



Parks and Recreation Department 2019 Highlights

Building for the future....

The West Lafayette Parks and Recreation Department has spent the 2019 season preparing for the future of the department in 2021. 2019 was spent building the infrastructure to continue to grow and improve facilities and programs for the City of West Lafayette. Following is an overview of what happened and what is coming.

West Lafayette Wellness Center:

The City of West Lafayette, West Lafayette Redevelopment Commission and the West Lafayette Parks and Recreation department **broke ground** for the long awaited Wellness Center on **August 15, 2019**. As the new 73,000 sq. ft. facility quickly takes shape planning for the new programs and classes that it will host are forming in earnest.



Amenities in the new center will include: a recreational pool with walking vortex, three full size gymnasiums, and fitness center complete with the most up to date equipment, three group exercise studios, three community program/meetings spaces, a warming kitchen and an indoor playground. Grand opening is targeted for January 2021.

Cason Family Park/Morris Schoolhouse:

The historic **Morris Schoolhouse at the future Cason Family Park held an open house on Sunday, July 21, 2:00 – 4:00 PM**. The Morris Schoolhouse/Cason Family Park Open House was a big success – well

received by the public (over **300 in attendance**), good press coverage and really satisfied volunteers. In attendance were Foundation Board members, City Council Members, the Mayor, Police and Fire, and other prominent local citizens, along with many interested individuals and families. Renderings and concept plans for the proposed Cason Family Park were shared for the first time. The park, when completed, will have a forty car parking lot with a circular drive, paved and mulch trails circling and throughout the 14-acre park, two play structures to accommodate younger and older children, a restroom facility to service schoolhouse patrons and the park as a whole, native gardens and large passive green spaces for various activities. A second phase will hopefully include more paved trails, a water feature and a concert venue. The cost for Phase I is estimated to be \$2.5M with Phase II at \$3.5Mil. (Photos of the proposed phases are shown below)



Happy Hollow Park:

2019 brought a new **playground** to Happy Hollow Park and the installation of **four insect art sculptures**. Included in the facelift for this West Lafayette treasure was new roofs and siding for the maintenance building and bathrooms and the beginnings of a dog park at the site of the old homestead.



Community Gardens:

Community Gardens were re-located on April 22 (Earth Day). This volunteer opportunity was truly impressive. **Seventy-eight raised garden beds** were constructed in Cumberland Park behind the basketball courts. A collaborative volunteer effort by the **City**, the **Redevelopment Commission**, the **Purdue Tippecanoe County Extension**, the **Master Gardeners** and **Purdue Research Foundation**, the day was a spectacular example of how working together can create beautiful things.



On the Trails:

West Lafayette's trail system remains unsurpassed for a city the size of West Lafayette. The planned addition to the trails included the completion of the Happy Hollow Trail. Work and planning began on a new trail through Cumberland Park in conjunction with the Health and Wellness Center construction.

Fun and Fitness:

The West Lafayette Parks and Recreation Department hosted a variety of activities throughout the year including: instructional, fitness and recreational swimming, yoga, Tai Chi, ballet – both children's and adult, all sorts of dance – ball room, salsa, tap, jazz etc., chess, broad sword, painting, pottery, tarot reading, creative writing, rowing, softball, pickle ball, volleyball, basketball, running and so much more. Listed below are a few fun facts about our recreation programs:

Recreation at a glance....		
Number of unique class offerings		1,284
Number of camper weeks		817
Number of swim lessons		1,537
Number of softball teams		35
Number of shelters rented		326
Number of skaters		11,451
Number of instructional hours		219,934
Number of total individual class participants		19,587
Sports Camp participants		181
Softball participation		863

Signature Events...

RiverFest: 2019 once again brought the coveted Beaver Trophy back to West Lafayette. A collaboration with the Wabash River Enhancement Corporation, the City of West Lafayette, and the City of Lafayette, Riverfest 2019 saw the biggest crowd yet for this fun filled family event.

Global Fest: The **24th Annual Naturalization Ceremony on September 20 and Global Fest on Saturday, September 21**, exceeded all expectations. The new and improved festival took place on Northwestern and Columbia streets and drew well over **8,000 visitors**. The City, Purdue Convocations, and the International Center worked diligently to ensure this year's festival was well received and ready to grow and expand in the coming years.

Art on the Wabash: 2019 saw another very successful "Art on the Wabash ".

In the Nature Area:

* **Lilly Nature Center** hosted over **10,000 visitors** and **the Celery Bog** provided **thousands** of additional visitors a beautiful place to walk the trails without coming into the Center.

* **50 volunteers** served as hosts and hostesses in the Lilly Nature Center. This talented and dedicated group contributed a total **1664 hours** in 2019. Our thanks for their rich contribution of time and talent.

* **The Indiana Parks and Recreation Association** awarded the **Lilly Nature Center** the State **Excellence in Exceptional Facility Design** Award for all the new educational displays and exhibits.

* **New exhibits and displays** at the Lilly Nature Center and on the surrounding grounds include:

- binocular scope on an observation deck
- historical video explaining the geological changes

- celery blanching display
- art display from West Lafayette High School students
- StoryWalk that encourages families to read a

- Historical wall panels

* The **Wednesdays-In-The-Wild** program offered 45 educational programs with **1400** people attending.

* The **Mind BOGgling Family Nature Celebration** event involved partnering organizations from all over the county and had over **400** people in attendance.

* **The Junior Nature Club** met in the Lilly Nature Center and involved over **200** youth from Kindergarten – 8th grade.

* The **Arbor Day event** involved the planting of **10 trees** along Lindberg Rd.

* West Lafayette will again receive for the **29th year the National Tree City USA** recognition.

* Two retired Purdue professors and students in the **Honors Society from the Purdue Polytechnic Institute** built an **ADA Universal Design accessibility ramp** off the Lilly Nature Center.

* **265 youth and adults from churches, Purdue groups, corporations, scouts, and individuals** spent over **1,000 hours** mulching trails.

* Lost a longtime volunteer in **Sam Postlethwait**, who did countless things for the Celery Bog Nature Area. He is greatly missed.

Special Recognition and Thanks:

Sincere thanks and congratulations to the many people who were so instrumental in making our community a special place throughout the year:

The many volunteers (trained as Master Naturalists) who provide at least 95% of the staffing for Lilly Nature Center;

The Tree Friends for providing over 1000 hours improving West Lafayette's urban forest this year - many street trees were planted (and watered), 1,292 trees were pruned, and the City was again recognized as a Tree City USA;

West Lafayette Community School Corporation – We thank their Board, faculty and staff for their cooperation and support of our programming at their facilities.

The Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society RIP (remove invasive plants) Squad for their on-going valuable work in our parks;
The Park and Recreation Foundation Board for their continued support.

The Parks and Recreation Board.

The many, hard-working Adopt-a-Spot sponsors who help make community thoroughfares more attractive and enjoyable;

The Sagamore West Farmers' Market vendors and workers for making the market a success and a community gathering place;

The Master Gardener Association and Purdue Extension for managing the Community Gardens in Cumberland Park to provide plots for local vegetable gardeners;

The approximately 100 volunteers who helped with the Detrash the Wabash event

I am certain that there are many more individuals and groups that contributed in 2019 to the success of the Parks and Recreation Department – My thanks to you – we could not do this work alone.

Celebrations, New Beginnings, and Fond Farewells:

Years of Service Awards:

West Lafayette Park Board	80 th Anniversary
Chris Foley	40 years
John Heitmiller	20 years
Ken VanderHoff	20 years

Promotions:

Kevin Noe	Recreation Director
-----------	---------------------

New to the Team:

Greg Mitchell	Assistant Superintendent
John Muller	Director of Parks
James Smith	Maintenance Tech
Kern Darbeyshire	Maintenance Tech
Jakob Bratton	Maintenance Tech
Doug Roarke	Maintenance Tech

Retirement:
Tom James

32 Years