

# PARKS FRIENDS UPDATE

A quarterly newsletter brought to you by Sun Prairie Parks Friends, Inc. (501.c.3)



VOL. 2, ISSUE 1

APRIL 20, 2024

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## First Quarter 2024—Celebrating, Anticipating, and Dreaming



Volunteer



Improve Our Parks



Improve Our World



Be a Park Friend

### Celebrating—Annual Meeting

Sun Prairie Parks Friends conducted its annual meeting with a record number of attendees from the community. The Friends leadership reviewed the events of the previous year and the current status of the organization. Kristin Grissom, the Director of Sun Prairie Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department, provided an update on the programs and improvements to the parks for 2024 including the new Wetmore Park Shelter, Aquatic Center upgrade planning, and updating the City Parks and Open Space Plan Update and various park master plans.

### Celebrating—Frozen Fest 2024



The Friends co-sponsored the City's Frozen Fest Night at the Ice Rink on January 27<sup>th</sup>. This year the event was held at Stone Ridge Estates Park due to the construction of the new shelter at Wetmore Park. Even though the weather was not optimal, there was a large turnout of folks to share the fire pits, smores, and beverages and to celebrate winter and Jimmy's prediction of more rapidly approaching spring.

In addition to Night at the Ice Rink, Friends board members also participated in the Hibernation Hustle. They finished together even though one was walking and the other 'running'. The week culminated with Jimmy predicting a early spring.



### Celebrating—Invasive Removals and Controlled Burn



Sun Prairie Parks Friends continued its efforts to improve the natural environment around Sun Prairie by removing invasive species from selected Parks. In coordination with Sun Prairie Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department (SPPRFD) staff the Friends completed work for now in the Shonas Highlands Park and began efforts in Sheehan Park in a prairie area that was at one time designated a wild flower area. Volunteers undertook the massive effort in the winter months of removing sumac, buckthorn, and other invasive species that had taken over the area.

SPPRFD staff removed the debris and then a controlled burn was conducted in collaboration with the City and Pheasants Forever to prepare the area for spring. We will see what comes up from the existing seed beds and then SPPRFD will determine what native seeding is necessary to fully restore the area to a native prairie.



**Renew, Invite Others to Join, Volunteer, and Donate to Support Parks in Sun Prairie!**

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## Celebrating—Earth Day 2024



Each year the Friends coordinate and sponsor the annual Earth Day Park Clean-Up. This year was the second year in a row that the community volunteers were able to reach and prepare every one of the parks in the City for the upcoming season. Volunteers assembled at Sheehan Park where we dedicated a memorial garden, bench and tree to Susan A. Larson, a local pastor and environmental activist. After the ceremony, well over 100 volunteers headed out to each of the City's parks to collect trash and debris that had accumulated over the winter month. The event was supported by SPPRF, city staff and elected officials, churches, businesses and organizations from the city and the local area. The day was a fantastic way for the community to show gratitude for the Earth by giving back of their time and efforts.



## Opportunities to Support the Friends—Pollinator Garden Installation



Pollinator Garden Installation—We will be doing our annual pollinator garden installation at multiple parks from **8:00 am to 12:00 pm on Saturday, June 1** to beautify and raise awareness of the need to provide for our pollinators year round. Our schedule for this year is as follows:

- Sunset Park 8:00 am—9:00 am
- Liberty Park 9:00 -10:00 am
- Birkinbine Park 10:00 -11:00 am
- Wetmore Park 11:00 am -12:00 pm

Join us for one in your neighborhood or travel around with the crew to two or more of the parks.

Sign up at: <https://parksfriends.org/>

## Dream Coming True



Sun Prairie Parks Friends have been advocating and fund raising for a disc golf course in the city based on input from the community. The City is in the process of updating is the Parks and Open Space Plan this year and disc golf will be on everyone's mind when that plan is updated. However, in the meantime disc golf players need a place to practice their skills locally without having to leave the city. The Friends in collaboration with SPPRF has located a spot in Wyndham Hills Park to construct a practice course for Sun Prairie. The course will consist of three playable and one practice baskets with multiple tee boxes to allow players to practice their skills with a variety of shots. The course is scheduled to be installed in June 2024 and the Open Space Plan which may address a larger facility should be complete later this year.

## Upcoming Activites

- June 1, 2024, 8:00 am—12:00 pm —Pollinator Garden Installation
- June 6, 2024, 5:30—9:00 pm, Sun Prairie Moves, Bikes, Brats and Brews, Stoneridge Estates Park
- June, 2024 - Disc Golf Course Installation and Ribbon Cutting, Wyndham Hills Park, Sun Prairie
- August 1, 2024—National Night Out, Cannery Square, Sun Prairie
- August 10, 2024—7:00 am—12:00 pm, SPPF at the Farmers Market
- September 14, 2024, —7:00 am—12:00 pm, SPPF at the Farmers Market
- September 21, 2024, 11:00 am to 4:00 pm —MultiCultural Fair, Sheehan Park, Sun Prairie
- Fall 2024—Community Playground Build—Westwynde Park

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