

# PARKS FRIENDS UPDATE

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



VOL. 1, ISSUE 7

DECEMBER 31, 2023

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

## Annual Meeting Report—Celebrating, Anticipating, and Dreaming



Volunteer



Improve Our Parks



Improve Our World



Be a Park Friend

### Celebrating



This year was another great year for the Friends and our efforts to support our parks. We started the year supporting Frozenfest's Night at the Rink with fire pits to keep us warm, helping with serving hot chocolate, and setup/tear down.

In early spring, the Friends organized the annual Earth Park Clean Up. This year saw a milestone achieved where with over 200 volunteers we were able to send people to every park in the City to prepare the parks for the new season. All this was done in a surprise spring snow. Thanks to all volunteers and we look for to this coming year's Earth Day on April 22nd.



May saw the start of the planting season and the Friends stepped in to action to add four new pollinator gardens to the City park system. Three were installed around new park signs in Orfan Park, Wyndham Hills Park, and Grandview Park. We also installed a pollinator garden in Sheehan Park in memory of Sue Larson who was an advocate for the environment and supporter of our parks.

We began our efforts to help the City remove invasive species from the parks' natural areas. The Friends organized volunteers to clear buckthorn and honeysuckle from Shonas Highlands Park starting in the spring and continuing into the late fall months. Their efforts cleared invasive brush from the understory to promote a healthier environment. Those efforts were completed and the Friends are moving to Sheehan to support the same efforts.



Summer saw the Friends participating in various events in the parks and to raising funds and awareness for the organization. From a Beer Garden in Orfan Park, to the Sun Prairie Farmers Market, to the Multi-Cultural Fair, the Friends were out and about to raise awareness of our activities and to raise funds to support our efforts.

We closed out the year with another community playground build. Volunteers constructed a new playground in Royal Oaks Park with the help of the contractor and City staff. In one day, the volunteers did what was planned to be two days of work—building the ADA accessible playground and spreading over 120 cubic yards of mulch.

### Anticipating



Our parks will be improved and maintained by both City staff and volunteers. The Parks Friends will continue to organize the annual Earth Day Park Clean Up on April 20, 2024, plant and/or improve Pollinator Gardens in the City's parks in May, remove invasive species from the natural areas of our parks throughout the year, help construct a playground in fall, support special programs in winter and summer, and participate in other volunteer activities.

Additionally, the Parks Friends advocates for the Parks, Recreation and Forestry in the City's budgeting process. This year the Capital Improvement Program has \$1,365,000 worth of projects scheduled in addition to the Wetmore Shelter replacement, which is underway. These projects include Sunset Park - Token Creek Access, Westwynde Park Rehabilitation, Creekview Crossing Development Park Design & Construction, FAC Bathhouse Renovation, Town Hall Crossing Park Development, Basketball Court Rehabilitation, and the Wetmore Park Pedestrian Bridge Replacement.



The Parks Friends are also raising funds and assisting in the design of a disc golf course in the City, to provide this exciting recreation opportunity here in Sun Prairie.

Consider donating to the course by buying commemorative discs, sponsoring a hole., or donating. Hurry, 25% of the funds needed are already raised! You can find more information for the effort at: <https://parksfriends.org/discgolf.html>

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

Sun Prairie Parks Friends, Inc. (501.c.3)

<https://parksfriends.org/>

# PARKS FRIENDS UPDATE

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



DECEMBER 31, 2023

VOL. 1, ISSUE 7

## Dreaming



Sun Prairie Parks Friends is continually looking forward to what we can do in the future to make our parks safe, accessible, modern, and available to all residents to meet their needs. Our parks and trails have seen an increase in use since the pandemic which provides for more visibility for what Sun Prairie has to offer.

Part of what we do is to dream about how we can improve our parks through volunteer efforts, fund raising, and physical improvements. Our Earth Day events, the pickleball court expansion at Wyndham Hills, pollinator gardens, and our current disc golf initiative are examples of how we can support our parks and increase the community's awareness of the environment around us. Our annual meeting is an opportunity to capture some of the dreams of those around us, our members and the community.

Another part of our mission is supporting the community and its parks. We are currently discussing the formation of a foundation. Our annual meeting is an opportunity for our current membership and followers to provide their insights and expertise on this topic.

As part of the dreaming, we could use a few more members of our board to bring new dreams and expertise to the table to make our dreams and the dreams of those we serve come true.

## Opportunities to Support the Friends



Sheehan Park Invasive Removal—February 10, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Meet at the parking lot in Sheehan Park across from the Sun Prairie Public Library and join us to remove invasive species from Sheehan Park as part of the environmental improvements to that park!

Sign up at: <https://cityofsunprairie.volunteermatters.org/project-catalog/40>

## Opportunity to Donate to the Disc Golf Effort



Sun Prairie Parks Friends continues to fund raise for a disc golf course in Sun Prairie. In our approved fundraising agreement, the Friends will purchase the equipment and provide it for the City to install. The Friends and the City are working to finalize the site for the proposed nine-hole course in November so the Friends can complete the fundraising effort. **We currently have over \$5,000 in donations.**

**Consider donating, buying commemorative discs, or sponsoring a hole. Hurry, three holes are already taken!**  
You can find more information for the effort at:

<https://parksfriends.org/discgolf.html>

## Earth Day—Save the Date



Sun Prairie Parks Friends and the City will be celebrating Earth Day with a City-wide park clean-up. We will meet at Sheehan Park at 9:00 am on Saturday, April 20 to kick-off the event and then head out as teams or individuals to prepare everyone of the City Parks for the upcoming season by picking up trash and debris that has accumulated over the winter months. This effort saves thousands of dollars in city labor-hours that can be redistributed to other work and improvements in our parks. Watch our website and Facebook site for the event details.

## Upcoming Activites

**January 17, 2024, 5:00 pm —General Membership meeting**—Glass Nickel Pizza, 410 E Main St, Sun Prairie, WI 53590

**January 27, 2024** - as part of **Frozen Fest** activities 3:00-7:00PM, **Night at the Ice Rink**, Stoneridge Estates Park—The ice rink at Stoneridge Estates Park will be open all weekend, but there will be lots going on at the rink on Saturday night! Join the Parks Friends for a night skate while we enjoy music, games, bonfires, refreshments, and more.

**April 20, 2024—Earth Park Clean Up**, Meet at Sheehan Park at 9:00 am and then head to the parks throughout the City to prepare them for new season.

**May 2024—Pollinator Garden Installation**, locations to be announced.

**Fall 2024—Community Playground Build**—Westwynde Park

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