habitat restoration (\$194,824)
- National Park Service – Funds will support implementation of the Lincoln Park Master Plan (\$746,456)
- Community Development Block Grants – Funds will support renewal and restoration of Irving Park and Lincoln Park (Irving received \$50,000; \$50,000 Lincoln Park)
- US Forest Service Great Lakes Restoration Initiative – EAB and storm water mitigation (\$175,000)
- DNR Coastal Program – Western Waterfront Wayfinding (\$89,084)
- DNR Coastal Program – Lafayette Restrooms (\$100,000)
- Federal Recreation Trail Program – Phase II of DWP railroad bed repurposing (\$150,000)
- Federal Recreation Trail Program – New 5.4 km cross-country ski trail and lighting (\$150,000)
- EPA Natural Areas Program – Planning for St. Louis River Estuary and Natural Area (\$220,000)
- EPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative – Invasive elimination and control in St. Louis River Estuary (\$458,967)
- DNR Coastal STAR Program – Water Trail plan assistance (\$7,500)
- Conservation Partners Legacy Metro – Acquisition and restoration at Hartley Park (\$290,000)



Parks Planning

St. Louis River Corridor Update

2017 marked the fourth year of the \$18 million investment by the City of Duluth in the St. Louis River Corridor Initiative. All qualifying parks have complete mini-master plans, and many are working on securing their match funding through in-kind volunteer hours and donations. A few neighborhood parks have experienced upgrades in 2017, or are gearing up for 2018 implementation. Some highlights include:

Irving Park – Bid proposals were advertised on the City’s Purchasing website in January 2018. Phase I of the project will include ADA access to the park, site lighting, a new relocated playground, gathering area near the concessions, landscaping, and a porta-potty screen. Construction is scheduled to commence in May or June of 2018.

Harrison Park – In 2017, Harrison Park had the stairs, ramp, patio, and sidewalk concrete re-poured. In addition, the asphalt tennis courts were removed and lighting pole bases were poured. These site upgrades improved sidewalk circulation and provided a new gathering space. Installation of a stair railing and lighting system are schedule to be completed in spring 2018. Final grading for civil work is also scheduled for spring 2018 and will include covering exposed soils with straw and seeding.

Gary New Duluth –The Gary New Duluth Development Alliance is working closely with the City of Duluth to finalize plans for Phase II and III of the Mini-Master Plan. Once the project proposal is approved by the City, improvements will include soil removal, drain tile installation, new water lines, and class five gravel. The Gary New Duluth dog park was opened in December 2017 in partnership with Friends of Duluth Dog Parks. The group intends to complete the sport court, community garden, skate park, and installation of a porta-potty screen and pavilion in 2018.

Riverside Park – The Community Club worked with City staff to determine the final scope for a Phase I implementation. A design consultant has been hired and construction is anticipated in 2018.

St. Louis River Natural Area

Located in Duluth’s western neighborhoods, the unique riverfront location of the St. Louis River Natural Area provides the City of Duluth with an excellent opportunity to improve recreation and development as part of the larger St. Louis River Corridor initiative, while integrating it with the larger environmental restoration and protection goals of the area. In partnership with the City of Duluth Community Planning Division and Minnesota Land Trust, nomination for the Duluth Natural Area Program designation will proceed in 2018 with a community engagement process. Through the engagement process, a nomination package and management plan for the roughly 1400 acres of the St. Louis Natural Area and 12 miles of shoreline will be designed. This project is broken into three Phases; nomination, acquisition, and restoration. The City of Duluth is reorienting the economic, business, residential, and visitor use of the St. Louis River Corridor towards outdoor and recreation-friendly activities, provides an opportunity to reclaim riverfront properties, while conserving and enhancing the costal wetland area and other estuary habitat.



Glimpse Ahead

Lincoln Park

The City of Duluth was notified in June 2017 that they were the recipient of a \$750,000 National Park Service Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program grant, which will lead to implementation of the Lincoln Park Mini-Master Plan. The timeline for completion of Phase I was postponed in 2017 to accommodate environmental and cultural resource assessment requirements. Phase I will be completed in 2018, followed by a Phase II in 2019. In 2016, in partnership with Ecolibrium3, the City of Duluth was the recipient of a \$50,000 grant through the US Bank Places to Play grant initiative. In addition, this project is funded by \$550,000 in ½ and ½ tourism tax, \$50,000 Super Bowl Legacy funding, and an \$85,000 local match from Essentia Health, St. Luke's Hospital, Maurices, and Minnesota Power.



Grand Avenue Nordic Center

In partnership with Duluth Cross-Country Ski Club (DXC), the Parks and Recreation Division is currently in the bid phase of the proposed Grand Avenue Nordic Center, which will be a 3.3 km cross-country ski trail with snowmaking capability and lighting. The site will become a venue for local recreational skiing, youth activities, regional racing, and high school events. The trail will be located adjacent to the Spirit Mountain alpine ski area, next to the existing Grand Avenue Chalet. Parks is currently working to secure additional funding through multiple avenues including grants and fundraising efforts coordinated with DXC. Construction will be a multi-phase approach with the build out plan unveiled summer of 2018 with Phase I construction starting in the fall of 2018.



Glimpse Ahead

Cross City Trail—River Route

The Duluth Cross City Trail is envisioned as a 10.3-mile multi-use, non-motorized, wheelchair accessible, paved trail system that will connect the existing Lakewalk to the Munger Trail and Western Waterfront Trail in western Duluth. Segment 1 was built in 2014 and currently terminates at the Heritage Sports Complex near Carlton Street. Once property easements are acquired, the Cross City Trail River Route Segment 2 will be sent for bid in early spring 2018. The “River Route” will run from the current western end of the trail at Carlton Street, under the ore docks, under Interstate 35, and through the riverfront area, meeting up with the existing paved- multi-use Grassy Point Trail in Irving Park. Additionally, the City is currently pursuing a Federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant assist with the cost to construct Segment 3, from Irving Park to Keene Creek Park.

Stewart Creek Bridge

In July 2017, the Parks and Facilities Management Divisions submitted a request for proposal for restoration of the Stewart Creek Bridge, a large railroad trestle on the DWP trail. Restoration will include removal and replacement of the timber bridge and installation of cable railing that meets code requirements for safety, while still mimicking the historic look and feel of the existing structure.



DWP Infrastructure Restoration

The city-owned, abandoned, Duluth Winnipeg and Pacific (DWP) railroad corridor is currently used as an informal trail, and runs continuously from lower Spirit Mountain west to Becks Road, and eventually under I-35 to Proctor. In 2017, a grant was secured to repair critical infrastructure facilities, including several trail washouts, culvert repairs, replacements and capping, and regrading of trail surfaces that were damaged in the 2012 flood. Restoration has begun on the Stewart Creek Bridge and will include replacement of deteriorated decking with modern wood decking, restoration of flood damaged concrete abutments, and installation of cable railings for fall protection. This trail provides critical connection through the western hill side above the neighborhoods where the terrain makes passage difficult, if not impossible, without the existing railroad grade.



Clyde Connector Trail

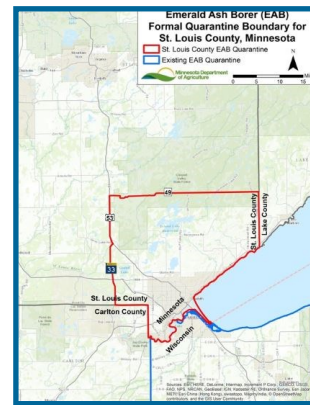
In addition to bridge restoration on the DWP, reconstruction of the existing Clyde Connector Trail is 75% complete, with additional trail work and landscape restoration to be complete in the spring of 2018. This trail will serve as a connection to the accessible DWP Trail, the Superior Hiking Trail, Munger Trail, Skyline Parkway, and the Duluth Traverse multi-use bike trail.



Glimpse Ahead

Lower Chester Park

In 2017, the Parks Division worked with community partners and stakeholders on the Lower Chester Park Mini-Master Plan, with the goal of providing high quality recreational opportunities for all community members. Four public meetings were held in 2017, with three additional planned in early 2018. While this plan presented great design challenges, community stakeholder groups and the voices of the neighborhood guided the planning process. Approval by the Parks Commission and City Council is anticipated in early 2018. The approved design plan will rotate a second existing hockey rink 90 degrees and improve drainage of the open green space to ensure year-round use. A proposed playground will be added directly adjacent to the green space. Construction will begin once funding is secured.



Emerald Ash Borer Grants

In December 2016, City Council approved the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Management Plan, which calls for a combination of education, quarantine, treatment, removal, and replanting. EAB infests ash tree populations in Duluth's urban forest and boulevards, causing harm and potential death to the trees, while posing further potential harm to the environment, the economy, and public health. Financial support was received in 2017 with the acceptance of two grant awards. A \$175,000 Great Lake Restoration Initiative grant from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources was awarded in 2017, and will contribute to the reduction of runoff and tree loss from EAB. The City's Management Plan calls for removal and replacement of 1400 ash boulevard trees and retention and treatment of 1000 more. This grant is effective from January 2018 to December 2020 and will fund the planting, monitoring, and maintenance of a diverse species of replacement trees in the Woodland, Congdon, and Lincoln Park neighborhoods where EAB infestation is relatively advanced. An additional reimbursement grant from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture was also awarded in an amount not to exceed \$65,000. This grant is effective from March 2017 to December 2018 and will enable the City to provide the first treatment to 1000 ash boulevard trees that are to be retained, and removal of an additional 50 infested trees.

Glimpse Ahead

Western Waterfront Park & Trail

The Western Waterfront Park and Trail Mini-Master Plan was initiated in 2016 and has undergone an extensive community engagement and planning process to facilitate the project goals of: increasing connectivity from adjacent neighborhoods to the St. Louis River, increasing recreational and development opportunities, enhancing neighborhood quality of life, and restoring and protecting natural habitat along the trail corridor. Some of the recommendations in the plan include extending and improving the trail, rebranding the Western Waterfront as a heritage trail, and developing new river access nodes and water trail entry points and improving upon existing entry points.



Glimpse Ahead

Continued Reforestation Efforts & Community Action Duluth Partnership

The City of Duluth in partnership with Community Action Duluth (CAD) has secured additional Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for continued reforestation efforts in 2018. The following park locations are slated to receive improvements:

Hartley Park – Woody invasive treatment in late October and ongoing throughout winter and into spring 2018

Lincoln Park – Woody invasive treatment on the upper portion of the park in October and ongoing throughout winter and into Spring 2018. Understory tree planting to mitigate the loss of Emerald Ash Borer will begin in Spring 2018 and continue into 2019.

Western Waterfront Trail – Woody invasive removal/treatment on the private site of Tate and Lyle, Bayhill Condominium Properties, and private land north of Bayhill. Community Action Duluth will spend roughly two years on this project. Work started in September of 2107.

Fairmount Park & Spirit Mountain Recreation Area – Woody invasive, Garlic Mustard, and Japanese Knotweed treatment in Fairmount Park and east of Knowlton Creek for approximately three months.



Park Maintenance Work Documentation

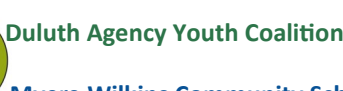
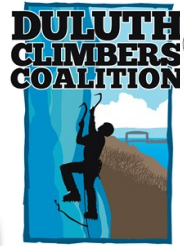
In 2017, Park and Recreation, Park Maintenance, and Facilities Management worked closely to refine the documentation and collection of Park Maintenance staff work hours. Recording staff hours and specifics such as location, activity, and equipment was effective in analyzing the average work load and trends at each location. After initial review of the 2017 data, the joint team continued to refine the documentation process that will continue in 2018. This information provides the Division with important information as it relates to daily, routine, and emergency maintenance of our park and trail infrastructure. In streamlining the data collection and analysis process, staff can also determine specific activity hours by locations. For example, hours spent mowing Lester Park during the summer season, or hours are spent on garbage collection at our restroom facilities along the Lakewalk is now available. Staff looks forward to utilizing this data for future Park Planning projects, as it provides a strong projection of staff maintenance hours by activity.

Storm Restoration

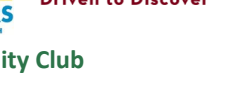
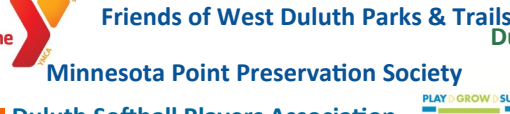
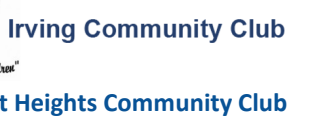
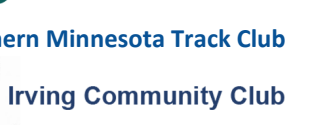
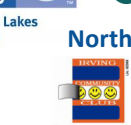
The October 27, 2017 storm caused significant damage to the shoreline and park infrastructure. The wind caused sizable waves to erode the shoreline, while causing significant damage to the Lakewalk paved trail and boardwalk, areas of Canal Park, Park Point, and Brighton Beach. Park Maintenance staff worked tirelessly to remove debris and reopen the Lakewalk shortly after the storm, displaying their commitment and resiliency. In response to the storm, the City of Duluth applied for State Disaster Assistance and was awarded \$2.12 million from Governor Dayton to move forward with restoration efforts in partnership with St. Louis County.

Lakewalk Mini-Master Plan

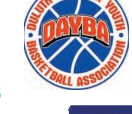
An iconic trail for both locals and tourists alike, the Lakewalk will be part of an extensive planning process, which will begin after final analysis of the Storm Surge. An implementation plan will be put in place, leading to the Mini-Master Plan, will include a full study of the trail length from Bayfront Park through Brighton Beach. As part of the planning process, the Mini-Master Plan will consider accessibility, user conflicts, community connections, Baywalk green space, Lake Place Park, asset management, safety, and signage and wayfinding. The Parks Division will lead the planning and public engagement process in partnership with a consultant firm once a formal Request for Proposal is approved by the Purchasing Department.



Over the Hills Night Riders Snowmobile Club



Norton Park Community Club



Portman Recreation Association

