



Operations Department Memorandum

TO: Benjamin Haberthur, Executive Director
FROM: Jeremy Jensen, Director of Operations
RE: October 2024 Department Monthly Report

OPERATIONS

Seasonal Tasks: Closing Out Fall and Preparing for Winter

As with every passing year and the changing of the seasons, tasks shift in the month of October. Winter preparations begin, as the mowing finally slows for the season, giving operations staff members the time to transition to new priorities. Mowing in the month of October is primarily to mulch leaves, with a portion of the equipment being cleaned up for storage. Carts are out on the trails blowing leaves from hard surfaces and bridges, which can prove to be a dangerous hazard for cyclists and runners. Wet leaves create a slick hazard, so at minimum those are blown from the surface weekly. During the process of removing leaves, we find other hazards on the bridges, and staff will utilize that time to complete routine maintenance and repairs on those bridges. Lastly, the South Operations burn pit was organized to prepare for the upcoming winter tree work season.

Aside from equipment storage and leaf removal, sled hill preparations are underway, with the hills at Campton and Oakhurst mowed and ready for the winter sledding season. Mowing is the first step in the process of getting the hills prepared for winter sledding, followed by adding snow fence and hay bales to provide additional safety; this will take place later on in November as we approach the Thanksgiving holiday. By that time, sled hills and cable gates will be up throughout the district and ready for our winter season.

The District's campgrounds, both Paul Wolff and Big Rock, closed on Monday, 10/21, at noon. As the season came to a close, we were treated to some spectacular fall weather, perfect for camping, hiking, and roasting marshmallows over a campfire. At Paul Wolff campers turned out with enthusiasm for the last weekend and almost filled the campground to capacity, with only 4



Fall shut-down of Paul Wolff Campground.



2024 camping season comes to a close. See you in May, 2025!



Ranger Hernandez wrapping up clearing an intersection along the Fox River Trail.

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sites left open. Campers this year expressed appreciation for the excellent customer service by full-time and attendant staff at the office, firewood sales, campground cleanliness, and the quick response they received to questions. We generally received good feedback to the new reservation system enacted for the whole 2024 season, and hope to see everyone back next year.

The morning following the last day of camping, staff began the process of shutting down the campground. Beginning with blowing out the water lines to prevent freezing, staff tried revising the process to complete it in a shorter timeframe. We are happy to report that staff efficiently completed this entire task in only two days and, in the process, also shut down the flush restrooms and drinking fountains. Other tasks tackled in the fall include repairs to the electric boxes at each site, a thorough office cleaning, inventory of stock and removal of any freezable cleaning supplies. All the firepits have been cleaned, firewood removed and litter picked up from the campground and preserve entrance. With a final leaf mulching in the coming weeks and tree trimming projects planned for the off-season, the facility will be ready for opening again on May 1st, 2025.

Horticulturalist Work

The horticulturist and crew removed all annuals and prepped the soil for next season. We cut to shape coverings for the window boxes located around the Villa to prevent the geese from nesting in them in the spring. We began our seasonal cut back of the perennials in all areas. For the Centennial garden and Windmill we continued to edge the existing beds with repurposed pavers. In the Japanese Garden we planted over 300 bulbs with the Geneva Garden Club to further improve the south end of the garden. Our last Sulphur application of 7.5 pounds was completed for the restoration of the Rose Arbor bringing the total to 15 pounds applied this year. Keeping us on track for plants to be installed next summer (Centennial Garden). Weeding, removing leaves and tilling is done weekly.

Repairs, Maintenance, and Shut-down Procedures

All hands on deck assisted with the shutdown of the water at Big Rock and Paul Wolff Campgrounds this year



Ranger Oftedal pushing the burn pile at Big Rock to prepare for winter work.



Bridge repairs along Geneva Prairie Path.



Ranger Dempsey assisting with relocating mussels along the Fox River from the Carpentersville Dam.

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with the plan to take over the water system next year. Staff completed several rounds of plumbing repairs and maintenance calls; a leak was repaired at Hampshire FP, the pump and well pressure tanks at Brunner-Family FP and Tomo Chi Chi Lodge were replaced, because of failure due to their age. Staff also worked on windows at the staff residence at Tyler Creek FP, and began replacement of the bathroom floor at the Fabyan FP staff residence.

Other projects completed last month included a permanent hook-up, with a new meter and backflow, for the ball washer at Settler's Hill Golf Course; floor drain repair at the Muirhead Spring FP operations shop; the replacement of the Campton FP shelter began and all the facilities with chimneys were swept and inspected. Along with the regular duties of the sign shop, a new sign was created and installed for the new Treiber Family FP, a new entrance sign was made to replace the old sign at Fabyan West. Staff also assisted in the mussel relocation, as part of the Carpentersville Dam removal project.

Fleet & Equipment

In October, fleet staff serviced and/or repaired a total of 28 Vehicles and 20 pieces of equipment. Services include, but are not limited to, oil and filter change, air filters checked, lights checked, steering linkage, suspension checked, brake inspections, and tire inspections.

Fleet with the help of North and South Operations along with Natural Resources staff took 55 units (trucks and trailers) through KDOT for Safety Test Lane inspections. We handled the replacement of a major cooling system hose on a F-450 that required partial disassembly of the top half of the motor to access, keeping the cost down and getting the truck back into service quickly. Fleet also took delivery of three 2024 Ford F-450 chassis cabs that will be sent out for upfitting for dump body and snow removal equipment. These three trucks will make great additions to the Districts fleet.



Ranger Smith, Ranger Payne, Horticulturalist Umstead, and Ranger Hostert take a moment to take a photo, in between working on horticultural work.



Staff prepping the soil for next season.



New Treiber Family Forest Preserve Sign made and installed last month.