

CITY OF RED LODGE

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Red Lodge Parks, Trees and Recreation Board

ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2018 (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018)

Title 8, Chapter 7 of the Red Lodge City Code defines composition, duties and responsibilities of the Red Lodge Parks, Trees and Recreation Board. The purpose of this code is to establish, improve, care for, regulate and manage a system of public recreation and public trees. The Board Mission is to protect, enhance, and maintain parks, facilities, natural resources, open space, trails, trees and plants by developing and executing the Comprehensive Parks Plan, Trails Plan, Active Transportation Plan and Urban Forest Management Plan. The Board is advisory to the City Council and the Mayor and consists of seven members, six area residents of which up to two may reside outside of the City limits but within five miles of the City limits, and a member of the City Council. Current Board members include:

Kelly Heaton, Chair, term expires December 2018

Rue Freeman, Vice-Chair, term expires December 2018

Theresa Whistler, Secretary, term expires December 2019

Kevin Bonk, term expires December 2020

Bryan Romeijn, term expires December 2019

Anna Drew, City Council Representative, term expires December 2018

Carol Bloomer, term expires December 2020

The Board receives support from members of the City staff designated by the Mayor:

James Caniglia, Community Development Director, Neil Matthews-Pennanen, Assistant Planner and Jim Bushnell, Public Works Director.

Board functions are outlined in:

- Ordinance 918, Composition and Responsibilities of the Red Lodge, Parks, Trees and Recreation Board
- Ordinance 919, Regulations of Trees on City Owned Land and Public Rights-of-Way



Urban Forestry Tree Programs

The Urban Forestry **cost-share tree program** continued for the 6th year with 10 new trees planted along city streets.

An updated **Urban Forestry Management Plan (UFMP)** was approved in March 2018. The updated UFMP incorporated the Tree Inventory completed in 2017. The 2017 Tree Inventory updated and added to the data from the 2008 Tree Inventory. The purpose of the Tree Inventory was to assess what trees were present in the City, within the public rights-of-way. The Tree Inventory and the UFMP were funded by a grant from the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) and Park Board funds.

Public outreach was conducted in the spring of 2018 after the UFMP was completed to share some of the pertinent information from the UFMP with the public. Some examples of information shared during public outreach include what tree species do well in Red Lodge and some best practices of tree care.

The Parks Board sponsored a free public **Pruning Workshop** on May 6th. About 15 people attended this event where they were able to participate in some hands-on pruning next to the Carnegie Library and along the Highway 212 right-of-way.

TreeKeeper Training, put on by DNRC, was conducted May 15th for City staff and Parks Board volunteers to increase the knowledge of urban forestry practices for folks who were interested.



Watering of trees in the downtown area is no longer done by volunteers. During the 2018 summer, watering equipment was acquired by the City from former volunteers. The City has now taken on the responsibility of paying a contractor to water trees in the downtown core. This is being funded by a Community Foundation Grant.

The City was again certified as a **Tree City USA** for achieving the standards set forth by the National Arbor Day Foundation for activities conducted by the Parks Board. The requirements for maintaining a Tree City USA status requires the City to spend a minimum of \$2 towards tree related projects every year. Red Lodge has been a Tree City USA for over a decade.

A supplemental **Tree City USA Growth Award** was awarded to the city for the fourth year in a

row. This award recognized the Parks, Trees, and Recreation Board going above and beyond, carrying out events such as the Arbor Day celebration, tree care workshop, and the dedication to caring for the urban forest with a specific tree maintenance budget.

Large poplar trees in Finn Park have been identified as a safety hazard. The Parks Board is currently seeking funds and putting together a plan to have these trees removed so they no longer present a hazard.

Ongoing Projects & Accomplishments

Dumpsters were installed in Rotary Park with a cost share between the Parks Board and the Rotary Club.

Some of the ramps in the **skate park** were replaced because they had fallen into disrepair. This work was done with Parks Board funds utilizing volunteer labor which was spearheaded by Bryan Romeijn of the Parks Board and Kevin Aukema, owner of Aukema Construction LLC.



A new **strategic plan** was developed in the spring and summer of 2017. This plan was reviewed and adopted in the fall of 2017. This plan is designed as a document to give focus to the Parks, Trees, and Recreation Board over the next several years. One of the early benefits of the outline presented in the strategic plan was the increased organizational efficiency from the use of a master task list.



The Parks Board has been taking input on what to do about the community pool nearing the end of its lifespan. An aquatics facilities study was completed, presenting the city with a few options of varying cost. A survey was developed to gauge the public's interest in each of these options.

Two new parks were officially dedicated by the City. These are Creekside Park and Van Dyke Park. In addition, Lions Park was expanded as the north end of the park had not previously been officially dedicated.



The **Earth Day** event was a big success. Participation seems to keep growing each year. There were numerous volunteers that helped with cleanup and minor construction at several parks throughout the city. Some of the projects completed include installation of a park bench at Van Dyke Park, posting of tobacco free signs in three parks, and sweeping gravel off mixed-use trails along highways 78 and 212. BRTA gave away 16 bikes which were serviced to fit recipients during the event. The Earth Day booths were well-attended. The Parks Board received some valuable feedback from attendees about

the potential pool plans and signage within the city parks.



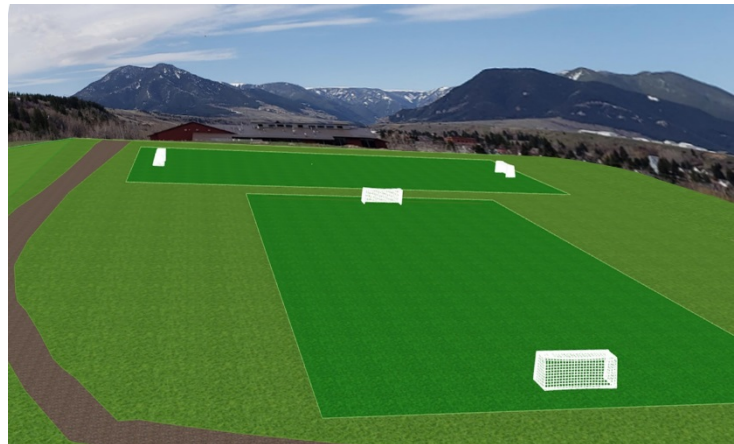


The **Red Lodge Wayfinding Plan** was finalized and adopted by City Council in March, 2018. The fabrication and installation of signs and a kiosk is pending identification/allocation of funding for this project.

A matching grant from the Lions Club was secured to fix the gazebo in Lions Park. Work on this repair will begin summer, 2018.

A grant of \$43,000 has been received from Montana DNRC to fund planning and engineering for new soccer fields in Coal Miners Park. Montana DEQ has agreed to seek mine reclamation

funds to fund a repository cap which would provide enough topsoil for a field. Input on the project has been received from various user groups including Disc Golf and the Red Lodge Mountain Biking Group. An outline of the next steps in this process is below:



- Determining if a new well is needed
- Have sprinkler installation dates set by January
- Determining how much turf will be placed on the cap
- Soil installation in April/May of 2019 is our current target date

Trails

Trail work was started on Beartooth Lane to develop it as a secondary entrance on the north side of Coal Miners Park. This project may take some time to come to fruition as the amount of re-vegetation and labor required to bring about the vision of an esthetically pleasing trail is significant.

The damaging snowstorm in September led to many broken limbs across the City. Volunteers, including the Parks Board and staff, worked to clear the trails of fallen limbs. This was just one example of how the work of dedicated volunteers that care about the City's parks and trails were able to make a difference and help keep the public spaces looking great!

Weed Control



Each year the Parks Board budgets for the spraying of noxious weeds in Coal Miners Park, Double Ditch Dog Park, Skate Park, Rotary Park and Lions Park.

Noxious weed control efforts have been stepped up over the past few years in Coal Miners Park. The noxious weed control efforts here have greatly reduced the amount of noxious plants in this park.

Noxious weeds control on other public areas, including City property, and on private property are coordinated for the City by a contractor.