

CITY OF AUSTIN PARKS, RECREATION, AND FORESTRY DEPARTMENT

2017 Annual Report



Date: 2/22/2018 Authored by: The Parks, Recreation, Forestry & J.C. Hormel Nature Center Staff

PARKS, RECREATION, AND FORESTRY DEPARTMENT

500 NE 4 AVENUE AUSTIN, MN

MISSION

The Austin Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department create a community through people, parks and programs. We strengthen community image and sense of place, support economic development, safety and security, promote health and wellness, foster human development, increase cultural unity, protect environmental resources, facilitate community problem solving and provide recreational experiences.

PARKS, RECREATION & FORESTRY ACCOMPLISHMENTS for 2017

- Completed C.I.P. projects:
 - Park road projects – The parking lot near the Todd #3 pavilion was completed.
 - ADA walkway from the new path in South Grove park to the new equipment and a path to the Orchard Creek play equipment.
 - Replaced the floor in the main area of Izaak Walton Cabin.
 - Pool bottom was repainted.
 - 8 more park signs were replaced.
 - Park restroom upgrades. (Lafayette & Veterans)
 - Online registration software in place for Park & Rec and Nature Center.
 - Early Morning Lion's Park play and exercise equipment was purchased with installation to happen in 2018. This project was a collaboration with the Senior Citizens Center which allowed us to receive the US Places to Play Grant, the Early Morning Lions Club added funds and a grant from the Hormel Foundation will allow for tile surfacing under the new play equipment.
- Continue to assess our park system to add upgrades for pavilions:
 - Added aprons to the small pavilions in Todd Complex South
 - Small pavilion constructed at Galloway and near soccer fields in Todd Park, weather deterred the pouring of the concrete slabs in both, to be completed in 2018.
- Continue to collaborate with organizations for the betterment of the Community.
- “Community Pride” clean-up day was transformed to a week-long volunteer effort giving volunteers greater scheduling flexibility.
- January 2017 Tree City USA announced that 2016 was our 38th year and December 2017 we submitted our application for the 39th year.
- Planted 7 honorary trees on public land.
- Assisted SUA with planting 9 trees along the Tree Trek on East Side Lake.
- Our crew assists others to set up for different City festivals.
- Power 96 Home & Vacation Show in Packer Arena.
- Cedar River Rabbit Club continues to host their rabbit show at Packer Arena.
- There were 2 bouts in Packer Arena hosted by the MN Southbound Rollers.
- Our forestry crew removed 147 trees and stumps, pruned 243 and planted 50 boulevard trees.
- We host Section and Sub-section tournaments each year at Todd Park and Riverland Baseball Complex as well as several invitational tournaments.
- Our Department takes pride in serving the community's needs and wants.

EQUIPMENT PURCHASED IN 2017

- Tiger mower with arm mower (Parks & Street Dept.)
- Replaced 1992 log truck (#2)

PARKS, RECREATION & FORESTRY GOALS FOR 2018

- Begin updating data and compiling it for a Park and Facility Master Implementation Plan.
- Continue to assess our park system to add upgrades:
 - Continue to upgrade playgrounds.
 - Continue to replace sand in non-flood areas under play equipment with wood fiber or other options which meet ADA.
- Continue to change recreation programming to adapt to changing needs and trends for youth and adults.
- Embrace new ideas and have an open mind on change.
- Be a good steward to the environment – partner with others.
- Request to carry funding from our 2017 projects that were started and not completed.
- Complete our CIP projects for 2018 and continue to plan for future projects that enhance our park system.

CREW

Forestry Crew- The forestry crew covers the maintenance of all trees in boulevards and park in the city of Austin. They remove and trim trees that block the view of street signs and for street construction. We grind all of the tree stumps and clean up shrubs and trees from the city's right-of-way areas. Letters are sent to private property owners to do the same. This crew also works with our other maintenance crews within our park system with mowing, garbage routes, flooding rinks and other work needed.

Mowing Crew- The mowing crew has a great responsibility with mowing 1,580 plus acres, 52,600 linear feet, along with the flood areas, library, arenas, and senior center. Flood acre total approximately 1,125, some of these areas are not mowed on each rotation. This crew switches hats in the winter to remove snow from 16 miles of city sidewalks, which include the library, Town Center, both arenas, and Mill Pond path. Parking lots include the Park & Recreation Office, nature center, shop, and outside rinks. The majority of our trails do not have winter maintenance however when it deems necessary to use a path to get to another area to plow that path will be cleared. Our crew is also called upon by the street department to help them plow or haul snow.

Mechanic- Our mechanic does everything from major overhauls on engines and transmissions, to tune ups on weed eaters. He also helps mow and remove snow when needed. He keeps our crews up and running smooth and on schedule. Our mechanic is located in the central garage building.

Park Maintenance/Equipment Operators & Construction- They has their hands full keeping the park system healthy and usable for the public. Buildings are constructed and maintained by this crew: truly jacks of all trades. During the summer months one man is pulled to spend his time maintaining the municipal pool. During certain projects he will split his time. Equipment operators also assist the tree crew when they are removing trees or grinding stumps.

Flower Crew- Temporary employees are hired for the flower season to water and care for the city's flowers. Duties include caring for the existing flowerpots, planters in public areas, library building, municipal building, and sterling medians. The total of flower baskets in 2017 was 246 and we were back to our original recipe.

Seasonal Crew- This includes all our extra summer help who run the smaller mowers, landscaper/planter, weed eaters, weed inspector, ball diamond maintenance, summer recreation instructors and our pool staff. We would not be able to maintain the City or hold programs without the help of our seasonal staff. Our winter staff is just as important to helping us cover the arenas during our skating events, outdoor warming houses and winter recreation programs.

NOTES

- Members from all City departments meet monthly as a safety committee to help solve dangerous issues. They strive to put together policy to ward off work place injuries.
- There were 210 weed orders processed, and of those orders 68 were billed to the property owner. If the bill is not paid, it is assessed to the owner's property taxes. There were 74 garden plots purchased for the Community Gardens in 2017.
- Our crews are involved with the preparation and clean-up for the 4th of July Festival Celebration as well as many of the other community driven events. This could involve cleaning, moving the show-mobile, picnic tables hanging flags and much more. During the summer, when the Concert in the Park band plays, a member from our crew hauls the equipment for each event.
- Our department maintains the library grounds as well as inside repair requests.

The Park and Recreation Department also works with other government departments as requested:

Street Department- Remove tree stumps and trims trees for street projects. Drive trucks for snow removal. The boom truck is used for hard to reach heights in the arenas during maintenance and in other areas of the city.

Austin Utilities- Assists us when we trim trees around high voltage lines. Safety training for tree crew when it comes to high voltage lines. We in turn help them by chipping brush piles from easement trimming.

Mower County Highway- P&R has, on an emergency only basis, gone out to the country to help trim back trees at bad intersections.

Austin Public Schools- P&R has helped seed and level turf as well as trim and remove trees. We help each other out to best utilize our playing fields and properties.



FACILITIES

Riverland Baseball Complex- (April-October) Home to the Riverland Blue Devils, Club League, PHS/Lyle, Austin High School Varsity, Junior Varsity, A, B & C, American Legion, VFW, Austin Youth Baseball, Austin All-Star BB and Hispanic League. In 2005, three fields were ready for play along with having the concession and restroom building up and running. In 2006, the new stadium on field number one was completed. The fourth field was renovated and usable. This complex has two lit fields: the stadium field, number one, and the original college field, number two. RCC had 116 scheduled games, practice hours are in addition, plus 4 tournament week-ends in 2017.

Todd Park Softball Complex- (April-October) There are eleven fields combined between the north and south complexes. Field number ten, a pony baseball field and field eleven a softball field, are located on the east side of the north complex. Field number seven, a pony baseball field is located within the



5 Diamond complex. Users include Park and Recreation youth & adult teams, Girls Fast Pitch softball, Austin Jr & High School, Pacelli/Lyle High School, Austin Youth Baseball, ARC Softball, Austin All-Star BB and Minnesota State High School League for Sections 1A, 1AA, 1AAA & 1AAAA. There were 13 scheduled events with HS section, invitational and youth state tournaments, Youth softball and baseball clinics and baseball tryouts. There were

57 HS & JH games, 221 Adult SB & Kickball games, 12 dates for Special Olympics & 93 t-ball, peeewe ball, 5 pitch & youth baseball games. This does not include the practice dates.

Todd Park Soccer Complex- (April- October) This complex has a total of six fields. These fields were largely funded by a Hormel Foundation grant. Users include Park and Recreation leagues, Austin Youth Soccer Club Teams, community and Hispanic Men's league. There were 99 scheduled uses for league games. This does not include unscheduled use or team practices. There were also two week-end long events with games played April 22 & 23 and September 2 and 3.

Municipal Pool- (June 19-August 19) in 1986, a 50-meter, eight-lane pool was opened. This pool has a separate diving well, tot pool, splash pad, 104-foot waterslide, 1-one meter and 1-three meter diving boards, 16' climbing wall, concession area, and bathhouse.

	2016	2017
Tags/Admissions:	\$41,388	\$35,217
Swim lessons:	525	548
Pool attendance:	11,555	10,779
Doggie dip:	42	57
Family Fun Night	286 NEW	556
Water Exercise		46 NEW



Izaak Walton Cabin (Annual) Acquired in the fall of 1996, this year-round facility will continue to be used for rentals and in-house programs. The building was utilized on 88 dates, with 59 of them being rentals in 2017. The floor was replaced in the main and bathroom areas in March so the cabin was not available for rent.

Veterans Pavilion (April 15-October 15) This spectacular addition to the park system was ready for public use June 1, 2002. This facility is open from April 15 to October 15, weather permitting. In 2017 there were 42 rental dates and 9 community functions.

Park Pavilion Rentals (April 15-October 15) In 2010, the board approved the rental of park pavilions that are fully accessible and have electricity.

Todd Park	2016	2017	
7North West Pavilion	35	40	Rentals
North East Pavilion	17	23	Rentals
South Pavilion	17	15	Rentals
Lions Park			
West Pavilion	10	10	Rentals
East Pavilion	27	28	Rentals
Horace Park			
Horace Pavilion	6	5	Rentals
Lafayette Park			
Lafayette Pavilion	17	17	Rentals
East Side Lake			
Gazebo	12	8	Rentals
Shirley Theel			
Memorial Pavilion	8	9	Rentals
	149	155	Total Rentals



Outdoor Rinks- The outdoor skating rinks in the community generally open from Christmas break through the end of February; weather permitting. Supervised warming houses with land and hockey rinks are located at Kaufman and Galloway. The outdoor rinks were open from December 16, 2016 to February 12, 2017 however we were closed from January 16 – 26 with warm weather. We were able to rebuild a few rinks. The total attendance logged at Kaufman and Galloway were 966 participants.

Riverside Arena and Packer Arena- These facilities are city owned, managed by the Park and Recreation Department and maintained by the Austin Street Department. We schedule both buildings for ice time and supervisory staff, during Austin Youth Hockey, Austin High School, Riverside Figure Skating Club, adult hockey and public skating. Tables, chairs, and riser rentals are available to rent by the public for events off premises.

Ice Hours Used by the following groups:

	2016		2017	
	<u>Riverside</u>	<u>Packer</u>	<u>Riverside</u>	<u>Packer</u>
Youth Hockey	169.75	296.75	209.5	333.5
AHS Boys & Girls	217	5.75	228.5	3.75
Riverside Skate Club	122.25	-	123.5	-
Public Skate Hours	37.5	37	203.5	54.25
Private Ice Rentals	138.25	11.5	139.5	12.25
Summer camps	64.5		42.75	-
Austin Bruins	195.75	3	251.5	3
Austin Bruins	148 games	-	116 games (1/1-12/31)	

Park & Rec Program Participant numbers:	2016	2017
Skills & Drills (Mites – Bantams)	68	48
3 on 3 Hockey (Mites – Bantams)	31	99 (spring and fall)
Learn to Play Hockey – New in 2016	76	-
Learn to Skate; two sessions '17	0	57
Curling	16	12
Dryland hockey new summer '17	0	30

Riverside Arena- is the home of the Junior Hockey team, “The Austin Bruins”. The owners are Craig Patrick and Mike Cooper, the team’s Head Coach is Steve Howard, Assistant Keenan Kelly and Associate Head Coach/Goaltender Coach Al Rooney. The Austin Bruins have developed a great fan base offering some exciting hockey games since their first season began in the fall of 2010. February 9th, 2017 marked the seventh year of “Paint the Rink Pink” a fundraiser by the Bruins giving funds to the Hormel Institute for breast cancer research. The season starting September 2016 through March 2017 they will have played 27 home games and one scrimmage. 2017 Riverside Arena had ice year-round.



Dryland Events:

Riverside Arena-

Figure skate and Youth Hockey season registration – 5 days

Packer Arena-

4-H Rabbit Show – 2 days with set up and show

Home and Vacation Show – 5 days with move in and out

Park & Recreation youth archery - 3 days/wk, June -July

Rain location for Park & Recreation youth tennis

Roller Derby league April –September included 2 bouts

Hosted the MN Wild Road Tour - June 23

Youth Hockey Dryland training 30 participants April-May



DEPARTMENT SUPPORT FOR AREA ASSOCIATIONS

Austin Youth Football- Transport equipment and accept registration forms.

Hockey Association- Rent ice at Riverside and Packer Arenas and use outside rinks as well. This Association runs the concession stands in both arenas. They help us out with the use of equipment for Park and Recreation “learn to” programs. They have also purchased the rink divider boards used with the Mite program as well as 3 on 3 programs.

Baseball Association- Accept registrations, laying red rock in the infields, maintain fences and other duties. This Association has run the concessions at RCC which has also contributed to many upgrades or additional maintenance at the fields. This complex has many volunteer hours which helps to contribute to its success and would be hard to run on our budget without their help.

Austin Youth Soccer- Continue to help with improvements to soccer fields and growing the game.

Spruce Up Austin- We assist in ordering materials, planting, and water trees so this group can continue to raise funds to beautify our green spaces. They have many volunteers that help to maintain many of the our parks and green spaces which help to educate our community on what trees mean to our environment.

Austin Disc Golf Association- Work with them on the course in Todd Park and Driesner Park. They have received many accolades on this course and are ranked in the top five in the state. They are an active group which helps to maintain the two courses in Austin.

PARKS

Bustad	14 Ave SW	Ballfield, playground
Bandshell Community	9 Place SW	Bandshell, sledding, play equipment, Veterans Pavilion, trail
Cullen	11 Ave SW	Playground equipment
Decker	6 Ave NE	Basketball, playground
Driesner North	Oakland Pl SE	Playground
Driesner South	Oakland Pl	Playground, shelter without electricity, 18-holes disc golf, trail
East Side Lake	Oakland Pl NE	Boat landing, fishing dock, playground, pavilion, gazebo, restrooms, trail
Galloway	2 Ave SW	Hockey & land rinks, warming house, playground
Honor Guard	8 St. NE	Resting bench, passive
Horace Austin	N Main St	Municipal pool, play equipment, skate park, fishing pier, access to Mill Pond & trail
Kaufman	11 Ave SE	Ball field, hockey & land rinks, warming house, play equipment
Lafayette	S Main St	Ball field, playground, restrooms, shelter w/electricity & trail
Lions Park	Oakland Pl NE	Play equipment, restrooms, two shelters w/electricity, volleyball court & trail
Murphy Creek	7 Street NW	Play equipment, basketball, gazebo & trail
Nature Center	1304 21 St NE	X-country skiing, restrooms, walking trail, interpretive center, Ruby Rupner Auditorium, log cabin
Northwest	13 Ave NW	Ball field, play equipment, shelter wo/electricity
Orchard Creek	16 Ave SW	Play equipment, basketball and gazebo w/electricity
Rotary Centennial Park	8 Ave SE	Horseshoe courts, basketball courts, play equipment, two gazebos, restrooms with solar energy & trail
Sherman	6 Ave NW	Ball field, basketball, play equipment
Shirley Theel	400 25 St SW	Soccer field, ball field, play equipment, restrooms, pavilion & walking trail
South Grove	4 Drive SW	Ball field, basketball, play equipment, shelters & trail
Sterling	5 Ave SW	Playground equipment
Sutton	Oakland Pl SE	Playground, shelter wo/electricity & trail
Todd	21 Ave NE	Ball fields, playgrounds, restrooms, shelters w/electricity, volleyball courts, disk golf course, soccer fields & trail
Whittier	3 Ave SE	Greenway
Wildwood	16 Ave NW	Play equipment, natural setting, trail
Worlein	606 NW 1 Dr	Benches, passive



RECREATION

City recreation is responsible for planning, promoting, and organizing a comprehensive recreation program for all ages. The philosophy is to provide for the citizens of Austin the most complete recreation programs possible for the greatest number of people at the lowest price. Please keep in mind that programing for children and adult sports are for the most part self-supporting.

SELF-SUPPORTING PROGRAMS	2017	2016
<u>WINTER/FALL PROGRAMS</u>		
K - 6 th Grade Basketball	65	58
Intro to Archery ages 9-14 (one day)	0	3
Archery League, ages 9-18 (Wed & Thurs) - 24 max	14	24
Dome Baseball ages 7 - 12	77	79
<u>SUMMER RECREATION</u>		
Golf, ages 6 and up	29	26
Water, Nature & Adventure (playground)- 15 max	10	15
Shake, Rattle & Read (playground) - 15 max	12	15
Track, ages 5 - adult	29	19
T-ball, entering K (Minor)	33	47
T-ball, gr K-1 (Major) changed in 2017	61	56
Youth Softball, ages 7-11	34	34
Soccer, ages 4-13	144	97
Tennis, ages 4-11	43	38
Archery Skills, ages 9-18	25	32
Archery League, ages 9-18	9	12
<u>YOUTH VB, WRESTLING & GFP</u>		
Girls and Boys Volleyball Club, U12 - U18	50	63
Girls Volleyball Camp, gr 3-12	37	49
Austin Youth Wrestling, grade K-6	57	57
Southern Minny GFP League U12, 14, 16, 18	325	1080
<u>SPECIAL EVENTS</u>		
Shamrock Open-NYWA Wrestling Qualifier	312	190
Noon Kiwanis Track Meets (2 in '16 Only 1 in '17 due to weather)	120	344
<u>ADULT PROGRAMS</u>		
Dome Flag Football	61	151
Softball Leagues	389	369
Kickball League	51	99
Volleyball Leagues, Winter	59	94
Volleyball Leagues, Fall	47	50
Sand Volleyball League, Summer	25	40



JAY C. HORMEL NATURE CENTER

The Jay C. Hormel Nature Center began in 1971. The nature preserve is made up of 518-acres. It is located in western Mower County outside the city of Austin. The nature center features restored and remnant prairie, hardwood forest, wetlands, and meandering streams. There are plenty of animals and birds for viewing wildlife as you hike the ten plus miles of trail.

JAY C. HORMEL NATURE CENTER ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2017

- Opened the new \$6.8 million Interpretive Center on Earth Day. The building cost \$5.8 million dollars (funded by the \$5 million Hormel Foundation grant, the city of Austin's \$500,000 and the Hormel Foods' \$300,000). The \$1 million exhibits were funded through private donations to the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center.
- The Halloween Warm-up, Thanksgiving Feast, 4th Water Festival, and 8k run continued to be highlighted special events.
- Summer Adventure Program scholarships continued to be provided to Austin area youth by private donations, Austin Audubon, Izaak Walton League, and the Friends of the Nature Center.
- Staff provided themed natural history programs during Mower County Fair week.
- For the eighth summer, "Thursday Nature Play" was held with free family activities.
- Summer senior specials continued to be offered with nature related themes. Access vehicle tours were part of those programs.
- The staff continued to provide quality environmental education programs for K – 12th grade students of Austin and nearby schools.
- The Hormel Foundation continued to subsidize Mower County students attending school field trips at the JCHNC.
- "What's New In Nature?" radio program continued.
- Belita Schindler continued to subsidize the ski and snowshoe rental.
- Phase 1 of habitat restoration began by hiring Stantec to remove invasive species and convert a 50-acre farm field to prairie. 90% of this project was funded through Minnesota's Conservation Partners Legacy Grant. The other 10% from the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center.
- The \$330,000 phase 2 of habitat restoration project was selected for funding by the MN Conservation Partners Legacy Grant.
- Continued the Kevin Dammen summer mentorship program where 15 mentees, ages 13 – 18, helped staff run programs and nature play days.

GOALS FOR THE JAY C. HORMEL NATURE CENTER IN 2018

- Offer these significant events: Thanksgiving Feast, Eco Blitz, Halloween Warm-up, Kevin's Adventure Race.
- Continue to offer and facilitate environmental education and outdoor education programs for students, kindergarten through college.

- Continue with the Thursday Nature Play for families and Senior Summer Specials, along with our Summer Adventure Programs.
- Continue with nature themed programs during the Mower County Fair.
- Complete revision of the geologic timeline.
- Develop a master plan and apply for the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission regionally significant parks designation.
- Develop a plan for a natural play area on or near the footprint of the old interpretive building.
- Apply to the Hormel Foundation to continue with the one-dollar rate for Mower County students to attend the environmental Nature Center field trips.
- Burn prairie as needed.
- Plant trees by the new interpretive center and shop as well as around the parking lot to improve aesthetics when entering the nature center parking lot and to provide a windbreak and bird habitat near the auditorium and new interpretive center.
- Administer the Conservation Partners Legacy Grant that the Friends received for prairie restoration, wetland restoration and invasive species removal.
- Purchase three honeybee hives through a local hive to bottle program that will produce honey and bees wax as well as provide bee education opportunities.
- Recruit more volunteers to act as guides in the new interpretive center.
- The nature center will be open 9:00 am- 5:00 pm- Monday through Saturday with staff and will continue to be open 1:00-5:00 pm with volunteers.
- Continue with the Kevin Dammen summer mentorship program.

FACILITIES

Interpretive Center - Features a new exhibit display area with live animals, nature games, preschool play area, a natural history resource library and conference room, two classrooms that can be opened up as one large space, and multipurpose room for renting skis or holding messy classes. The classrooms and resource room are also available to rent when not being used for nature center programming.

Ruby Rupner Auditorium - This auditorium is used for community education programs, conferences, and special events. It was built in 1994 and is available for private rental (there is no fee for environmental education related in-services and groups).

Rentals Used by the following groups: (includes 1/2 & full day)

	2017	2016
Private:	85 days	58 days
Conservation Groups/City:	20 days	17 days
Total:	<u>105 rentals</u>	<u>75 rentals</u>



RECREATION

Hiking, Cross-Country Skiing, Snowshoeing, Wildlife Viewing, and Nature Photography - The Jay C. Hormel Nature Center has over ten miles of trails. There is also a 1/4-mile handicapped accessible trail. Two wheelchairs are available for the public to use during the visitor center hours. Superior wildlife viewing and nature photography opportunities can be found all year on the Nature Center's trail. The trails are groomed for cross-country skiing in the winter.

Canoe, Kayak, Cross-Country Ski and Snowshoe Rentals - Enjoy youth and family canoe trips with Nature Center staff. Canoe and kayak rentals are available on Dobbins Creek to East Side Lake or on the Nature Center pond. Cross-country ski or snowshoe rental is available during winter. We provide free skiing or snowshoeing on Thursday afternoons from 3:00-6:00 pm in January, February, and March for adults and children.



EDUCATION BIRDS OF PREY

- The Barred owl and our two new Red tail hawks were utilized in 100 programs with well over 2583 participants in 2017. Our three birds of prey are on permanent display daily for all visitors to see. The two red tail hawks and owl have permanent injuries and are non-releasable.
- The Hormel Nature Center also provides triage/primary care for raptors/birds of prey. Eleven birds were cared for and either were treated and released, died, or transported to the University of Minnesota Raptor Center.

SPECIAL EVENTS, PROGRAMS, & SCHOOL GROUPS

School Programs - Environmental education programs are offered to all ages with an emphasis on grades K-7. Environmental field trip curriculum includes: stream/pond ecology, bird banding, maple syruping, prairie ecology, seasons, senses, soil critters, raptors, habitat, nature's adaptations and more. The fee for the field trips has been reduced for Austin and Mower County schools thanks to the Hormel Foundation grant.

Youth & Family Summer Adventure Program - Get out and discover nature by canoeing, kayaking, hiking, birding, geocaching, nature photography and more with the staff. The classes are fee based on expense. Scholarships for reduced fees or free classes are available due to funding by private donors, organizations, and the Friends of the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center.



Summer Nature Play Afternoons - Discover nature with your child with free canoe and kayak rentals, scooping the pond for aquatic critters, netting butterflies and dragonflies, archery, self-guided trail activities and nature programs. This free program began in 2009 on specified afternoons in June, July and August from 1:00-4:00 p.m. New this year, the little ones will be able to enjoy a mini water park (water tables) on a hot summer day.

Summer Senior Specials - This will be our eighth year to offer seniors 55 and 6 free nature programs, a short tour of the trails on our two access vehicles, coffee and a cookie.

Trail Access Tours - Enjoy the nature center trails with a free tour on one of the two access vehicles with a volunteer driver during the spring, summer and fall. This is the fifth season to offer these trail rides. The tours are for seniors and families. The date and time need to be scheduled ahead. A minimum four-day notice for the requested tour is required for scheduling a driver.

Halloween Warm-Up - Come experience the enchanted forest with bats, trolls, owls, and witches. Every ten minutes, a group of 25 are led into the boo'tiful forest to meet the assorted spirits that reside there. Established in 1983 this annual event is co-sponsored with Matchbox Children's Theater and is intended for children ages 4-11. Tickets are sold off site in September at Super Fresh Produce and Bakery.

Crafts of Christmas Past - Enjoy the holiday spirit. Join the Nature Center staff as you make your very own Christmas wreaths and hand dipped beeswax candles. Three classes are offered with fee based on material expense.

Ruby Ripner Nature & Community Programs - Features such performers as folksingers, storytellers, musicians, naturalists, staff and other guest speakers. Free programs are provided by an endowment fund from the Friends of the Nature Center along with other donated dollars.

2018 Eco Blitz: Waste Week

This is a free, family - friendly special event celebrating the importance of understanding what



happens to the waste that we produce as humans. It is intended to be fun and educational. In addition, there will be one community service day of offsite water sampling, river clean up, sewage treatment tours, as well as identifying and labeling storm drains. This is a week-long event with special guest presenters.

Thanksgiving Feast - Established in 2002, the Friends of the Nature Center host an annual banquet, entertainment and auction as a fundraiser. The Friends raise dollars primarily to pay for the intern and other seasonal staff.



Sola-Fide Observatory - Come see the moon, planets, and stars through a 10" refractor telescope. Free programs are held on specified Saturday evenings during the year. The City of Austin has owned and operated this facility since 1991.

School Groups, Programs, and Special Events
2017 **2016**

	Programs	Participants	Programs	Participants
Austin Public Schools	103	2744	103	2708
Mower County Schools (Includes Austin Catholic, Lyle, Grand Meadow, Southland, Gerard Academy, homeschool, Preschool field trips)	44	858	27	648
Outside Mower County (Includes Dodge, Faribault, Waseca and Freeborn, Northwood Kensett)	14	475	7	324
Community Programs	54	1943	24	3786
Friends of the JCHNC Bus Tour	1	34	1	48
Sola Fide Observatory	15	348	14	336
KAUS Educational Radio	52		52	
Thursday Nature Play and Free Ski and Canoe Rentals	8	1810	18	1122
Summer Senior Specials	6	194	8	359
Trail Access Tours	11	140	9	69
Summer Youth Adventure Classes	56	607	53	586
Halloween Warm-Up	2	805	2	884
Crafts of Christmas Past	3	45	2	34
Free Public Programs	21	1804	21	1382
Mower County Fair	4	650	4	680
Thanksgiving Feast	1	270	1	260
Summer Youth Scholarships		63		58
Walk-Through Mini Programs (Preschool, ECFE, Daycares)	38	702	4	127
Total:	433	13,492	354	13,308

SUPPORT



Friends of the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center - non-profit organization that supports the Nature Center through fundraising, programming, equipment, volunteering, and planting of wildflowers and trees. Memberships are available at the Nature Center.

Funding Sources - City of Austin, Friends of the Hormel Nature Center, Hormel Foundation, Austin Area Foundation and state grants.

PARKS, RECREATION, AND FORESTRY DEPARTMENT

STAFF

Kim Underwood	Director
Randy Hofner	Park Supervisor
Tricia Branden	Park and Recreation Clerk
Patti Hamilton	Administrative Assistant
Riley Donovan	Recreation Supervisor 9/26/17
Jake Solberg	Recreation Supervisor until 9/8/17
Luke Reese	Director/Naturalist
Julie Champlin	Nature Center Assistant
Maria Anderson	Nature Center/Teacher Naturalist

PARK BOARD

Ward Halvorson	Chairperson
Helen Jahr	Vice Chairperson
Bob Wilson	Member
Deedee Marx	Member
Chris Grev	Member
Jeff Austin	City Council
Don Fox	School Board

PARK CREW

Michael Goetz	Park maintenance/Equipment operator
Lynn Thompson	Park maintenance/Equipment operator
Dayton Kerhet	Park maintenance/Equipment operator
Greg Bell	Pool maintenance/Park maintenance
Terry Corkill	Park maintenance/Equipment operator
Tim Rodgers	Tree trimmer/ Chipper operator
Spencer Wolner	Construction maintenance
Neal Goergen	Mechanic
Andrew Jensen	Tree trimmer/Chipper operator
Jon White	Tree trimmer/Chipper operator



Ice skating is easy on the joints because it's low impact, and it improves your balance and coordination.

Watch our Facebook page for public skate hours! We also have summer ice.