



Operations Department Memorandum

TO: Benjamin Haberthur, Executive Director
FROM: Jeremy Jensen, Director of Operations
RE: March 2025 Department Monthly Report

OPERATIONS

Spring Preparations

For District staff, spring is a time of transition and preparation, often with great variety. As the colder temperatures of winter are left behind, with the last attempts to cover our roadways with snow and ice, there are snowplow markers to remove and clean-up to do along roadways to prepare for mowing operations. Preserves undergo a thorough spring cleaning of amenities, to include restrooms and shelters, and putting out fresh garbage cans in anticipation of the increased usage seen in the summer months. Trails and roadways are blown free of leaves, twigs, and other debris to make them safe for travel and parking lots receive a realignment of concrete bumpers and cleanup of landscape edges. The picnic tables that were built or repaired over the winter months are placed in the preserves, and all temporary winter closures are returned open to allow for full summer access.

Staff now turns their attention to projects that are restricted to access during the winter months. This season fallen trees and log-jams were pulled from areas with difficult access, like back trail areas and creeks. Thawing ground and spring rains cause localized flooding, and removing these downed materials from these types of areas save the district significant time while also providing a better environment to enjoy for the patrons of the district.

Wrapping Up Winter Projects

In between the amenity preparations, staff wrap up winter trimming projects aimed at reducing vegetation encroaching on trails, minimizing the time requirements to keep trails accessible all summer long. Some brush and vegetation are removed from intersections to improve visibility for vehicles and bicycles operating around preserve entrances and critical trail crossings.



Staff clearing trees in creeks last month.



Storms last month caused several trees to be downed, above are Muirhead (first photo) and Fox River Trail (second photo).

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Additional chainsaw work is also required to clear obstructions resulting from windstorms frequently experienced in early spring. This season has already seen its share of trees across trails that need to be chipped up.

Prescribed Burns, Maintenance, & Clean-Up Events

A variety of other activities require staff attention at this time of year, including participating in the prescribed burn season whenever weather conditions cooperate. When it's too wet to burn, equipment maintenance is being wrapped up so the fleet of mowers can be deployed without delay or breakdowns in the coming month, and litter pickup is a high priority along roadways, riverbanks, trails and picnic areas. Two successful clean-up events were hosted this month at Fox River Shores to haul out trash from the riverbed recently exposed after the removal of the Carpentersville Dam. Trash items are sorted for recycling whenever feasible.

Along with this seasonal litter removal and other spring-cleaning tasks are underway. Early season warmth and rain will lead to an early start to the mow season here at the district. Other tasks include repairing picnic table and servicing lawn mowers to get prepared for a busy later spring and summer season.

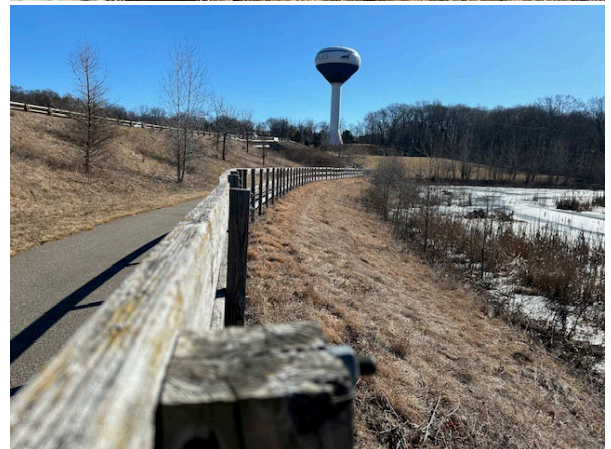
Horticultural Work

Soil testing was completed and compiled at the Japanese Garden, the Centennial Garden, and the Durant House. Adding that information to compare against previous tests. Shifting the pH along the Centennial arbor down to 7 has been successfully accomplished, a process that begun nearly 18 months ago. The order for new plants for the arbor has been placed at Midwest Groundcovers.

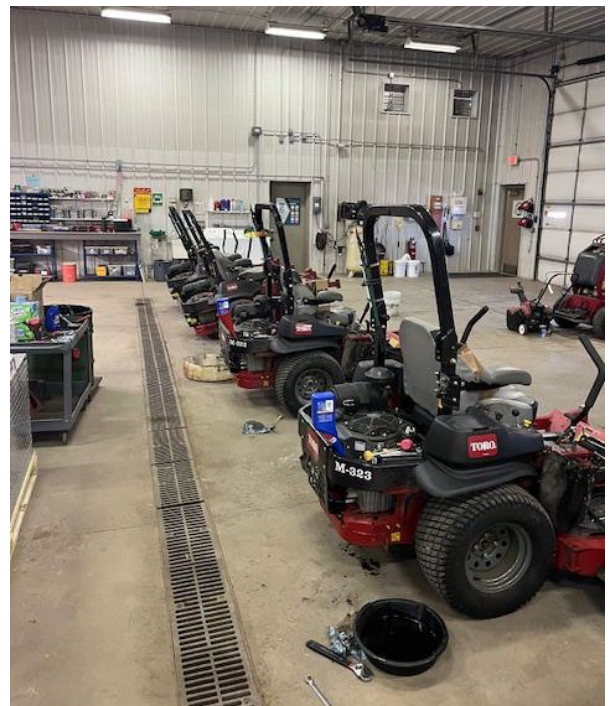
We also began some light spring cut back in the Japanese Garden, and began repairing the pathways from erosion.

Fleet

In March, Fleet focused on annual services for numerous carts, tractors, and mowers; getting them ready to go for the season. April is Safety Test Lane inspections for District trucks and trailers, preparations have also begun to make that an efficient process.



Before and after photos of clearing vegetation along the Fox River Trail to maintain line-of-sight.



Staff conducting equipment maintenance during the season transition.