

PARKS, RECREATION, AND FORESTRY DEPARTMENT

121 NE 4 AVENUE AUSTIN, MN

MISSION

The Austin Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department creates a community through people, parks and programs. We strengthen community image and sense of place, support economic development, strength, 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 & FORESTRY ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2011

- Pool splash pad opened for the first season.
- The dugouts on the Five Diamond Complex were a hit.
- The new boiler was complete in May for the pool.
- The bottom of the pool was painted following the 2011 season.
- Pool drain covers were installed in the main and diving well.
- Additional shade systems and lounge chairs were ordered in 2011, to be shipped in 2012.
- Two pool pumps were sent in for repair, impellers ordered, replacement to be in 2012.
- The parking lot at North Todd Ball Diamonds was overlaid.
- Swings were added to Orchard Creek Park, ADA material will be completed in 2012.
- Play equipment was re-installed in Horace Austin Park; ADA material will be completed in 2012.
- Submitted "Tree City USA" designation for the 33rd consecutive year.
- Earned our 32nd year as "Tree City USA".
- Worked with Spruce Up committee.
- The fifth year of "Community Pride" clean-up day.
- 143 tree work orders were processed.
- 16 Honorary and Memorial trees were planted through Spruce Up.
- Planted 75 new trees in the fall in parks and boulevards.
- Planted 40 more trees in Todd Park.
- 124 trees were removed.
- Continued work on the older soccer fields in Todd Park adding artificial turf to goal areas.
- Planted native prairie grass and plants in the Mill Pond area.
- RCC diamond fields were over seeded and artificial turf walkways were added.
- With the help from Austin Youth Baseball, RCC diamond #1 now has a warning track.
- The aerator fountain was installed in the Mill Pond. Funded by the Hormel Foundation grant.
- SHIP grants provided bike racks, an ADA lift at the pool, ice skates, free skating dates and free swimming dates.
- Trail signs purchased in 2010, from a SHIP grant, were placed along the 13 miles of city trails.
- Season two started for the Austin Bruins.
- The grant for the Riverside Arena light project was completed.
- Received a GreenCorps member to conduct a tree inventory.
- General maintenance, mowing and landscaping crews stayed on task.

EQUIPMENT PURCHASED IN 2011

- Toro 325 mower
- Converted the 1996 mower into a line painter
- Skid loader replaced older tractor

PARKS, RECREATION, & FORESTRY GOALS FOR 2012

- This is the final year of funding for the soccer fields.
- Complete projects started in 2011.
- Complete tree inventory.
- Plant trees in parks and boulevards.
- Complete the application to receive a DNR Community Forest Bonding Grant.
- Make necessary equipment purchases approved in the budget.
- Assess the park system for the next road or parking lot project.
- Replace roof of the pool building.
- Replace sheetrock and lighting inside of the pool building.
- Tuck point the building in Shirley Theel Memorial Park.
- Gel-coat the slide at the pool.

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-ways. 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 455 plus acres, 52,600 linear feet, along with the flood areas, library, arena, and senior center. 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 which require us to remove snow include the Park & Recreation Office, nature center, shop, and outside rinks. Our crew is also called upon by the street department to help them plow or haul snow. We can keep up with these areas taking in the normal upgrading of equipment.

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

Park Maintenance- Park maintenance and construction crews have 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.

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, downtown mall area, library building, municipal building, and sterling medians. The total of flower baskets in 2011 was 190.

NOTES

- There is a safety committee in place. We strive at working hard to eliminate any injuries.
- There were 179 weed orders processed, and 74 of those orders were billed to the property owner. If the bill is not paid, it is assessed to the owner's property taxes.
- Our crews are involved with the preparation and clean up for the 4th of July Festival Celebration. This involves cleaning, moving the show-mobile and picnic tables. 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 trimmed 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.

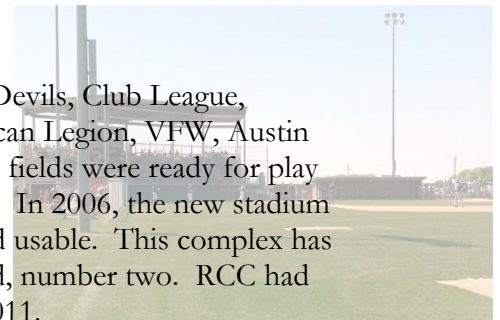
Austin Utilities- Trim trees, grind stumps and brush. P&R and Austin Utilities are co-owners of a wood chipper. Plant trees and lay out areas for them. There is an agreement between P&R & AU in which they provide a mower, truck, trailer, and wages. P&R provides and supervises the employees that mow all their substations and warehouse areas.

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. Trim and remove trees. Worked back and forth 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 138 dates scheduled for league or practice, including 5 tournaments in 2011.

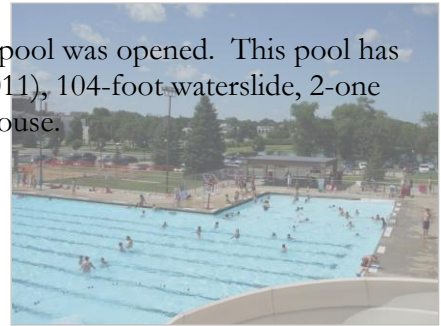


Todd Park Softball Complex- (April-October) There are nine fields combined between the north and south complexes. Field number ten, a baseball field, is on the east side of the north complex. Users include Park and Recreation adult and youth softball, kickball and t-ball leagues. Summer and fall square bag round hole leagues, Austin High School, Pacelli High, Austin Youth Baseball, ARC Softball, Austin All-Star BB and Minnesota State High School League for Subsection 1A West and Sections 1A, 1AA, 1AAA. There were eleven scheduled invitational, sections, and state tournaments. There were 96 dates scheduled for practices, games, or tournament days in 2011.



Todd Park Soccer Complex- (April- October) Three fields were added to our soccer complex which brings us to a total of six. These fields were largely funded by a Hormel Foundation grant. Users include Park and Recreation leagues, Austin Youth Soccer Club Teams, Austin High, and Hispanic Men's league. There were 45 scheduled uses for league games from 5/11 to 7/7/11. This does not include unscheduled use or team practices. The Hispanic Men's league rented Sundays from May 8th through September 11th.

Municipal Pool- (June 11-August 14) In 1986, a 50-meter, eight-lane pool was opened. This pool has a separate diving well, tot pool and play area, splash pad (new in 2011), 104-foot waterslide, 2-one meter and 2-three meter diving boards, concession area, and bathhouse.



	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>
Tags/ Admissions:	\$46,457	\$43,545
Swim lessons:	418	455
Pool attendance:	15,634	15,945
Doggie dip:	70	90

Isaak 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 70 dates, with 56 of them being rentals in 2011.

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 2011, there were 49 rental dates and 13 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.

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	
Todd Park			
North West Pavilion	32	26	Rentals
North East Pavilion	9	6	Rentals
South Pavilion	12	12	Rentals
Lions Park			
West Pavilion	13	9	Rentals
East Pavilion	26	18	Rentals
Horace Park - was closed in 2011, due to construction			
Horace Pavilion	---	7	Rentals
Lafayette Park			
Lafayette Pavilion	12	14	Rentals
East Side Lake			
Gazebo	12	3	Rentals
Shirley Theel			
Memorial Pavilion	9	0	Rentals
	<u>125</u>	<u>95</u>	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 did not open due to the unbelievable warm weather in 2011.

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 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:

	2011		2010	
	<u>Riverside</u>	<u>Packer</u>	<u>Riverside</u>	<u>Packer</u>
Youth Hockey	164.25	240	92.75	438.25
AHS Boys & Girls	265.5	98	253	83
Riverside Skate Club	160.75	8	146.25	32
Public Skate hrs	11.5	78		69.75
School Skates		2		13.5
Private ice rentals	54	31	32	109.5
Homeschool		22.5	1	27
Austin Bruins	215.5 practice		135.75 ½ season in 2010	
Austin Bruins	120 games		48 ½ season in 2010	

Riverside Arena- is the home of the Junior Hockey team, “The Austin Bruins”. The owner is Craig Patrick and the team’s head coach/general manager is Chris Tok. Their first season began in the fall of 2010. This past season 2011/2012 they played 28 home games from October 1, 2011 through March 24, 2012. February 5th 2011 marked the first year of “Paint the Rink Pink” a fundraiser by the Austin Bruins of just over \$22,000 given the Hormel Institute for breast cancer research.

Youth hockey and the Austin Bruins, partnered together to run Skills & Drills on Wednesdays, September 14, 21 and 28th.

Dryland Events:

- Riverside Arena- Circus Pages – 1 day
- Home and Vacation Show – 5 days with move in and out
- Austin Public School – Grade 8 career fair for all area schools
- Freeborn Mower Coop Annual Meeting – 2 days
- Austin High Prom – 6 days with set up and event
- AHS Graduation – 2 days with set up and event
- Private rentals for dances – 3 separate events
- Figure skate and Youth Hockey season registration – 4 days

- Packer Arena- Park & Recreation youth golf program- 2 days/wk, June-July
- Park & Recreation youth archery program- 2 days/wk, June -July
- Rain location for Park & Recreation tennis & square bag/round hole.



DEPARTMENT SUPPORT FOR AREA ASSOCIATIONS

Austin Youth Football- Transport equipment and take registration forms.

Hockey Association- Flood outside rinks for practice and public. Rent ice at Riverside and Packer Arenas.

Baseball Association- Laying red rock in the infields, maintain fences and other duties. RCC has been a large project that they have helped with.

Austin Youth Soccer- Line fields and nets at Shirley Theel and Todd Park. In 2008, they began to help raising funds to add three more fields in Todd Park. The Hormel Foundation approved a grant of \$50,000 for the next five years dedicated to this project.

Spruce Up Austin- Order materials, plant, and water trees for this much needed organization.

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 ranked in the top five in the state.

PARKS

Bustad	14 Ave SW	Ballfield, playground
Bandshell Community	9 Place SW	Bandshell, sledding, play equipment, home to Veterans Pavilion
Crane	16 Ave NE	Playground equipment
Cullen	11 Ave SW	Playground equipment
Decker	6 Ave NE	Basketball, playground
Driesner North (Elk's)	Oakland Pl SE	Ball field, playground
Driesner South	Oakland Pl	Playground, shelter without electricity, 9-holes disc golf
East Side Lake	Oakland Pl NE	Boat landing, fishing dock, playground, pavilion, gazebo, restrooms
Galloway	2 Ave SW	Hockey & land rinks (warming house), playground
Honor Guards	8 St. NE	Resting bench, passive park
Horace Austin	N Main St	Volleyball court, walking trail, municipal pool, play equipment, skate park
Kaufman	11 Ave SE	Ball field, hockey & land rinks, warming house, play equipment
Lafayette	S Main St	Ball field, playground, restrooms, shelter with electricity
Lions Park	Oakland Pl NE	Play equipment, restrooms, two shelters with electricity, volleyball court
Murphy Creek	7 Street NW	Play equipment, gazebo
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 without electricity
Orchard Creek	16 Ave SW	Play equipment and gazebo with electricity
Rotary Centennial Park	8 Ave SE	Horseshoe courts, basketball courts, play equipment, two gazebos, and restrooms with solar energy

Sherman	6 Ave NW	Ball field, basketball, hockey & land rinks, play equipment, restrooms, tennis
Shirley Theel	400 25 St SW	Soccer field, ball field, play equipment, restrooms, walking trail
South Grove	4 Drive SW	Ball field, basketball, land rinks, play equipment, shelters
Sterling	5 Ave SW	Playground equipment
Sutton	Oakland Pl SE	Playground, shelter without electricity
Todd	21 Ave NE	Ball fields, horseshoes, playgrounds, restrooms, shelters with electricity, volleyball courts, disk golf course, soccer fields
Whittier	3 Ave SE	Greenway
Wildwood	16 Ave NW	Play equipment, natural setting, trail will come through area
Worlein	606 NW 1 Dr	Benches, Passive Park



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. Children's programs are offered as inexpensive as possible, while the adult programs are self-supporting.

<u>WINTER/FALL PROGRAMS</u>	<u>PARTICIPANTS/TEAMS</u>	<u>DATES</u>
2 nd – 5 th Grade Indoor Soccer	13	
K – 6 th Grade Outdoor Soccer Camp	12	Sept. 17 & Sept. 24, 2011
2 nd – 5 th Grade Basketball	41	Oct.25-Dec.8, 2011
Intro to Archery ages 9-11	14	Dec. 27-28, 2011
Archery League, ages 9-18	12	Jan. 6-Mar. 24, 2011

<u>SELF SUPPORTING PROGRAMS</u>	<u>PARTICIPANTS/TEAMS</u>	<u>DATES</u>
Bowling, ages 5 and up	16 participants	June 8-July 20, 2011
Golf, ages 6 and up	22 participants	June 6-July 13, 2011
Track, ages 5 – adult	27 participants	June 6-July 14, 2011
T-ball, entering K, 5 year olds (Minor)	84 participants/7 teams	June 7-July 21, 2011
T-ball, gr k-1 (Major)	94 participants/8 teams	June 7-July 21, 2011
Youth Softball, ages 7-12	48 participants	June 6-July 20, 2011
Soccer, ages 5-9	75 participants	June 7-July 24, 2011
Tennis, ages 4-16	51 participants	June 6-July 20, 2011
Girls Volleyball Summer League U18	Not enough participants
Girls Volleyball Winter League, U15, U18	55 participants/7 teams	Jan. 9-Mar. 6, 2011
Girls Volleyball Club, U14, U15, U16, U18	23 participants	Jan. 10/11-April 2011
Girls Volleyball, gr 4-6	Not enough participants
Austin Youth Wrestling, grade K-5	42 participants	Nov. 29, 2010-Mar. 9, 2011
Southern Minny GFP League U12,14,16,18	89 teams	June 1-July 29, 2010
Intro to Archery, ages 9-18	20 participants	June 7-July 21, 2011
Archery League, ages 9-18	4 participants	June 8-July 20, 2011

<u>SPECIAL EVENTS</u>	<u>PARTICIPANTS/TEAMS</u>	<u>DATES</u>
Shamrock Open-NYWA Wrestling Qualifier	154 participants	Mar. 18, 2011

Noon Kiwanis Track Meets 216 participants July 14, 2011

<u>YOUTH ACTIVITY CENTER</u>	<u>PARTICIPANTS/TEAMS</u>	<u>DATES</u>
Attendance	1,693 (149 days)	Jan. 1-Mar. 26, 2011

<u>POOL</u>	<u>PARTICIPANTS/TEAMS</u>	<u>DATES</u>
Swim lesson	417 lessons (2 week sessions)	June 13-August 5, 2011
Open Swim	15,315 uses	June 11-August 14, 2011
Lap swim, noon	319 uses	June 11-August 14, 2011
Doggie Dip	70 dogs	August, 14, 2011

<u>ADULT PROGRAMS</u>	<u>PARTICIPANTS/TEAMS</u>	<u>DATES</u>
Softball Leagues	475 participants/35 teams	June 16, 2011
Kickball League, Summer '11	206 participants/18 teams	May 12-Aug. 4, 2011
Volleyball Leagues, Winter '11	247 participants/32 teams	
Volleyball Leagues, Fall '11	178 participants/23 teams	
Square Bag Round Hole League, Summer '11	34 participants/17 teams	May 9-July 18, 2011

ASSOCIATION SUPPORT

Austin Youth Baseball	Austin Softball Association
Austin Youth Soccer	Austin Swim Club
Austin Youth Wrestling	Austin Area Volleyball Club
Austin Girls Fast Pitch	Horseshoe Club

JAY C. HORMEL NATURE CENTER *(Celebrating 40 years in 2011)*

The J.C. Hormel Nature Center began in 1971. There are 507-acres nature preserve that 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 nine plus miles of trail.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2011

- Celebrated 40 years! Created a historical/pictorial 2011 anniversary calendar and held special programs.
- Halloween Warm-up, Eco-blitz, Re-Fest, the 8k run and cross country ski race continue to be highlighted events for the nature center.
- Our ninth annual “Thanksgiving Feast” fundraiser was again a very successful endeavor. Raising the greatest amount of dollars ever for the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center. The money raised are primarily used to pay for the teaching interns.
- Facilitated, with Austin Utilities and Riverland Community College, the fourth annual Re-Fest Renewable Energy Festival in September.
- For the third summer, “Thursday Nature Play,” was held for family activities. It continued to provide opportunities for youth and families to be active in the outdoors.
- Summer Adventure Program scholarships continue to be provided to Austin area youth by Austin Audubon, Izaak Walton League, Friends of the Nature Center, along with private donations.

- The staff continues to provide quality environmental education K-12 programs for the Austin School District and surrounding communities.
- 2011 staff initiated five summer senior specials with access tours for seniors.
- The parking lot fence was repaired and improved, new concrete was poured in the entrance to the nature center and Mike Goetz designed and installed a new entrance gate.
- Eagle Scouts project by David Erdahl placed four new wood duck boxes and removal of the old wood boxes.
- “Red,” the Red-tailed Hawk, our education bird of prey, has made it to 31 years of age.
- Dick and Belita Schindler’s donation of \$5,000 for the nature center, continues to reduce cross-country ski rental for youth to \$1.00.
- Sixty acres of prairie was burned with help from the Austin Fire Department.
- The “Welcome Circle” trailhead sign was completed and mounted in 2011. A double flagstone walk was installed to access the Welcome Circle.
- Ten new trail signs with, “You are Here,” maps were strategically placed on the trails.
- New snowshoes were acquired through a grant from the Minnesota State Health Improvement Plan.
- Repairs were made and a new roof was put on the bird of prey house for Barred Owl.
- A bench was placed, north of the pond, in memory of Kevin Dammen.
- Replaced door on the visitor center.
- Installed solar panel columns.
- Built roof over heat pump outside the visitor center.
- Photovoltaic system on the Ruby Rupner Auditorium was completed. Received \$3,500.00 from Austin Utilities to install this new system.

GOALS FOR 2012

- Begin restoration of the 148-acre, Wayne Diekrager property. More specifically the 92.5 acres of the property in the conservation reserve program.
- Continue to offer and facilitate environmental education and outdoor education programs for students’ kindergarten through college.
- Continue to offer these big events: Eco-blight, Re-Fest, Dammen Nordic Ski race, 8K run, Halloween Warm-up, and our fundraising event, The Friends of the JCHNC, Thanksgiving Feast.
- Offer, on behalf of the Friends of the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center, a fundraiser for Alzheimer’s research.
- Continue to offer summer adventure programs for youth.
- Continue to offer geocaching and nature photography as part of our summer programming.
- Continue with the “Thursday Nature Play” free family activities during the summer of 2012.
- Continue to provide recreational opportunities for wildlife photography, hiking, cross country skiing, canoeing, snowshoeing, geocaching, and more.
- Continue to offer the “Summer Senior Specials” programs on select Thursdays with a short, educational program. Seniors are also given the opportunity to tour the trails on one of our trail access vehicles.
- Apply to the Hormel Foundation to continue with the one-dollar rate for student field trips.
- Replace van as approved by the Austin City Council.

- Upgrade the visitor center exhibits and displays with a new bison exhibit.
- Repair the roof of the visitor center as approved by the Austin City Council.
- Continue “What’s New in Nature” at KAUS.

FACILITIES

Visitor Center- Features an exhibit display area with live animals, nature games, preschool play area, and a nature history resource library.

Ruby Rupner Auditorium- This auditorium is used for school programs, 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 ½ & full day)

	2011	2010
Private:	116 days	109 days
Conservation Groups/City:	10 days	30 days
Total:	<u>126 rentals</u>	<u>139 rentals</u>



RECREATION



Hiking and Cross-Country Ski/Snowshoe Trails- The Nature Center has over nine miles of trails. There is also a ¼-mile handicapped accessible trail. Two wheelchairs are available for the public to use during the visitor center hours. The trails are groomed for cross-country skiing in the winter. A ski pass is not required. Cross country ski or snowshoe rental is available. We provide free skiing or snowshoeing on Thursday afternoons from 3:00-6:00pm in January, February and March for adults and children.

Canoe/Rental Trips- Enjoy youth and family canoe trips with Nature Center staff. Canoe rental is available on Dobbins Creek to East Side Lake or on the Nature Center pond.

EDUCATION BIRDS OF PREY

- The Barred Owl and Red-tailed Hawk were utilized in *61 programs with 2045 total participants* in 2011. “Red” the Red -tailed Hawk, will celebrate his 32nd birthday this spring. The Barred Owl-“Gu ka ka ou” is seven years old. The two birds 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 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 include: stream/pond ecology, bird banding, maple syruping, prairie ecology, seasons, senses, critters, soil 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, hiking, birding, geocaching, nature photography and more with the staff. The classes are fee based on expense. Scholarships are available from funding by private donors, organizations and the Friends of the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center.



Thursday Nature Play- Discover nature with your child with free canoe rentals, scooping the pond for aquatic critters, netting butterflies, self-guided trail activities and nature programs. This free program began in 2009 on specified Thursday afternoons in June, July and August from 1:00-5:00pm.

Summer Senior Specials- This will be our third year to offer seniors 55 and over five 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 third 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.

ReFest Energy Fair- 2012 will celebrate the 5th year of green living & clean energy festival held at Riverland Community College. The event includes stage events, vendors, exhibitors, artisans, free electronics recycling area and a keynote speaker. This event is co-sponsored with Austin Utilities, Riverland Community College and the Friends of the JCHNC.

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. Two classes are offered with fee based on material expense.

Ruby Rupner 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.

Summer Solstice Ecoblitz- This free event is for parents and grandparents and their children and designed to get families outside for outdoor fun. Summer Solstice Ecoblitz is the discovery and exploration of our natural world by participating in hiking, geocaching, canoeing, bird walks, self-guided trail activities, nature programs, art activities and more. Complete three or more sessions of the activities and you will be entered into nature themed prize drawings at the end of the day.

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.



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 year long and summer intern.

Hormel Nature Center School Groups, Programs, and Special Events 2011

	2011		2010	
	Programs	Participants	Programs	Participants
Austin Public Schools	156	3,821	104	4,398
Mower County Schools (Includes Austin Catholic, Lyle, Grand Meadow, Southland, Gerard Academy, homeschool, Preschool field trips)	14	332	31	669
Outside Mower County (Includes Dodge, Faribault, Waseca and Freeborn, Northwood Kensett)	25	740	23	656
Community Services	19	381	8	347
Sola Fide Observatory	20	550	20	550
KAUS Educational Radio	52	---	52	---
Youth & Family Summer Adventure	59	1,000	54	350
Thursday Nature Play	11	731	10	325
Summer Senior Specials	5	268	6	275
Trail Access Tours		178		199
ReFest Energy Fair	1	3,000	1	1,200
Halloween Warm-Up	2	800	2	750
Crafts of Christmas Past	2	34	2	35
Ruby Rupner Programs	14	983	10	2,971
Community Programs	13	813	12	458
Summer Solstice Ecoblitz	1	85	1	80
Sola-Fide Observatory	20	550	20	550
Thanksgiving Feast	1	265	1	270
Summer Youth Scholarships	---	57	---	37
Walk-Through Mini Programs (Preschool, ECFE)	---	---	11	218
Total:	415	14,588	368	14,338

SUPPORT

Fiends 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 and state grants.

PARKS, RECREATION, AND FORESTRY DEPARTMENT

STAFF

Kim Underwood	Director
Tom Graff	Park Supervisor
Larry Dolphin	Director/Naturalist
Valerie L. Pitzen	Recreation Supervisor
Tricia A. Branden	Park and Recreation Clerk
Julie A. Champlin	Nature Center Assistant
Amanda Grant	Administrative Assistant

PARK BOARD

Ward Halvorson	Chairperson
Gretchen Ramlo	Vice Chairperson
Bob Wilson	Member
DeeDee Marx	Member
Karen Sundal	Member
Jeff Austin	City Council
Don Fox	School Board

PARK CREW

Douglas Kelly	Equipment operator
Michael Goetz	Park maintenance/Equipment operator
Randy Hofner	Mechanic
Lynn Thompson	Pool maintenance/park maintenance
Dayton Kerhet	Equipment operator
Greg Bell	Tree trimmer/Chipper operator
Terry Corkill	Park maintenance
Tim Rodgers	Chipper operator/Tree trimmer
Spencer Wolner	Construction maintenance

