Our Mission

“Helping Des Moines Live Well, Play Hard and Protect the Earth.”
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CONTACT US

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parks@dmgov.org

Facebook.com/desmoinesparks
Instagram.com/desmoinesparks
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Pinterest.com/desmoinesparks

Text Message Notifications
Text any of the following keywords to 84483 to sign up for updates on:
DSMEvents, DSMPools, DSMSports, DSMTrails
An annual report affords us the opportunity to not only review the past year’s achievements but perhaps allows us the chance to measure the impact the services we provide have on the community at large. In early 2014, we announced the findings of a study we commissioned through the University of Northern Iowa entitled “The Economic Impact of Parks and Recreation Services.” The results contained within this report provide quantifiable data showing how every facet of our organization makes a difference in our city from tourism dollars to storm water management.

By continually developing and strengthening public and private partnerships, we have been able to lessen our budgetary impact. In 2014 alone, over $1 million in amenities was donated to the park system including Rotary Riverwalk Park and Ashley Okland Star Playground.

Our team constantly looks to lessen our impact on the environment and we continue to focus our efforts on sustainability. Nowhere is this more evident than in our new headquarters, the Richard A. Clark Municipal Service Center. Housing nearly all of our services in this innovative facility has created a more cohesive team and streamlined operations.

The people who make up our department, the staff of 80 full-time and over 200 seasonal employees, strive to positively impact the quality of life through the places we maintain, the programs we provide and the projects we complete. This group is a powerful force for community revitalization, environmental and historical education, health and wellness, connectedness with nature, and much more. This great potential can only be realized when supported by effective, passionate and committed elected officials, board members and committees and we are very fortunate to have them working with us in our mission of “Helping Des Moines Live Well, Play Hard and Protect the Earth”

Des Moines is a rare region where you can have more of what you expect and less of what you don’t. It is a place where life is accessible, affordable and achievable. With the national media taking note, our city ranks high as a destination for families, young professionals and empty nesters and the park and recreation department has been a key contributor to this.

With appreciation,

Benjamin R. Page
Director of Parks and Recreation
City of Des Moines
DID YOU KNOW?

$1.1 MILLION annually in property taxes can be collected from single family houses within 500 feet of parks.
2014 PROPERTY TAXES

Des Moines Public Schools 38.55%
City of Des Moines 35.95%
Polk County 15.23%
Broadlawns County Hospital 6.62%
DMACC 1.40%
State of Iowa 0.01%
Polk County Extension 0.09%
Polk County Assessor 0.59%

FY2015 ADOPTED CITY OF DES MOINES OPERATING BUDGET

General Fund by Department
$153,535,491

City Manager 2%
Community Development 4%
Finance 6%
Fire 23%
Human Resources 1%
Information Technology 3%
Library 4%
Legal 2%
Other 1%
Public Works <1%
Parks & Recreation 10%
Police 38%

Engineering 5%
“During my tenure at the City of Des Moines and as city manager, I was lucky to have been involved in the transformation of the park and recreation system including some of the most iconic features in our city such as Gray’s Lake Park, the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park and the Principal Riverwalk. In addition to these major attractions, the numerous neighborhood parks and miles of trails not only contribute to the quality of life that citizens have come to expect but provide a significant economic impact on our local economy. The city of today and what it will be tomorrow will continue to rely on what our Parks and Recreation Department offers the residents and visitors of Des Moines.”

– Richard A. Clark
Former Des Moines City Manager
DONATED ACQUISITIONS

“Cash or In-Kind”

2011: $125,101.50
2012: $38,509.00
2013: $156,674.50
2014: $1,448,317.00
The parks and recreation programs provide a range of values to residents, businesses and the local government. Many of these values are often overlooked and rarely quantified. The purpose of this effort is to quantify the benefits received due to the operation of Des Moines Parks and Recreation.

**REVENUE PRODUCING FACTORS FOR CITY GOVERNMENT**

Property values within 500 feet of parks have an increased property value of over $1.1 million in tax receipts to the City of Des Moines.

The City of Des Moines collects an additional $1 million in tax receipts from a sample of tourism activities that are held in parks, trails, festivals and sporting events, which are operated by the Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department.

**WEALTH INCREASING FACTORS FOR CITIZENS AND BUSINESSES**

Homes in close proximity to parks have an increased value of $45 million dollars.

A sample of tourism activities held in the City of Des Moines parks, trails, festivals and sporting venues bring more than $12 million of revenue to the citizens and businesses.

**COST SAVING FACTORS TO CITIZENS**

A sample of seven fitness and recreational programs provided by the Des Moines Department of Parks and Recreation save an estimated $210,845 in direct use spending. Direct use value refers to the difference between the public and private costs for a recreational service.

Citizens who engage in fitness and exercise programs provided by the Department of Parks and Recreation are conservatively estimated to save $19 million in health savings and medical costs.

The Department of Parks and Recreation provides opportunities for volunteers and donations resulting in what is referred to as community cohesion. The value is estimated to be $1.2 million (volunteer labor and donations).

**COST SAVING FACTORS FOR CITY GOVERNMENT**

Of the parks and open space areas within the city's integrated sewer system (20% of the total system is integrated) area, the cost savings for water treatment, and operations and maintenance is estimated to be $398,832 per year. The cost savings is calculated based on only 863 of the 5,481 acres (15%) of parks within the City of Des Moines.

Due to the presence of parks and open space in floodplains, the City saves an estimated $1.7 million in flood protection benefits.
THE ECONOMIC IMPACT
BY THE NUMBERS

$2.1 million tax revenue

$21 million event income

$19 million savings

700 jobs

PROPERTY VALUE

$1.1 million annually in property taxes can be collected from single family houses within 500 feet of parks.

TOURISM

$1 million is collected in tax receipts from various tourism activities that are held in parks, trails, festivals and sporting events.

HEALTH

Des Moines Park and Recreation users are estimated to save $19,472,194 in health care costs.

TRAILS

Projected economic impact of Des Moines trails was just over $15 million.

JOB CREATION

29 festival & events + 220 sporting events + 214 trails = 700 JOBS

PROGRAMS

Festival and Sporting events produce between $1.7 to $2.3 million; and $11.2 to $18.9 million respectively.

$155,854 Stormwater management saves the city annually in direct water treatment costs.

$316,083 volunteer dollars. A total of 2,601 volunteers account for more than 14,000 volunteer hours for the city.
An average home in Des Moines with $104,100 assessed value pays $119 towards Parks and Recreation. For $119 a year, residents have access to these Parks and Recreation & Municipal Facilities:
THAT’S NOT ALL

$119 ALSO GETS YOU ACCESS TO GREAT LANDMARKS

$119 ALSO GETS YOU ACCESS TO THESE FACILITIES MANAGED BY CONTRACT/LEASE

THERE’S STILL MORE

$119 ALSO GETS YOU ACCESS TO THESE FACILITIES MANAGED BY CONTRACT/LEASE
Des Moines Park and Recreation users are estimated to save $19,472,194 in health care costs.
An appointed Park and Recreation board meets monthly. This 15-member panel advises City Council and oversees planning and administration of city parks, cemeteries, recreation centers, aquatic centers, and various programs.

Susan R. Noland.................................................................Chair
Jon D. Cahill .................................................................Board Member
Richard Thornton ..........................................................Board Member
Paula J. Feltner ...............................................................Board Member
Jeffrey C. Clubb .............................................................Board Member
Kimberley Boggus .........................................................Board Member
Victoria Facto ...............................................................Board Member
Sammy F. Pugh ..............................................................Board Member
Danny Passick ...............................................................Board Member
Loyd W. Ogle .................................................................Board Member
George Davis .................................................................Board Member
Vincent J. Scavo .............................................................Board Member
Andrea Jansa ...............................................................Board Member
Connie Boesen .............................................................Board Member

2014 PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
ROSE GARDEN

The Rose Garden Committee consists of citizen volunteers, who assist the Parks and Recreation Department in providing advisory oversight of the Clare and Miles Mills Rose Garden. The committee provides recommendations on rose varieties on an annual basis. They review and recommend anticipated capital improvements and care of the rose collection.

TRAILS AND GREENWAYS

The Trails and Greenways Advisory Committee is authorized by the Polk County Conservation Board and the Des Moines Park and Recreation Board. The purpose of the committee is to assist and advise the City, County and other governmental agencies concerning the multi-use recreational trail system, the greenways system, nature trails, on-street bikeways and water trails.

The Des Moines Park and Recreation Board and the Polk County Conservation Board are each responsible for appointing five members to the committee. The cities of Ankeny, Johnston, Urbandale, West Des Moines and Pleasant Hill also appoint one member each.

CITIZEN CEMETERY ADVISORY

The Citizen Cemetery Advisory Committee (CCAC) is a committee authorized by the Des Moines Park and Recreation Board for the purposes of advocating for the public as well as assisting and advising Parks and Recreation Department management in matters concerning the City’s seven municipal cemeteries. Its current stated mission is: We will be guided by the public’s need for community gatherings celebrating life both past and present while honoring history in a serene, natural setting.
2014 SUBCOMMITTEES

CITIZEN GOLF ADVISORY COMMITTEE

As the body established by the City Council to advise the Council in all matters pertaining to the Parks and Recreation Department, the Park and Recreation Board does herewith authorize the establishment and support of a citizen advisory committee to be known as The Des Moines Citizen Golf Advisory Committee whose activities will be of an advisory and informative nature to the Board and department staff in the Park and Recreation Board’s process of recommending golf policy and fees to the Council for the citizens of the City.

URBAN CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Des Moines Park and Recreation Board created an Urban Conservation Advisory Committee as a standing subcommittee of the full board in 2004. The mission of the committee is to promote a park management philosophy that is holistic and ecologically based through policies that direct the planning, design and maintenance of healthy green space in the City of Des Moines toward protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

The City of Des Moines owns approximately 25% of the land in the City. Management policies and maintenance of this property are under the supervision of the Parks and Recreation Department. The Park and Recreation Board believes that implementing more sustainable practices on this land can have a large impact on the quality of our natural environment, the quality of life in Des Moines and can also demonstrate practices that homeowners and developers could implement as well.

Our work to date has addressed the Parks Department’s maintenance practices to include the introduction of more native species throughout the City’s park and open space lands, decreased mowing to expand the amount of land that is covered in native plants and trees, worked to implement a series of policies regarding stewardship of the City’s land and buildings through the application of chemicals, urban reforestation studies and recommendations, storm water management, environmental education, waste reduction, use of nontoxic materials, energy management and sustainable site design.

The committee includes individuals with diverse backgrounds and interests in an effort to create a balanced advisory group.
### 2014 Subcommittees Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cemetery Advisory</th>
<th>Rose Garden</th>
<th>Urban Conservation Advisory Committee</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ferol Wegner</td>
<td>Sarah Hill</td>
<td>Scott Ralston</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patrick Beeman</td>
<td>Miles Mills</td>
<td>Tom Rosburg</td>
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<td>Max Knauer</td>
<td>Delores Pagliais</td>
<td>Dave Silver</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carlton Peterson</td>
<td>Ed Pagliais</td>
<td>Marilyn Staples</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Lamb</td>
<td>Matt Rosen</td>
<td>Keith Summerville</td>
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<tr>
<td>George Davis</td>
<td>Janis Ruan</td>
<td>Jennifer Welch</td>
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<td>Tammy Hayes</td>
<td>Scott Wallace</td>
<td>Doug Adamson</td>
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<td>Scott Atzen</td>
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<td>Citizen Golf Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>Brian Bakke</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jim Calvert</td>
<td>Jim Calvert</td>
<td>Chuck Becker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jon Thyberg</td>
<td>Jim Calvert</td>
<td>Jane Clark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vincent Scavo</td>
<td>Jon Thyberg</td>
<td>Kimberly Becker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam Pugh</td>
<td>Vincent Scavo</td>
<td>Dan Pritchard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Thornton</td>
<td>Sam Pugh</td>
<td>Deb Schiel-Lorson</td>
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<td>Paula Feltner</td>
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<td>Gina Duffy</td>
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<td>Loren Lown</td>
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<td>Stephen Vilmain</td>
<td>Gina Duffy</td>
<td>Susan Noland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rex Coble</td>
<td>Stephen Vilmain</td>
<td>Andrea Jansa</td>
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<td>Richard Hodges</td>
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<td>Susan Hanke</td>
<td>Richard Hodges</td>
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<td>Kathy Stachon</td>
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<td>Trails and Greenways</td>
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<tr>
<td>Craig Stafford</td>
<td>Trails and Greenways</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris McCarthy</td>
<td>Craig Stafford</td>
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<td>Ginger Soelberg</td>
<td>Chris McCarthy</td>
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<td>Tamra Jurgemeyer</td>
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<td>Alan Foster</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carol George</td>
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<td>Vicki Facto</td>
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<td>Tim Lane</td>
<td>Vicki Facto</td>
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<td>Linda Appelgate</td>
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<td>Mark Courter</td>
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<td>Connie Johnson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Penny Thompson</td>
<td>Connie Johnson</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Scott Sumpter</td>
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### 2014 Retirements

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<th>Leonard Ballard</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>08/20/1991</td>
<td>12/31/2014</td>
<td>23 yrs. 4.5 mo.</td>
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</table>

“As a past Park and Recreation Board member and one of the founding directors of Des Moines Park and Recreation Foundation, I understand how important parks are to our city neighborhoods. We lived close to Greenwood Park and my son Jay Spence often visited the park while growing up in Des Moines. Later he became a successful photographer in Los Angeles but was killed in a car accident 10 years ago. The Greenwood shelter was in great need of repair to be reopened. In working with the Parks and Recreation department, it was rewarding to have found the perfect project to honor the memory of my son. The new shelter has far exceeded all my expectations.”

– Suzy Burns
DID YOU KNOW?

$1 MILLION is collected in tax receipts from various tourism activities that are held in parks, trails, festivals and sporting events.
In late summer, Parks and Recreation administration as well as the majority of the field staff moved into the new Richard A. Clark Municipal Service Center, located at 1551 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway. The building, at just over 100,000 square feet, was built with many environmentally friendly features including:

- Parking lot bioswales to capture stormwater and filter water before reaching the detention basins.
- Low/no mow seeding in detention basins.
- Permeable pavers between parking and sidewalk to capture and filter stormwater.
- Interior courtyard providing daylight inside building. About 80% of regularly occupied spaces are lit with daylighting and occupancy sensors to control lighting.
- Vehicle bay skylights eliminate the need for lighting on most days.
- LED lighting in the majority of areas helps reduce the lighting power density by 20%.
- Solar thermal panels on the roof assist the boiler for the in-floor radiant heat and the water heater for domestic hot water.
- Rain water from the roof is captured in a 2,000 gallon storage tank. The water will be used to maintain the landscaping around the facility and in the parks.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification is currently being sought for the Richard A. Clark Municipal Service Center, which would add to the City’s five LEED buildings.
The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the management of 76 parks across Des Moines. Besides the special features found in some of the signature parks (Ewing, Union, Greenwood, Gray’s Lake and Pappajohn Sculpture Park) patrons can enjoy a variety of amenities such as, basketball courts, BMX track, boat and bicycle rentals, disc golf, enclosed and open-air shelters, equipment rental and concessions, horseshoe pits, ice skating, nature trails, picnic areas with tables and grills, playgrounds, ponds and fishing, sledding hills, soap box derby track, soccer fields, softball fields, tennis courts, volleyball courts, wading pools, skateboarding, dog parks and more.

Gray’s Lake Park is the city’s best-known and most-visited recreation area. The park has unique qualities and features that prove to be popular regardless of time of day or season of the year. The iconic 1,400-foot-long Kruidenier Trail Pedestrian Bridge over the lake is the park’s most distinguishing feature. Even more dramatic at night, the bridge comes to life as a rainbow of colors light up its 16-foot-wide pathway and reflects off the dichroic glass panel railings. The 1.9-mile walk around Gray’s Lake is known as “doing the loop;” for some residents it is a daily ritual that even trail repairs and flooding won’t interrupt.

**DOG PARKS**

Nearly 2,000 permits were sold for use at Des Moines’ off-leash dog park facilities. Annual permits are required and are available for purchase for just $20 at the City Clerk’s office in City Hall. The permit is good for all locations:

**Ewing Dog Park** - 8.5 acres of fenced area for all dogs, one-acre fenced area for dogs 20 lbs or less;

**Reno Memorial Dog Park** - 3.5 acres of fenced area for all dogs;

**Riverwalk Dog Park** - 4.0 acres of fenced area for all dogs

Dog park ambassadors are always needed at each park. In 2014, 41 volunteers helped to keep the parks safe by ensuring all patrons have their permit visible while using the facility, informing users of the facility rules and requirements and more. If you are interested in becoming a dog park ambassador, please email parksvolunteer@dmgov.org.

**AQUATICS**

There are five pools and aquatic centers open to residents from May until September. Season swim passes are available for individuals and families. During the month of April, purchase a swim pass and save $5 to $20. Private party rentals are an option at all of our aquatic facilities, making them a unique option for your next birthday party or special event. Family Swim Nights are held monthly and Doggie Dives are held the last day of the pool season as a great opportunity for dogs and their owners to celebrate the last day of the pool season.
Des Moines has two multi-use community centers, located on opposite sides of the city to serve residents. Our two community centers serve users as a neighborhood hub. They provide a place to learn, play, socialize, collaborate and belong.

**Pioneer Columbus Community Center** – Just minutes from downtown – the center serves as a neighborhood hub for people of all ages to learn, play and socialize.

**Robert L. Scott Four Mile Community Center** – Four Mile Community Center has an active weight room, a strong aerobics program, a well-attended senior walking club and is the hub of our youth basketball program.

Both community centers provide congregate meal sites for seniors ages 60 and over, warming and/or cooling centers during inclement weather, and also host a number of Camp Fire and neighborhood meetings throughout the year. These facilities also host numerous youth and adult league sports throughout the year.

**Pioneer Columbus Community Center Amenities:**
- **New climbing wall**
- 2 indoor gyms: basketball, volleyball, takraw, pickleball, kickball, dodgeball, walking
- Weight room with free weights and cable machines, cable TV, stereo
- Cardio area with 2 ellipticals, treadmill, stair stepper, exercise bike
- Game room with 2 billiards, table tennis, foosball, air hockey
- Rental spaces: 2 gyms
  - 75 person multi-purpose room and kitchen
  - 50 person open space
  - 35 person open space
  - 20 person conference room
  - 15 person conference room
- ADA accessible restrooms
- ADA accessible parking
- Elevator
- Water fountains
- Indoor playground (Seasonal Imagination Playschool)
- 3 tier stage
- Outdoor playground
- Wading pool
- Outdoor basketball court
- Paved walking path
- Large open area of green space
- Gardens and flower beds

**Robert L. Scott Four Mile Community Center**
- **New playground**
- 1 Indoor Gym: basketball, volleyball, takraw, pickleball, kickball, dodgeball, walking
- Cardio/weight room: free weights and cable machines, 2 treadmills, 2 exercise bikes, cable TV
- Game room with table tennis and foosball
- Family room with fireplace, piano, sofa, 2 oversized chairs, cable TV
- Rental spaces - 1 gym
  - 50 person sit down eating/multi-purpose room and kitchen (multipurpose/family/game room can fit 75 - not all sitting),
- 15 person conference room with cable TV
- ADA accessible restrooms
- ADA accessible parking
- Water fountains
- Open air shelter house
- Skate park
- Softball back stop
- Large open area of green space
- Gardens and flower beds

“*The community center has a fun, relaxed, and safe environment. We meet a lot of like-minded seniors and enjoy talking with the other participants and the staff. We really like the location and the price of admission.*”

– Dino and Lee Persaud
There are 11 traditional wading pools, four splash pools, four spraygrounds and two fountains operating in Des Moines parks free of charge. Our wading pool season extends from the first full week in June through mid-August each year. The days and hours of operation vary by facility. These water facilities are specifically aimed at children ages 10 and under.

The wading pools are dispersed throughout the city and offer supervised water play. It is a great opportunity for children to meet other children, have fun and build water confidence. Parental supervision is required.

A splash pool is a splash pad with standing water and spray features; offering water play. City of Des Moines Splash Pools are staffed, however, parental supervision is strongly encouraged.

A Sprayground is a splash pad with spray features without standing water. Spraygrounds offer unsupervised water play. City of Des Moines staff is not provided at spraygrounds or fountains, parental supervision is required.

We invite you to experience all that this extensive trail system has to offer. You’ll find it to be your way of connecting with places, nature, friends and culture. You can run, walk, in-line skate or bicycle with connections to over 550 miles of existing central Iowa trails (52 within Des Moines) and many more planned. Whether you are out for an afternoon of exercise, commuting to work or enjoying the scenery on a family outing, the trails are yours to enjoy and protect. Trails aren’t just for exercise; numerous riders also utilize the trail system for their daily commute. By reducing the number of cars on the road, those who bike to work also cut down on pollution and fuel use. The result is cleaner air and healthier lungs for everyone.

The newest segment of trail is along the Waveland trail from I-235 to University Avenue.

Wading Pool and Splash Pool Attendance:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
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<td>Ashby</td>
<td>19,717</td>
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<td>Ashfield</td>
<td>985</td>
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<td>Bates</td>
<td>688</td>
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<td>Burke</td>
<td>2,709</td>
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<td>Chesterfield</td>
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<td>Crivaro</td>
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<td>Drake</td>
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<td>Grandview</td>
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<td>Jordan</td>
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<td>Martin Luther King Jr.</td>
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<td>Sayers</td>
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<td>Sheridan</td>
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<td>Stone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tower</td>
<td>659</td>
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<tr>
<td>Union</td>
<td>18,818</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>82,297</strong></td>
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</table>
The City’s seven municipal cemeteries range in age from 107-166 years and are of historic, cultural and societal importance to Des Moines, the metro and the State of Iowa. Comprising nearly 10% of the City’s parkland, the cemeteries’ 353 acres contain more than 171,000 interments in below- and above-ground spaces and niches. Eleven full-time and two part-time staff provide perpetual care for the grounds and infrastructure in addition to providing a full range of support services to the public and the funeral industry. They are assisted by over 40-volunteers who serve as cemetery stewards for specific areas of the cemeteries through the Adopt-a-Plot program.

Cemetery operations currently account for nearly 31% of the Park and Recreation Department’s revenue and 10% of its expenditures. Increased revenues and additional efficiencies in municipal cemetery operations in Fiscal Year 2014 continued the now-three-year trend of decreasing taxpayer subsidy numbers. Down from the FY 2013 subsidy level of 21%, the current year’s 16% subsidy of operations was the lowest operating ratio in the past 15 years.

In fiscal year 2014, 420 below- and above-ground spaces were sold; 640 interments were conducted. Two new areas opened for space sales at Glendale Cemetery this year, both in the high-demand pond area off University Avenue, offer consumers more options for single- and double-space lots. Elm Grove Cemetery’s rural setting was enhanced through the clearing of bordering fences and scrub trees as well as demolition of an unnecessary maintenance building. The resulting new scenic vistas, along with a re-built roadway, have literally paved the way for development of a premium soon-to-open area along the south entrance.

Also new in 2014 . . . a cemetery database search site, www.cemeterysearch.dmgov.org, was introduced, providing the public the convenience of researching grave locations from any computer or “smart” phone connected to the Internet.

“I’m extending my thanks and sharing my gratitude for the service provided by Des Moines Municipal Cemeteries Staff and the multitude of volunteers, including “adopt a plot” organizations and individuals and the Citizen Advisory Committee members whose faithful service contributes measurably to the mission:

Giving thanks, as well for the public support generated both through service to preserving memories and for enabling the City of Des Moines to do so in the most fiscally responsible manner, preserving and advancing the tradition of Public Cemeteries as a model for others in Iowa and Our Nation;

• For the ethical business-practices which are held paramount by both staff and Advisory Committee Volunteers;

• For the development planning for our Cemeteries guided both by Staff knowledge and know-how and by the inputs of Citizen Advisory Committee members, drawing from their diverse backgrounds and current involvement with business, the community, our proud military traditions and service and with the broad, diverse Faith Community of Central Iowa.

– Max R. Knauer, III
James W. Cownie Soccer Park - Cownie Soccer Park is the home field for Grandview College, AIB College, Drake University and local high schools including: Roosevelt, Lincoln, East, Carlisle and Des Moines Christian. This renowned facility hosts many of the states most prestigious soccer events including the boys and girls high school state soccer tournaments, Menace Midwest Invitational, Just For Girls Spring Tournament and more. In addition the complex has hosted US Youth Soccer national tournaments including Region II Championships and The Presidents Cup Tournament.

Cownie amenities include 12 irrigated turf fields, four of which are lit and have scoreboards. Field nine at the complex is considered championship level and consists of 2,000 seat bleachers, a press box and a video platform. The facility also has a 1,200 vehicle parking lot system, concession stand, playground and maintenance facility.

Greater Des Moines Softball Complex - This complex is the premier facility in the area for adult softball play. Each year this site hosts district and state Amateur Softball Association tournaments. In past years national tournaments such as the North American Fastpitch Association, World Championships and the Senior Slow Pitch World Series have been held at the facility. In addition, Des Moines Parks and Recreation’s adult softball leagues, consisting of nearly 400 teams, schedules nearly 2,500 league games yearly at this location.

The complex has four irrigated turf fields, all of which are lit. All fields have scoreboards and bleacher seating. Other complex amenities include: a new playground, concession stand, maintenance facility and parking lot to accommodate up to 200 vehicles.

James W. Cownie Baseball Park - This park is one of the top baseball facilities in the area and hosts many local and national United States Specialty Sports Association tournaments. Each summer, this site hosts South Des Moines Little League games with over 500 youth playing nearly 300 games.

The complex consists of eight irrigated turf youth fields, two of which are lit. All fields have scoreboards and covered bleacher seating. Other complex amenities include a playground, batting cages, concession stand, new maintenance building and parking lots to accommodate up to 250 vehicles.
In 2014, rentals totaled 1,340 and provided users with the perfect location for birthdays, family reunions, baby showers, neighborhood meetings, meal sites and much more. Dispersed throughout the city, our department provides nine enclosed shelters and 27 open-air shelters available for reservation as well as 11 “first come, first serve” shelters.

Renovations were completed on a shelter at Greenwood Park, which was converted from an open-air to an enclosed shelter and renamed the Jay Spence Shelter House.

Customer Survey Comments:

“Really nice shelter, love the outside pergola with the tables to sit outside. Beautiful location. Liked that we could set the time to meet the park person with the key.”

“We love this shelter and have already scheduled for next year. Perfect.”

“Overall it was a wonderful experience; and I thank you!!”

“The shelter was very clean and easily accessible from the parking lot.”

“I like renting shelters online and how the calendars are there so we can see what is/isn’t available.”

“We were completely satisfied and would rent the shelter again.”

“The person who met me was very helpful & the person who came to close shelter up actually helped us carry stuff to the cars”

“We have rented this shelter before, and have always had a good experience. It was perfect for my daughter and niece’s birthday party.”

Des Moines Parks and Recreation owns and operates a 15,000 square foot greenhouse located at 2501 SE Maury. The vast majority of the labor necessary for plant production is provided by hundreds of volunteers who donate thousands of hours to produce the annuals.

Statistics for 2014 include:

• 87,312 annuals were grown for the Neighborhood Flower Program;
• 64,848 plants grown for parks, city facilities and recreational complexes;
• 99,684 plants grown for Fleur Drive medians and Water Works Park;
• 39,640 plants grown for the downtown streetscapes, containers and planting beds;
• Greenhouse Volunteer Transplanting in the Tropics Program – 191 volunteers transplanted 291,484 annual plants.
The Principal Riverwalk is a 1.2 mile looping trail along the Des Moines River that features lighted, landscaped public spaces, world class public art and unique pedestrian bridges and pathways that connect to over 300 miles of Central Iowa trails. The project was a gift to the City in 2013 in honor of the 125th anniversary of the Principal Financial Group.

A new amenity, the Rotary Riverwalk Park, was added to the Principal Riverwalk in late 2014, the culmination of a 10-year project undertaken by multiple local Rotary clubs.

Another new feature was the addition of a canopy to Brenton Skating Plaza, which extends the usage of the facility throughout the year for special events, concerts, etc.

**The Riverwalk is a collection of unique downtown amenities.**

- Iowa Women of Achievement Bridge
- Meredith Trail
- Brenton Skating Plaza
- Rotary Riverwalk Park
- Hansen Triangle
- The Hub Spot
- Promenade and multi-use trail
- Long Look Garden
- Union Railroad Bridge

This year, golfers enjoyed a combined 74,000 rounds of golf at A.H. Blank, Bright Grandview and Waveland Golf Courses. All three City of Des Moines public golf courses have affordable rates and vary in course design, ranging from tree placement and sand traps to green size, which offers golfers a different experience each round.

A.H. Blank Golf Course, located at SW 9th & County Line Road, first opened in 1971 as a nine hole course, it then expanded to 18 in 1985. This course can be challenging as water and sand come into play on many of the holes, especially the front nine. Throughout the 6,700 yard course there are 31 sand traps and 10 water holes. Blank’s clubhouse features a full service deli, pro shop and banquet room. The course also has a driving range. Blank also has a miniature golf course available for groups, parties or just individual fun.

Bright Grandview Golf Course, located at 2401 East 29th Street, was built in 1902, making it one of the oldest courses in the county. The layout of the course is relatively flat, making trees the biggest challenge. Bright Grandview has a total yardage of 5,422 yards. Bright Grandview’s clubhouse, new in 2012, has a full bar and grill, pro shop and banquet room. Bright Grandview is one of the oldest in the country, not just the county.

Waveland Golf Course, located at 4908 University Avenue, is the oldest municipal golf course west of the Mississippi River. Built in 1901, the entire course, which measures just over 6,500 yards, is on wooded hillsides surrounded by mature trees. Golfers say this is the most difficult of the City’s three public golf courses. Waveland’s clubhouse is a vintage 1940’s red brick building, complete with a pro shop, banquet hall, full bar, concession counter and excellent food. Waveland also has a putting green available for anyone to practice on. The Waveland clubhouse was built in 1936 as a WPA project.

Commonalities of all three courses include Fat Joe’s Pizza, GPS systems in carts at Waveland and Blank and free sledding during the winter months. Besides being used for the usual corporate outings, tournaments and every day rounds of golf, all three golf courses can be rented for your wedding, birthday party or holiday get together. For more information about any Des Moines public golf courses, visit www.dmparks.org.
DID YOU KNOW?

$2.3 & $18.6 Million produced by Festivals and Sporting events respectively
# BY THE NUMBERS

**Aquatics Attendance:**
- Ashworth: 11,225
- Birdland: 8,065
- Nahas: 14,135
- Northwest: 14,804
- Teachout: 16,081
- **TOTAL Attendance:** 64,310

**Swim Lesson Attendance:**
- Baby, Infant and Me: 94
- Pre-School Swim: 157
- Level 1: 357
- Level 2: 413
- Level 3: 519
- Level 4: 240
- Level 5: 128
- Adult Swim Lessons: 10
- Winter Swim Lessons: 86
- Daycare Group Swim Lessons: 174
- English Language Learners Swim Lessons: 165
- Aquatic Certification courses: 85

**Wading Pool and Splash Pool Attendance:**
- Ashby: 19,717
- Ashfield: 985
- Bates: 688
- Burke: 2,709
- Chesterfield: 1,090
- Crivar: 17,584
- Drake: 4,239
- Grandview: 1,958
- Jordan: 844
- Martin Luther King Jr: 5,516
- Sayers: 1,030
- Sheridan: 1,313
- Stone: 5,147
- Tower: 659
- Union: 18,818
- **Total:** 82,297

**Facility Rentals:**
- Open Shelters: 756
- Enclosed Shelters: 584
- Amphitheaters (Sylvan and Simon): 62
- Floral Gardens: 32
- Community Center Rentals
  - (Pioneer Columbus): 46
- Community Center Rentals (Four Mile): 175

**Gray’s Lake Rentals:**
- Beach: 6
- NW area: 9
- NW Shoreline: 9
- Peninsula: 5
- SE Area: 9
- South Dock: 1
- Terrace Rentals: 36
- Kruidenier Trail: 24
- **Total:** 99
- Boat: 10,750
- Bike: 527

**P&R Sponsored Program Attendance:**
- Evelyn K. Davis Park Program: 8,130
- Halloween Hike: 95
- Birdfeeder Workshop: 8
- Bricks 4 Kidz: 10
- Canine Craze at River Walk Dog Park: 13
- Kite Flying Festival: 33
- Plant.Grow.Fly. Mother’s Day Flowers: 5
- Rain Barrel Workshop: 32
- Snow Shoeing in the Park: 18
- Story Time in Greenwood: 10
- Superhero/Princess 5k Fun Run: 60
- Wiffleball-Pee Wee-Coed: 53
- Water Safety Instructor Course: 12
- Father/Daughter Dance: 677
## Free Flicks
- **Art Center 6/5 Moonstruck** __________ 100
- **Ashby 6/12 The Incredibles** __________ 200
- **Cownie 6/27 The Gumball Rally** __________ 40
- **Witmer 7/3 Gravity (PG-13)** __________ 75
- **EK Davis 7/5 Despicable Me 2** __________ 100
- **Art Center 7/10 Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid** __________ 200
- **Evergreen 7/17 The Smurfs 2** __________ 250
- **Sargent 7/25 The Blind Side** __________ 120
- **Good 7/31 The Lego Movie** __________ 200
- **MLK 8/5 The Nut Job** __________ 75
- **Art Center 8/7 The Pink Panther (1963)** __________ 50
- **Ewing 8/9 Despicable Me** __________ 350
- **Woodlawn 8/14 The Karate Kid (1984)** __________ 40
- **Hoyt Sherman Place 8/23 E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL (Restored)** __________ 100
- **Simon Estes 8/28 Ghostbusters** __________ 26
- **Art Center 9/4 Maltese Falcon** __________ 170

## Community Gardeners
- **Total Gardeners** __________ 211
- **Ashfield** __________ 9
- **Franklin** __________ 135
- **Downtown** __________ 53
- **Woodlawn** __________ 28

## Total Garden Plots __________ 221
- **Ashfield** __________ 12
- **Franklin** __________ 179
- **Woodlawn** __________ 30

## Activity Type
<table>
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<td>Coed Spring Bags League</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coed Winter Bags League</td>
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<td>Adult Kickball League</td>
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## Softball
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<td>Men’s Softball</td>
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<td>Men’s 12” SLOW-Pitch District</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Men’s 12” Fast-Pitch</td>
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## Soccer
- **Indoor Pee-Wee** __________ 79
- **Outdoor Pee-Wee** __________ 176

## Basketball
- **Adult Teams** __________ 12
- **Pee-Wee** __________ 441
- **Youth Teams** __________ 353

## Flag Football
- **Adult** __________ 24
- **Adult State Tournament** __________ 11
- **Youth Flag Football** __________ 28

## Tennis Lessons
- **Quick Start Tennis (5-10)** __________ 152
- **Youth Tennis (11-17)** __________ 28
- **Adult Tennis (Beginner)** __________ 5

## Conservation Programs:
- **Bow Hunters** __________ 79
- **Deer Harvested** __________ 143
- **Wood Harvester** __________ 33
- **Prescribed Burns** __________ _72.55 acres burned_

## Brenton Skating Plaza:
- **Attendance** __________ 33,677

## Leased Programs:
- **Soap Box Derby** __________ 625
- **Des Moines Rowing Club** __________ 188
- **Drake Crew** __________ 28
- **Cycle-cross** __________ 320
- **Disc Golf** __________ 600
- **Hy-Vee Triathlon** __________ 4,000
- **Mud Run** __________ 1,900
- **BMX** __________ 300
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Pioneer Columbus</th>
<th>Four Mile</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Star Party</td>
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<td>Ice Fishing</td>
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<td>Bald Eagle Day</td>
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<td>“Make and Take” Rain Barrel Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carousel of Colors Egg Hunt</td>
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<td>Mayors Annual Ride</td>
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<td>Cache In Trash Out</td>
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<td>Carp Fest</td>
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<td>River Run Garbage Grab (R2G2)</td>
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<td>Birding Basics Grays Lake</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unwind</td>
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<td>Moonfloat</td>
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<td>Archery Basics</td>
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<td>Campfire Day Camp Pioneer Columbus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lilac Event</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Cyclocross Practice</td>
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<td>The First Tee of Greater Des Moines</td>
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<td>Youth Community Recreation</td>
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“We love being involved with Des Moines Parks and Recreation. These programs are so fun and affordable! We have done one round of indoor soccer, one flag football, and two rounds of basketball. My son loves it—especially the big game at the end of flag football. The kids on my son’s team all had a blast. When we walked up with the lights on and music playing my 6 year old said, “Mom, This is ‘the big time’”. Thanks for all you guys do. See you for basketball!”

– Audrey Steil
Des Moines
Aerobics Four Mile ___________________________ 2080
Urban Bald Eagles Day _______________________ 150
Growing Up Wild ____________________________ 20
Iowa Veterans Bald Eagles ____________________ 18
Earth Day at SCI ____________________________ 100
Star Viewing ________________________________ 65
Preschool Bugs ______________________________ 10
Easter Lake Watershed Kidk Off ________________ 150
Special Needs Fishing Day ____________________ 25
Father’s Day Canoe Float _____________________ 70
iEarth Camp _________________________________ 96
Fishing at Grays Lake ________________________ 20
Plant, Grow, Fly ______________________________ 25
Canoe and Hike exchange students ____________ 25
Stand up Paddleboard with the Naturalist ______ 20
Butterfly & Native Pollinators Festival _________ 150
Insects at EK Davis ___________________________ 30
Creek Clean up with Easter Lake Watershed Project______________________________ 20
Brody Middle School, Watershed ____________________________ 120
Butterfly Tagging ______________________________ 41
Des Moines Ikes Outdoor Expo ____________________ 60
Prairie Pick ___________________________________ 5
Mysteries of the Castle ________________________ 50
Story Time in the Park _________________________ 11
Canoe classes at Grays Lake __________________ 13
Doggie Dives
Ashworth Swimming Pool ______________________ 52
Birdland Swimming Pool ______________________ 108
Nahas Aquatic Center _________________________ 36
Northwest Aquatic Center ____________________ 112
Teachout Aquatic Center _____________________ 40

“Martin Luther King Jr. Park Neighborhood Association and Park & Recreation Department has teamed up! Over the last 18 months to rehab our neighborhood Parks. By creating green spaces, family areas, Movies in the Park and a Soccer League. Last summer Parks & Rec with neighborhood partner’s designed and finished a Youth Park Theme for pocket park. To be used by the neighborhoods pre teenagers. Thanks Park & Rec with all your help in our community.”

– Curt Wagner
Martin Luther King Jr. Park Neighborhood Association
The City of Des Moines Urban Bow Hunt Program season started in September 2013 and ended on January 26, 2014 with a harvest of 143 deer by 79 hunters. This totals a seven year harvest of 1234 deer within the City under this program. Of the 1234 deer 82% were female which over time have effectively prevented over 3,000 additional deer inside city limits according to reproduction models. The goal of this program is to reduce the population, not to eliminate urban deer. This will reduce the negative attributes that an overpopulation of deer causes, such as accidents. This also ensures that citizens can enjoy the infrequent sighting of a deer while being able to enjoy flowers and gardens which a high population of deer would not allow. The urban bow hunt connects property owners who wish to reduce the deer numbers with hunters who are willing to harvest the deer in a safe effective manner. Hunters are required to adhere to a long list of rules, attend a safety course and an annual proficiency test. If you would like more information on the program, please call 237-1386.

Our Learn to Swim program offerings increased again this year by expanding the number of sessions we offered. The changes were positively received by parents and participants and resulted in a 5% increase in attendance. In all, we had 2,343 participants.

This was the third year we have partnered with Des Moines Public Schools English Language Learner Summer School in providing free swim lessons to students in grades 2-12. We have taught lessons and water safety to over 600 students who have been in our country less than two years and due to cultural and financial influences have not previously been exposed to open waterways. These children are at higher-risk for drowning because they are swimming in lakes and rivers that are close to their homes in our country and do not know the dangers.

Family Swim nights and Doggie Dive are two popular events held annually at the pools. In the inaugural year for Family Swim nights, we had a little over 200 families participate. Doggie Dive attendance increased again this year with over 300 dogs taking advantage of the opportunity to swim with their owners on the last day the pools were open for the season.
Environmental education was active throughout the seasons in our Des Moines Parks. Winter created the opportunity to try out snowshoes in Pioneer Park, watch the Bald Eagles along the Des Moines Bike Trail and even go out on a cold night to look for live owls in Grandview Park. Spring brought some warmer weather along with a Rain Barrel Workshop and celebrating Earth Day by making kites. For Mother’s Day, there was a Plant.Grow.Fly. program where flower pots were decorated and then planted to provide beautiful flowers for Moms as well as habitat for butterflies and native pollinators. Dads joined in the outdoor fun, bringing their families out for the Father’s Day Canoe Float from Prospect Park to the Birdland marina. The summer heat was great for iEarth Camps, canoeing and Stand Up Paddleboard programs at Gray’s Lake. When the fall season arrived, so did the Monarch butterflies. Monarch butterfly tagging events took place in several different parks. There were two Prairie Picks where prairie habitats were explored and seeds harvested to use in future park plantings. The Bird Feeder Workshop at Gray’s Lake was held on a chilly Saturday morning, a sure sign that the winter season was arriving again and the annual cycle was coming full circle. Look for these seasonal events to happen again along with even more Environmental Education activities in the coming year.

In July, we hosted our third celebration of National Park and Recreation Month by inviting a few of our friends to join us on the Court Avenue Bridge including the Friends of Des Moines Parks, the Blank Park Zoo, Iowa Cubs, Greater Des Moines Soap Box Derby, Des Moines Rowing Club and the Heritage Carousel. Participants had fun playing games and winning prizes while learning more about the activities and programs our department offers the community throughout the year such as bocce ball, soccer, tennis, and much more. In addition to the returning favorite booths and activities, we added a new mini-golf hole resembling Pappajohn Sculpture Park, flag football, a Climbing Wall courtesy of the National Guard, bags game and a natural playscape replica. Keep an eye on our website, Facebook and Twitter this spring for the 2015 celebration date.

Since this program began in 2003, thousands have enjoyed free outdoor movies in parks across the city. Free Flicks reconnects communities by bringing people together to watch a movie on a 25-foot inflatable screen with theater-quality sound. Our department teamed up with local neighborhood groups to host 17 different movies. Free Flicks continues to be a great way to connect and entertain communities through classic and current films played in our beautiful parks and facilities.

“The movie selection was great and we heard from several families how much they appreciated the opportunity to attend a movie with their entire family, to go to a movie theater would be too expensive. What a fun event, the weather was wonderful and the city staff did a great job of setting up the screen and placing it in a position that made it so those visitors at Taylor House could come right out their door and enjoy the movie. We held the event at Sargent Park and we had more than 200 people attend the movie.”

– Linda Westergaard
Yoga offerings were expanded beyond “Yoga in the Park” at Gray’s Lake to include two new downtown lunchtime series called “Yoga at the Hub” at The Hub Spot in May and June and “Yoga at the Plaza” under the canopy at Brenton Skating Plaza during July and August. Each of these programs is only possible because of instructors who volunteer their time each week.

Earth Day Trash Bash 2014 saw over 1,200 volunteers gather on a hot sunny day April 25 for a kick-off lunch with Big City Burgers and Greens (Iowa’s first fully compostable restaurant) before heading out to more than 60 project sites throughout the Greater Des Moines metro for a fun-filled afternoon. In 2014 alone, volunteers removed almost 122,000 pounds of brush, trash, tires, metal and debris, as well as 20 pounds of cigarette butts. They worked on projects such as rain garden improvements to help filter and slow down water run-off, cleaned streams, picked up litter and cut down honeysuckle to help bring back our native woodland plants.

The Big Buttowski award for most cigarette butts collected went to Iowa Events Center who picked up 4.9 pounds of cigarette butts. A huge effort since about 18% of all litter, including cigarette butts, travel primarily through storm water systems and end up in local streams, rivers and waterways. With 22 community sponsors donating over $32,000 in 2014, and 55 registered teams and nine coordinating agencies and municipalities, Earth Day Trash Bash has become a community event benefiting the entire metro area.

Since 2008, Trash Bash has had over 7,000 volunteers remove over 253,000 pounds of trash, tires, invasive species, brush and recyclables from Des Moines, West Des Moines, Windsor Heights, Clive and Polk County lands.
**UPCYCLE**

**UPCYCLE**, a new program offered jointly by Des Moines Parks and Recreation, Blank Park Zoo and Trees Forever was designed to remove invasive species from Greenwood Park, improve the health of our woodlands and help feed animals at the Blank Park Zoo. Over 40 volunteers participated, donating over 160 hours of service valued at more than $3,500.

**SUPERHERO/PRINCESS 5K AND KIDS FUN RUN**

Another first for 2014, was the Superhero and Princess 5K and Kids Fun Run as 60 participants enjoyed the kids fun run or 5K along the Principal Riverwalk. All finishers received a custom superhero medal and prizes were awarded for individual child, individual adult and best group costume.

**YOUTH BASKETBALL**

Des Moines Parks and Recreation partnered with the Des Moines Public schools to offer youth basketball for the 2014-2015 season. The program grew significantly from 460 participants last year to 813 this season.

**SCHEELS PADDLE DEMO DAY**

In partnership with Scheels All Sports, Des Moines Parks and Recreation hosted a Demo Day at Gray’s Lake. This free event allowed nearly 300 people to try out standup paddle boards or kayaks.

**MAYOR’S ANNUAL RIDE AND RUN**

In 2014, participants could ride AND run for trails. Des Moines Parks and Recreation added a 5K run that started at City Hall and highlighted downtown trails. Over 800 people joined in the annual event that has traditionally kicked off the biking season.
DID YOU KNOW?

$155,854

Stormwater management saves the city annually in direct water treatment costs.
Ewing Park Ashley Okland Star Playground
Construction of all-inclusive playground est. $550,000 from Variety Children’s Charity and open-air shelter

Rotary Riverwalk Park
Construction of a larger-than-life fishing bobber and pole with swings est. $500,000 from Rotary Club of Des Moines AM Foundation

Waveland Trail, I-235 to University
Upgraded section of trail along Waveland Golf Course

SW 14th Quiet Street
Creation of a bike friendly route from Gray’s Lake to Blank Park Zoo

Jay Spence Shelter House / Greenwood Park
Renovation of an open-air to an enclosed shelter and improvements to restrooms at the WPA era building near the wading pool in Greenwood Park

Elm Grove Cemetery Roads
Construction of new roads throughout the cemetery

Grandview Park
Creating a nature trail through the woodlands of the park

Accessibility Improvements
Completed construction of improvements to parking and site access at Four Mile Community Center, Prospect Park, Nahas Aquatic Center, Northwest Aquatic Center, Waveland Golf Course, Grandview Park, Greenwood Park, and Westchester Park

Sheridan Park
Constructed a basketball half-court

Tower Park
Constructing basketball court and improvements to the open-air shelter

Woodlawn Park
Constructing basketball court and walking paths

Four Mile Community Center
Constructing a playground

Pocket Park #1
Constructed a playground made of natural materials for children 2-12 years with est. $20,000 from Rebuilding Together

As both an ecologist and a parks enthusiast, I find the work that Des Moines Parks and Recreation is doing to restore our natural resources to be paying huge dividends to the public. Our parks are some of the last places we can go where we can get a glimpse of what Iowa’s prairies and woodlands must have been. Efforts to manage the plant and animal communities are creating authentic recreational experiences that provide people like me with opportunities to learn, relax, and reconnect.

– Keith Summerville
Windsor Professor of Science, Professor, Environmental Science & Policy
Associate Dean, College of Arts and Science Drake University
COMPLETED PROJECTS:

The Des Moines park and open space system is almost 125 years old and many of the parks have been preserved for more than 100 years. As the department shifted to a more sustainable land management philosophy, a natural resource team was established to be responsible for the management of the park and open space system’s natural areas. They began the year by establishing goals to be undertaken in 2014, which included:

- Education of staff and the public on the importance of the city’s natural resources and the best management of those resources.
- Reduce maintenance costs, by management of natural areas and converting areas lightly used by park users to natural areas thus reducing the yearly cost maintaining park areas with a more healthy and resilient landscape.
- Create more resilient and ecologically sound landscapes through appropriate management that utilizes techniques such as prescribed burning.
- Provide passive recreational opportunities that allow park users to view and appreciate natural areas more by getting them into these areas and off of the mowed turf.
- Implement water quality improvements that filter runoff before it reaches bodies of water, or by stabilizing land that reduces sediment that is deposited in local bodies of water.
- Protect and restore historic landscapes through land restoration and the removal of invasive species.
- Manage and seek to reduce invasive species within the park system.

In keeping with those goals, the following major projects were started in 2014:

- Woodland restoration – Major woodland restoration projects were started in Grandview, MacRae and Ewing Parks. Nearly 50-acres of land in these parks had invasive honeysuckle removed which allows more ground sunlight and starts the process toward a healthier ecosystem in each park.
- Greenwood Park Woodland Restoration – A volunteer program, Upcycle Stewards, was formed to encourage citizens to help remove invasive species from park woodlands.
- Prescribed Fire Program – Nearly 100-acres of parkland was burned in 2014, more than any previous year.
- Bat Box Program – Bat boxes were constructed and installed in four parks in the hopes of encouraging more bats to take up residence to serve as a natural remedy for mosquito control.

The natural resource team performs regular maintenance in our parks such as: prairie management, rain garden maintenance, invasive species removal, water quality testing, habitat improvements, shoreline restoration, and growing native plants to be used in the park system.
Skilled Trades
Skilled Trades covers over 600,000 square feet of building space and 76 parks. They completed 1,131 work orders in 2014

Major Projects
• City Hall Second Floor Remodel
• New Brines System at Public Works
• Trail LED Lighting System
• Tower Park Shelter Remodel
• Exterior LED Light Upgrade at Four Mile Community Center
• Four New Bridges on Grandview Nature Trail
• New 1000’ Water Line at Drake Observatory
• Remodeled City Manager’s Office
• Remodeled Economic Development Office
• Remodeled Traffic and Transportation Offices
• Started First Phase of LED Lighting at the Sculpture Park

Heavy Equipment
The Heavy Equipment crew covers 76 Parks, trails, cemeteries and city facilities. The Heavy Equipment crew completed 163 work orders in 2014

Major Projects
• Elm Grove Cemetery Demolition and Fence Line Reconstruction
• Grading Work Throughout the Park System
• Grays Lake Outlet Channel
• Grays Lake Shoreline Restoration
• Grandview Nature Trail
• Police Garage Demolition
• Grade work and hauling for the Franklin Community Garden
• Support all trades and horticulture staff with equipment and hauling needs
• Clean and maintain trails during high water
• Built new football field at Columbus Park
• Ash tree removals as part of the city’s Emerald Ash Borer Plan

Building Maintenance
The Building Maintenance team covers over 600,000 square feet of building space, seven enclosed shelters, three aquatic centers, two pools and seven cemeteries.

Major Projects
• Installed new Liebert AC units in Server Room
• Installed fire suppression system in Information Technology server room
• Installed new rooftop units at the Animal Rescue League
• City Manager office HVAC upgrade
• New HVAC units at Four Mile Community Center, Animal Control Office, Police Station
• Installed new HVAC equipment at Ding Darling Shelter
• Completed over 350 work orders for 2014
• LED light replacement at Gray’s Lake, Four Mile Community Center (exterior) and Pappajohn Sculpture Park
2,601 Volunteers accounted for more than 14,400 volunteer hours for the city.
**Adopt a Plot Program** - Although the city maintains the grounds of its seven cemeteries, individual families and friends are responsible for the overall care of the graves and monuments of their loved ones. However, for many who have been deceased for decades or even centuries in these historic cemeteries, fewer and fewer family members come back to care for their graves each year. Parks and Recreation is hoping you’ll consider “adopting a plot” for these graves, as hundreds of other people do. Volunteers of all ages donate their time as cemetery stewards each year, as individuals or members of families and organizations, to help take care of the city’s municipal cemeteries, while enjoying the fascinating history and beauty they provide.

Volunteers can choose to become a steward of a specific section of the cemetery of their choice - Woodland/St. Ambrose, Glendale, Laurel Hill, Sims, Oak Grove, or Elm Grove. Work might include picking up small branches, cutting back dead flowers and brush, maintaining headstones and reporting disrepair, or picking up litter. No experience is necessary, training and supplies are provided. You can volunteer once or as many hours as you like, on a flexible one-time, weekly or monthly basis - whatever works best for you – year-round or just between the months of April and October.

This is a great way for families, church groups, clubs or individuals to experience the outdoors and the beauty of the seasons in a park setting while preserving the condition of these historic city landmarks. To learn more about becoming a cemetery steward or other cemetery volunteer opportunities, call 248-6320 or email cem@dmgov.org.

**Other ways to volunteer** -
- Transplanting in the Tropics
- Dog park ambassador
- Earth Day Trash Bash
- Special events
- Group specific opportunities

For more information about our volunteer program please visit dmparks.org, email parksvolunteer@dmgov.org or call 248-6380.

**Sponsorship** -
Des Moines Parks and Recreation has numerous sponsorship options available. Packages can be customized at any level including:
- Recreation and sports programs
- Environmental education offerings
- Special events
- Playgrounds

Contact our marketing team at 237-1386 or parks@dmgov.org to learn about how your group can collaborate with us.

**VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

In 2014, we had over 2,601 volunteers donating around over 14,016 hours of service (valued at over $300,000). They removed over 122,000 pounds of litter, brush, tires and debris from our parks on Earth Day alone. They help grow almost 300,000 annuals, distribute hundreds of toys to families in need, record our City’s history, survey trail users, distribute flowers to neighborhoods, build playgrounds and more.

“Volunteerism is an essential part of the Des Moines community. This well-organized event allows us an opportunity to meet new people, gain exposure to fun experiences, and spread some holiday cheer. This was my third year volunteering with Des Moines Parks & Recreation. Each year, I’m amazed by how many citizens the organization serves and the amount of an impact made to those in need.”

– Callie Angove

48 PARTNERS
VOLUNTEER AWARDS

The City of Des Moines Volunteer Award program was established in 2009 to recognize volunteers for their commitment and service to the Parks and Recreation Department. Volunteers bring diverse skills and talents, which enrich our community in so many ways. In 2014, we had over 2500 volunteers donating around over 14,000 hours of service.

2014 AWARD WINNERS

- Erv Wagner, Lifetime Achievement Award
- Rogers Shell, Volunteer of the Year
- Clear Channel Outdoors, Corporate Group of the Year
- 49th Regiment Iowa Veteran Volunteer Infantry, Volunteer Group of the Year
- Jay Hastings, Volunteer Supervisor of the Year
- Central Iowa Trails Association, Special Volunteer Award
- Lower Beaver Neighborhood Association, Special Volunteer Award

Lifetime Achievement Award—Erv Wagner
Erv Wagner has been giving his time, since 1997, to the establishment and service of the Polk County Deer Task Force. This task force was formed to address the deer population in Des Moines and other cities in Polk County. Wagner is one of only two original people still directly involved with the committee and currently is the chair. The City of Des Moines’ Parks and Recreation Urban Deer Hunt Program has greatly benefited from his continued commitment towards the mission of our task force and to the department. Wagner regularly volunteers to attend board meetings, assists in deer hunt property inspections, establishing program rules and regulations. We honor him for his lifelong dedication to our Urban Deer Hunt Program and the City of Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department.

Volunteer of the Year—Rogers Shell
In the 1930’s, bluebird populations dwindled due to habitat destruction and the illegal introduction of the European Starling and the House Sparrow. These birds competed for remaining cavity nesting space. Volunteer of the Year Rogers Shell led efforts to bring bluebirds back and make Des Moines, Iowa a Bluebird City. Shell locates, removes and repairs old boxes, creates and installs new boxes, monitors and identifies box locates and gets utility provider approval to ensure their safety. In addition to this, he recruits additional volunteers and created two new Bluebird box trails in two Des Moines city parks, installing twenty-three new boxes in Grandview and Gray’s Lake Parks. Shell helped the City reach their goals a year in advance. Thanks to his volunteer efforts, there were 15 bluebirds and 8 tree swallows fledged during the 2014 nesting season.

“During the last two years, Sheridan Gardens Neighborhood has been making improvements to our local park. This type of process can be overwhelming at times – but Des Moines Park & Rec helped us design a park plan and also gave us suggestions on contractors to use and the best type of equipment to buy. This made a big difference and helped make the process easier. When we suddenly had an offer to help pour a new basketball court, Park & Rec was able to step in to help complete it. We now have a park that has a new look and a place that the people in our neighborhood can enjoy.”

– Kurt Lee, President
Sheridan Gardens Neighborhood Association

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– Kurt Lee, President
Sheridan Gardens Neighborhood Association
Corporate Volunteer Group of the Year-Clear Channel Outdoors
Clear Channel Outdoors continued their commitment to the City of Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department with an all-staff volunteer day of service at Union Park in 2014. Clear Channel Outdoors has been active in our parks, cemeteries and community gardens over the past four years and donated over 500 hours of service to beautifying and maintaining our City’s unique resources. In 2014, they removed woody invasive species in our prairies. Iowa was once covered in 99.9% prairie. Today, less than 1/10 of 1% of prairie remains. Their volunteer efforts restore native ecosystems and provide habitat for Iowa wildlife. Our native plantings have deep root systems that also filter water as it moves towards the river. We honor them for their ongoing dedication to our Department and help this year bringing back Iowa’s historical landscape.

Volunteer Group of the Year-49th Regiment Iowa Veteran Volunteer Infantry
Company "A", 49th Regiment Iowa Veteran Volunteer Infantry/SVR "The Governor’s Own Iowa Rifles," has, for many years, been outstanding in their service and support of the City of Des Moines’ cemeteries. The Governor’s Own has served as the military honor guard and presented the colors at various City historic events and also conducted memorial events and marked military graves with flags in City cemeteries in conjunction with Veterans Day and Memorial Day holidays. As part of the nation’s commemoration of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, in 2012 they conducted a historic walking tour of Woodland’s Cemetery’s Civil War gravesites and are likewise planning another event, a candle-lit walk to those same graves, in April this year to mark the end of that all-important American war. The past two years, the unit has taken on the role of providing proper Military Disposal of “unserviceable” National Flags for the City of Des Moines Park and Recreation Department in ceremonies at Des Moines’ Woodland and Glendale Municipal Cemeteries. Over 2,000 flags from the City’s parks and cemeteries as well as those from surrounding metro communities have been committed by fire, as is required by long-standing military tradition and Federal law. The Governor’s Own saw the need and response was so great that they created a larger burner/disposal unit and christened it the U.S.S. Zenti. The new unit weighs over five hundred pounds and is constructed entirely of sheet steel; it will be permanently located at Glendale Municipal Cemetery, where “the 49th” plans to conduct several “burns” each year to accommodate the metro’s need. The Governor’s Own was able to commit five 18 X 24 feet unserviceable flags as well as several hundred smaller flags in the new unit with no problem at the most recent ceremony in November. Des Moines Parks and Recreation honors The Governor’s Own for their service to our forefathers, our veterans, our nation and our community, as they carry out long-standing and historic military traditions in the City’s cemeteries.

Volunteer Supervisor of the Year-Jay Hastings
Jay Hastings has worked with volunteers at four of the municipal cemeteries on a wide range of projects including fence and weed-tree removal, realignment of stones in infant grave areas and raking and removing leaves. Hastings is a people-person who is able to motivate volunteers and keep them satisfied, engaged and interested in the projects. Hastings’ work with the volunteers has decreased citizen complaints, protected our historical treasures and dramatically improved the appearance of the cemeteries.

Special Volunteer Award-Central Iowa Trails Association (CITA)
CITA works closely with the City of Des Moines Park and Recreation Department to create trails. Since 1996, they have donated their time, money and expertise to help construct and maintain approximately 15 miles of trails in Des Moines’ Greenwood, Ashworth and Ewing Parks. CITA educates land managers and trail users about sustainable trail design, maintenance techniques and usage. We honor CITA’s passion, dedication and countless hours of donated labor that have expanded outdoor recreation opportunities in Central Iowa.

Special Volunteer Award-Lower Beaver Neighborhood Association
The Lower Beaver Neighborhood Association has developed a parks committee that organizes individuals, organizations and families that commit to visit the park twice per month to pick up litter and ensure Woodlawn Park is clean and in good condition. This year the association had ten families volunteer over 80 hours. They kept the park clean and planted flower beds. We honor them for their commitment to their neighborhood park.
Join Friends of Des Moines Parks - Friends of Des Moines Parks is a not-for-profit foundation committed to supporting Des Moines 76 parks, over 4,000 acres of park and open space, 52 miles of trails, and municipal facilities such as aquatic centers, community centers and civic attractions for the benefit of all neighborhoods and citizens. The City’s private sector partner has long invested tax-exempt donations for programs like swim lessons for low income and ELL students, the Earth Day Trash Bash, Yoga in the Park and others. In 2014, the Friends’ park projects included the Father Daughter Dance, Greenwood Shelter opening and the first annual FORE Our Parks Golf Tournament.

Are you a Friend? Visit www.friendsofdmparks.org to learn how you can protect and strengthen solutions to our communities’ social, economic and environmental challenges.

Join the Friends to protect what you love. When you become a Friend, you help to preserve, protect, improve, and promote the use of Des Moines parks, greenways and recreational programs for the benefit of all neighborhoods and citizens.dmgov.org.

The Central Iowa Trail Association (CITA) was awarded the 2014 Lay Organization Award by the Iowa Park and Recreation Association for their dedication in creating and maintaining nature trails in and around Central Iowa. Since 1996, this volunteer-driven organization has played a central role in the development of sustainable, multi-use, soft surface nature trails.

CITA works closely with many public agencies like the Des Moines Park and Recreation Department, Polk County Conservation Board, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Des Moines Water Works, and others in central Iow to develop high-quality, non-erosive nature trails. They have donated their time, money and expertise to help construct and maintain approximately 50-miles of trails in Des Moines’ Greenwood, Ashworth, Ewing and Water Works Parks, along the Des Moines River south of Saylorville Lake, Banner Lakes at Summerset State Park, and other locations in central Iowa. They also educate land managers and trail users about sustainable trail design, maintenance techniques, and usage.

These trails wind through wooded areas, by lakes and streams, and up and down hills. They are loved by thousands of mountain bicyclists, hikers, birdwatchers, runners, and other adults and children needing a respite from urban life and wanting to immerse themselves in nature. These opportunities would not be as abundant without CITA’s passion, dedication and countless hours of volunteerism. CITA helps make Des Moines and central Iowa a great place to live by bringing people closer to nature, nurturing a respect for the environment, and providing a fun way to lead healthier lives.
Ashley Okland Star Playground - This project began in October 2012 when two (2) non-profit groups, Young Variety and Variety – The Children’s Charity of Iowa, approached Park and Recreation Department staff with a proposal to fund and build a new playground that would provide a play opportunity for children of all abilities. Although the City currently has a variety of types of playgrounds throughout the parks system, none of them are specifically designed for all children, including those with special needs.

The playground was named the Ashley Okland Star Playground in honor of Ashley Okland, a real estate agent who was fatally shot during an open house event in West Des Moines on April 8, 2011. Ashley was passionate about providing children with the opportunity to engage in outdoor activities. This new playground will offer an exceptional opportunity for children of all abilities to play together.

“Variety — the Children’s Charity is THRILLED to be able to provide the City of Des Moines with its first all-inclusive playground. The Ashley Okland Star Playground caters to children with special needs by featuring adapted equipment. However, it was built to provide play opportunities for people of all ages and abilities, which is critical for healthy physical activity and learning...TOGETHER! The playground is in memory of Ashley Okland. Ashley was a person who energetically enjoyed living life to its fullest and was happiest when others were doing the same. It is our hope the Star Playground will allow her spirit and energy to live on through the children who play there.”

– Sheri McMichael
Executive Director
Variety – the Children’s Charity of Iowa

Rotary Riverwalk Park- The newest addition to the Principal Riverwalk was the playground constructed immediately north of the Iowa Women of Achievement Bridge on the west side of the Des Moines River called the Rotary Riverwalk Playground. This fishing themed facility features a larger-than-life-sized fishing pole and bobber. The design includes swings hanging from the “pole,” and a rubberized play surface installed around the “bobber,” allowing children to climb and play and also incorporates seating, landscaping, and signage.

The custom designed playground, which opened in November, was the vision of six central Iowa Rotary Clubs - Rotary Club of Des Moines A.M., Rotary Club of Des Moines, Rotary Club of Northwest Des Moines, Rotary Club of West Polk County, Rotary Club of West Des Moines, and Rotary Club of Waukee. Over the course of eight years, these dedicated clubs raised the necessary $500,000 needed for construction of the playground.

“Construction of the Rotary Riverwalk Park was a labor of love for more than a thousand central Iowa Rotarians. While the initial concept was hatched in 2004, through the perseverance, vision and commitment of 10 central Iowa Rotary clubs (Des Moines AM, Des Moines, Northwest Des Moines, West Polk County, East Polk County, Waukee, West Des Moines, Johnston, Indianola and Adel), we were able to construct and open the Rotary Riverwalk Park in 2014. With its 65 foot long fishing pole, 12 foot wide bobber, rubberized play surface and LED night lighting, it is as unique of a park as Des Moines is as a city. It is a wonderful addition to the river walk. All Rotarians sincerely hope that thousands of families enjoy this gift to the City for many years to come.”

– John M. Bouslog
Attorney and Counselor at Law
Simpson, Jensen, Abels, Fischer & Bouslog, P.C.
On a workday in early October, Rebuilding Together of Greater Des Moines in cooperation with Meredith Corporation employees and Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Iowa volunteered to install playground equipment at Pocket Park 1 at East 19th and Cleveland Avenue. The playground equipment and the required engineered-wood-fiber safety surfacing, a $20,000 value donated by Meredith, includes multiple spinning and bouncing elements and several chainsaw carved logs reclaimed from storm damaged trees in the Des Moines area. To partner in this effort, the Parks and Recreation Department agreed to remove old play equipment in the park and prepare the site for the work day. In addition to the playground build, the 27 volunteers also:

- Moved 140 cubic yards of wood mulch into the playground area to serve as the required safety surface.
- Planted six trees in the small park replacing older trees removed in years past.
- Painted the wooden bear figure carved by the chainsaw sculptor Garry Keenan that watches over the park.

Des Moines Founders Garden Club transplanted 21 disease resistant elm trees from the nursery at the City Greenhouse in parks throughout the city. They also planted 9,000 daffodils surrounding the newly remodeled Jay Spence Shelter House at Greenwood Park.

Neighborhood discussions to improve Tower and Jordan Parks brought together leaders from the City of Des Moines and Polk County. Upon finalization of concept plans, Polk County agreed contributing to the installation of new concrete pathways around the perimeter of the both parks providing neighbors and visitors with an accessible route to the amenities of the parks as well as creating a pleasurable walking loop within the parks.

- **GRANTS**
  - SW 5th (Jackson) Street Bridge - State Recreation Trail Rehabilitation $500,000 Grant
  - Neal Smith Trail - FLAP Grant $303,000 for widening of the trail
While 2014 was another busy year for Des Moines Parks and Recreation, we don’t anticipate a slowdown in 2015. Here are some of the projects our team will be working on in the coming year:

- Completion of Grandview and Greenwood/Ashworth Nature trails
- Installation of LED lights on I-235 pedestrian bridge
- City Hall exterior LED project
- Expansion of internment options at Glendale Cemetery including a new 1.8 acre prairie cremains scattering garden, believed to be the first of this kind in the state.
- Sprayground installation at Grandview Park
- Completion of Mark Ackelson Trail in Ewing and Easter Lake Parks
- Construction of a new parking lot at James E. Cownie Baseball Park
- Community Center enhancements at Pioneer Columbus and Four Mile
- Installation of touch padlock at Riverwalk Dog Park
- MacRae woodland restoration
- Installation of Gray’s Lake trail safety railing along the Raccoon River
- Additional lilacs planted at Ewing Park Lilac Arboretum.