



Parks and Recreation Annual Report 2023

2023 SPECIAL EVENTS

The 2023 Special Event season kicked off on Friday, February 17th with the City's Arbor Day Celebration. The City of Woodstock gave away 770 tree seedlings for residents to plant at their homes. Trees included Dogwood, Eastern Redbud, Catalpa, and Crepe Myrtle. Each seedling also came with a tree care guide. Tree care guides were available on the City website. Trees were planted in honor of employees celebrating 20 years of employment with the city. Congratulations to Assistant Police Chief, Mark Hand, and Fire Department Sergeant, Benjamin Daniel for their milestones. Their names were also added to a plaque hanging in the lobby of City Hall.

The City's annual Greenstock Day was held on Saturday, April 22nd. The annual event features city wide yard sales and a recycling/paper shredding event. The annual recycling event collected over 13,036 lbs. of electronics, 612 lbs. of batteries, 200 lbs. of textiles, 3.5 tons of paper was shredded, and .67 tons of other recyclables were collected. 408 cars carrying 565 people came through the event. The city-wide yard sale had 49 registered residential garage sales and 17 community sales throughout Woodstock.

The City of Woodstock Memorial Day Ceremony was held on Monday, May 29th. There were approximately 350 attendees during the ceremony held in the gazebo at The Park at City Center. Speakers from the American Legion Post 316 and Marine Corps League Detachment 1311 gave honor to those who fought and died to keep us free. The Cobb New Horizons Band and the Marine Corps League Ceremonial Rifle Team made the ceremony even more special.

The 25th Annual Woodstock Summer Concert Series kicked off on May 10th with award winning Country Superstar Craig Morgan. Grammy Award winner Rick Springfield headlined the June concert and drew a crowd of 14,300. July brought Uptown Funk (Bruno Mars Tribute Band) playing in the heat of July to another large crowd of 11,800! Completely Unchained, a Van Halen Tribute Band rocked the house in August with classic Van Halen songs from 1978 -1984. There was a 2nd concert in during the month of August on August 25th. The Voice winner and local resident Bryce Leatherwood performed a homecoming concert for all of his local fans. Drivin' N Cryin' closed out the 2023 concert series on a beautiful night and entertained an estimated crowd of 6,600 fans. The 2023 Summer Concert Series had an average attendance of 8,966 per show. The City is excited about the lineup for the 2024 Summer Concert Series that will be announced during the Mayors 2024 State of the City address.

The City's Annual July 4th Spectacular parade, festival, and 5k Freedom Run was hit with an estimated 12,600 people attending the parade and festival. The annual fireworks display brought an estimated 15,000 spectators to the Highway 92 and 575 corridor to watch the display which finished just as the rain started to come down. The Freedom Run in the morning had over 800 participants. There were 75 parade units that marched down Main Street, 33 vendors in the park, and 9 food vendors serving up summertime treats. An estimated crowd of more than 2,600 visitors came out and enjoyed the festival.

The Woodstock 9/11 Day of Remembrance Ceremony was held on September 11th and had guest speakers from the City of Woodstock including Mayor Michael Caldwell, Police Chief Robert Jones, Fire Chief Shane Dobson, Asst. Fire Chief Jimmy Eley, and Police Volunteer Chaplain Doug Whitney. State Senator, and 4th generation Firefighter and EMT, John Albers also spoke to approximately 200 people in attendance. The Hillside United Methodist Church Vocal Ensemble, Above & Beyond, performed several songs including the Star Spangled Banner. River Ridge AFJROTC presented the colors and the American Heritage Girls marched into the ceremony with posters they made to thank our first responders. 9/11 Remembrance Lapel Pins were given away to those in attendance.



On September 24th the Sunset Symphony featuring the Cobb New Horizons Band, played music “From Broadway to Hollywood” for over 250 spectators. All enjoyed a relaxing night under the stars. The band offers senior adults, with musical instrument experience, the opportunity to join an actively performing concert band.

The annual 3rd Grade Woodstock Elementary School Downtown Walking Tour took place on October 6th. Approximately 290 third graders made their way to The Park at City Center, The Chambers at City Center, and the Northside Hospital-Cherokee Amphitheater to learn about the history of the City of Woodstock and the services it provides. The highlights of their trip were a question and answer session with Mayor Caldwell and Kyle Bennett, and the demonstrations by Police K9, and Fire Department uniforms and equipment.

The annual “Halloween Trail of Tricks and Treats” was held for the 3rd year in a row along Rubes Creek Trail. It introduced the residents of Woodstock to the Rubes Creek Trail as they walked along collecting toys, candy, and trinkets from the Parks and Recreation staff and vendors lined up along the trail. Many enjoyed the Skeleton City featuring fun skeleton displays that entertained everyone as they enjoyed the nighttime trail walk. Over 2,500 people attended the event. The addition of Big Idea Entertainment carnival games and bubbles were well received by the public. DJ Ronnie played music for those waiting in line. This event is held on Halloween as a safe alternative to trick-or-treating.

For Veterans Day on Saturday, November 11th, the annual ceremony was held at The Chambers due to bad weather. Approximately 50 people attended, a little less than normal participation but weather was definitely a factor. Black Rifle Coffee Company Woodstock supplied coffee and donuts after the event for our Veterans meet and greet. The ceremony was presented by The City of Woodstock, Marine Corps League Woodstock Detachment 1311, and American Legion Post 316 South Cherokee County. Attendance has been declining in the last several years, so the committee maybe looking at something other than a ceremony.

The “Tis the Season to be Green” Recycle Event took place on Saturday, November 18th. To celebrate National Recycling Week, the event offered document shredding and recycled electronics, batteries, cell phones, CFL bulbs, glasses, hearing aids, textiles, magazines, and newspapers. Collected that day were 7,509 lbs. of electronics, 8,270 lbs. of paper shredded, 546 lbs. of batteries, .86 tons of waste, 375 lbs. of textiles, and .69 tons of other recyclables such as cardboard, magazines, and newspaper. There were 296 cars carrying 388 people that were counted at the event.

On December 2nd, the Parks and Recreation Department presented The 27th Annual Christmas Jubilee & Parade of Lights! An estimated 8,500 people attended the parade and an additional 3,000 visited The Park at City Center for Christmas Jubilee. There were over 76 parade units, 5 food vendors, and 25 vendors who all helped kick start the holiday season! Parade float winners are as follows, “Best Holiday Float” Mauldin Body Shop & Towing, “Most Original Float” Let’s Pretend Publishing, “The People’s Choice Award” Ready Mix USA, “The People’s Choice Award” Sweet Honeysuckle Bake Shop, “Most Spirited Golf Cart Award” Kent Aabye, “History & Heritage” Gold Swim Team, and “Most Spirited Jeep” Tom & Suzanne Young.

PARK/TRAIL/AMPHITHEATER RENTALS

There were 11 other events that were held at the Northside Hospital Cherokee Amphitheater, Noonday Creek Trail, and Dupree Park.



RECREATION

As opportunities continue to present, recreation programming is growing and meeting the needs of the citizens of Woodstock. 2023 was a year of improving existing brands and programs, creating new opportunities, and expanding the department's reach in recreational instruction.

The 25th year of the Brown Bag Concert Series was enjoyed by over 800 people in the City Park. Acts for 2023 in May included Danielle McLean, Mark Miller, Trevor Startt, and Serpent & Dove, and September included Chip Jones, Wyatt Espalin, Ezra Jacob, and Wilkes. With great weather in May and September, the tunes and leisure were welcomed.

AMPED in the Park, our free monthly collaborative fitness offering in the Northside Hospital-Cherokee Amphitheater saw nearly 500 participants April – October. Local fitness providers, Burn Boot Camp, Onelife Fitness, HEW Fitness, Strongside, Pure Barre and Twisted Cycle, shared vital fitness instruction one Saturday every month for the duration of the program.

Our collaboration with Foxtale Book Shoppe, Storytime Live! that brought storybook/movie characters Mario, Princess Leia, Ariel, Spiderman Miles, Barbie, Leonardo, Batman and Paw Patrol Marshall, to the Gazebo at City Park April through October continued to be successful with over 500 kids enjoying the program.

With jingle in his step, jolly, old St. Nick answered letters from close to 250 children sent to the North Pole during our Santa Mail program beginning right after Thanksgiving.

With the Sequoyah Regional Library System as a partner, the Trailstory program brought children's books to Trestle Rock Trail, Rubes Creek Trail and Towne Lake Pass Trail in April, June, and August. Titles included, Drawn Together, Daniel's Good day and My Papi Has a Motorcycle.

Dupree Park Field Space continued to provide youth sports as we collaborated with i9 Sports throughout the year for youth baseball, flag football and soccer and summer multi-sport camps, Upward Soccer in and Healthy Kids Running Series in the fall. In total, over 1,000 children had the opportunity to pursue recreational sports.

Woodstock's Adopt-a-Trail program continued to keep the trails trash and hazard-free in 2023. Ten sections of trail on Noonday Creek Trail, Rubes Creek Trail, Towne Lake Pass Trail, and Trestle Rock Trail were monitored and cleaned by Woodstock organizations and individuals. Thank you to these volunteers!

Our introduction to recreational activities brand "Discovering" offered over 60 classes in 2023 with Pickleball leading the way. Also returning this year were classes in beekeeping, archery, fishing, disc golf, tennis for kids, and paddleboarding. We added yoga, pickleball for kids and a discovering pickleball practice & play program for those who participated in the discovering pickleball class to have time set aside to practice their newly learned skills.

Essential Gardening classes grew this year by adding no-till gardening, apple history and hydroponic gardens. The ever-popular essential gardening classes ran January through November, with over 250 participants. In addition, a craft sour dough baking class was introduced with registration filling quickly.

In 2023, the "SKILLS" brand continued to introduce Woodstock citizen into self-development programming. The two classes were SKILLS – Gun Safety, where we partnered with the Woodstock Police Department, and SKILLS – First Aid, where we partnered with the Woodstock Fire Department with SKILLS – Gun Safety being well-attended.

Activating play and creativity is a main tenant of recreation and the Rocks! series, where every other month folks gather to paint and distribute river rocks throughout Woodstock was real fun. Love Rocks! Mother EarthRocks!



Dad Rocks! Happiness Rocks! And Monster Rocks! brought nearly 100 people together for this fun, interactive, community-driven activity.

With the six Dupree Park Pickleball Courts, we added several new leagues, including intermediate and advanced mixed and women's doubles, to our existing beginner leagues. As we enter 2023, pickleball leagues are actively being reevaluated. The big win was adding the monthly class +55 Pickleball Practice and Play, an instructor led pickleball class for individuals 55 years and older that wanted to improve their skill and have some fun. Offered for a month every Wednesday morning from June through October, the program was full every month.

SENIOR CENTER

The William G. Long Senior Center has returned to its normal operating hours from 9am-4pm Monday through Friday. Heather Gilliland was promoted to Senior Center Coordinator in March 2023 to replace Julie Markey who stepped down from the position in February 2023. Latoya (Shae) Slan was hired in May 2023 to fill the Senior Center recreation Specialist role. Latoya has jumped into her new role helping with trips, luncheons including set-up and break-down of the event rooms, helping with special events, and will be helping facilitate the start-up of some new and exciting groups to come.

Senior Center memberships at the time of this report are 674, with a goal of reaching 700 by the end of June 2024. Senior Center memberships at the time of this report are 688, with a goal of reaching 700 by the end of June 2024. Last year the center averaged 44 members a day for drop-in activities. This year the average number of members per day for drop-in activities is 60. The center offered 218 programs with 4,913 registrations. Members took 47 trips, attended 14 Holiday Luncheons, 154 center programs and 19 weekly fitness and dance programs.

The billiard room has grown to be a popular activity at the Senior Center. The new wall that was built in the billiard room to create a separate activity space for workout equipment has inspired members to use the treadmill, elliptical and exercise bicycle. The Garden Club members continue to have great success with growing vegetables and all members benefit as they can consume fresh vegetables through the season. Heather has re-scheduled the highly requested nutrition & weight management group, and our members are excited to get back to the class. As our memberships grow, and programming gains popularity, programs and luncheons frequently reach capacity with a substantial waiting list for members who were unable to register in time. The need for recreational programming space, and the need for community groups to meet, continues to grow. As a result, the center continues to feel smaller and smaller in terms of sharing space. Staff are intuitive in shuffling around tables and classes as needed to ensure programming can continue to evolve and grow without space restriction being too big of an issue.

2023 was a great year for the Senior Center as members continue to make their way back for activities after Covid-19 and new members joined. The center chose not to enter a float in the Christmas Jubilee Parade in 2023, at the last minute, due to weather conditions. However, weather permitting the Senior Center will enter their float in the Christmas Jubilee Parade in 2024 to take advantage of the opportunity to get involved in the community and advertise for new members. We hired two new recreation aides this year, Lisa McCook and Margaret Franklin, who have been successfully growing into their new roles. The Senior Center will continue to provide our members with quality programs, events, and recreational opportunities, and grow our memberships. The Parks and Recreation department staff are looking forward to the success of 2024.



MAINTENANCE

The Parks and Recreation Maintenance Division continues to be fully staffed this year with six (6) Park Maintenance Workers, one (1) Park Maintenance Crew Leader and one (1) Park Operations Coordinator.

At Woofstock Park, new agility equipment was installed this fall inside both the large and small dog areas. New mulch was also installed this fall in both large and small breed areas. Staff created an additional 10 parking spaces next to the small dog area.

A new restroom facility was installed at Dupree Park in June. The new restroom facility is located next to the Pickleball and Tennis Courts.

The old playground at Springfield Park was removed during the summer due to safety concerns. A new playground was ordered and will be installed in early January 2024.

The Park Maintenance team completed additional projects throughout the year to enhance park and facility amenities. They worked with the local fish and game group to test the water and restock the pond at Dupree Park. The team assisted the Police Department with the set up of various events held by the Police Department. They repaired a broken irrigation head located in one of the tiers located at the amphitheater. The team handled all of the set up and take down of tables and tents for each of the concerts this summer as well as the trash removal from each concert. The staff also removed and replaced the old bridge Rope Mill Park. The Parks & Recreation Maintenance team installed two (2) new cable anchors for the Kayak Launch at Rope Mill Park. They also removed the old benches and installed new benches at both the large and small dog areas at Woofstock Park. The team added new mulch to all the playgrounds at the Downtown Playground and Dupree Park.

The Park Maintenance team is currently working with Prime Contractors on the engineering and design of a new Parks Maintenance building to be located next to Dupree Park.

Little River Park- Construction for Little River Park Phase 1 is expected to begin during the 3rd quarter of 2024 with completion expected by late spring 2025.

ADMINISTRATION

Park Bond Initiative

The City Council approved at the June 19th City Council meeting the Resolution for the Park Bond Referendum in the amount of \$24 million dollars to be placed on the November 7th ballot. The Park Bond Referendum was overwhelmingly passed by the residents of Woodstock during the November 7th election.

Phase 1 Park Bond projects include Little River Park Phase 2 and Phase 3, Rubes Creek South Trail segment, Little River Park Trail Connector and the Buckhead Crossing Boardwalk.

Contracts for the engineering and design work for Phase 2 and Phase 3 of Little River Park were awarded to Earth Elements. Construction on these two (2) phases are expected to begin in late spring 2025.

NRPA CAPRA Re-Accreditation Preparation

The department administration team spent much of the year in preparation for the agency's 2024 Re-Accreditation, including policy review and revisions, updates to standard operating procedures, writing narratives and gathering documentation of evidence of compliance with the CAPRA standards.



The department is eager to reach completion and to submit the agency self-assessment report, in mid-March of 2024. The self-assessment report consists of 10 chapters, including standards for organizational structure, planning, communications and marketing, human resources, finance, programs and services management, parkland development, operations and maintenance, safety and security, risk management and evaluations and research. In completion of the self-assessment report, the department will provide over 1,000 evidence of compliance documents for review.

A review team of 3 members will complete an on-site review of the agency in May of 2024. The agency re-accreditation will go through its final review during the NRPA Annual Conference in October 2024.

NRPA's Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) delivers quality assurance and improvement to accredited park and recreation departments throughout the United States. This operational management system improves their infrastructures; increases efficiency in all activities; and demonstrates accountability within their communities. Implementation of this system strengthens teamwork among department staff, imbeds all aspects of CAPRA into their department's internal culture, and establishes a continuous improvement mindset for all department activities.

CAPRA is the only national accreditation of park and recreation departments and is a valuable measure of a department's overall quality of operation, management, and service to the community. Achieving CAPRA accreditation is the best way to demonstrate that your department and your staff provide your community with the highest level of service.

Personnel Highlights

Admin Team: Brian Borden – Completed his first year with the City serving as the Parks & Recreation Director. Heather Gaddis- 20 Years of Service.

Recreation Team: The senior center hired a new Recreation Specialist and Bus Driver! Marybeth Stockdale- 17 Years of Service, Jamey Snyder- 10 Years of Service, Heather Gilliland- 2 Year of Service, and new hire- LaTonya (Shae) Slan.

Maintenance Team: We have a fully staffed maintenance team! Jeff Armstrong- 17 Years of Service, Brad Baker- 4 Years of Service, Ryan Gobie- 9 Years of Service, Torie Lindley- 3 Years of Service, Kelvin Jones- 2 Years of Service, Dillon Morgan – 1 Year of Service, Grant Wiseman – 1 Year of Service, Brian Lagasse – 1 Year of Service.

Agency Professional Memberships

National Recreation and Parks Association- Premier Agency Membership and CAPRA Accredited Agency Georgia Recreation and Parks Association- Agency Membership and District 5 Membership

Certifications

NRPA Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP)

Brian Borden, Heather Gaddis, Jamey Snyder, Marybeth Stockdale

The Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) certification is the national standard for all parks and recreation professionals who want to be at the forefront of their profession. Attaining the CPRP designation shows that you have met education and experience qualifications and illustrates your commitment to the profession as well as your knowledge and understanding of key concepts within parks and recreation.



NRPA Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI)

Brad Baker

The National Recreation and Park Association offers the industry-leading certification program in playground safety, the Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) certification program. The CPSI certification program provides the most comprehensive and up-to-date training on playground safety issues including hazard identification, equipment specifications, surfacing requirements and risk management methods.

Staff Development

NRPA Playground Safety Inspector Course - Brad Baker completed and passed the test to become a Certified Playground Safety Inspector for the department.

NRPA Events Management School Year 1– Marybeth Stockdale

The International Festival & Events Association and National Recreation and Parks Association Event Management School was held January 15th through the 20th in Wheeling, West Virginia. There were 119 people in attendance representing 32 states and 4 countries. Marybeth Stockdale will be attending NRPA Event Management School Year 2 in January of 2024.

University of Georgia and the Carl Vinson Institute of Government Succeeding as a Supervisor Course- Successfully completed by Heather Gaddis and Marybeth Stockdale

Georgia Municipal Association Strategic Planning, Management and Evaluation Training-

Brian Borden, Heather Gaddis, Marybeth Stockdale

Georgia Municipal Association Leading Change Training-

Brian Borden, Heather Gaddis, Heather Gilliland, Marybeth Stockdale

National Recreation and Park Association Annual Conference

Brian Borden

The NRPA Annual Conference is the premier annual meeting of the park and recreation community. Join thousands of people who are passionate about parks and recreation and making their communities great places for inspirational education sessions, energetic discussions and an inside look at the latest products for the field.

National Recreation and Park Association Annual Conference- Virtual

Heather Gaddis

Training sessions attended focused on administration, leadership, strategic planning, budgeting, marketing, park operations, and diversity and inclusion in recreation programming.

Georgia Recreation and Parks Association Annual Conference-

Heather Gilliland and Jamey Snyder

Heather and Jamey attended the annual conference trade show and classes covering topics on leadership, professional growth, senior services, and recreation programming.



GRPA Maintenance Management School Year 2- Brad Baker

The GRPA Maintenance Management School has been in existence for over a decade and continues to offer the highest quality training for maintenance personnel employed by parks and recreation agencies.

Experts from both the public and private sector teach classes on a broad range of maintenance-related topics. Classroom direction and hands-on experiences are used to provide the best possible learning environment.

Department staff attended a variety of City sponsored training sessions, including,

IT Security Awareness Training, Irate Customer/Safety Training, Citizen Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE) Training, Cash Handling Training, CPR and Barriers to Effective Communication Training

Reservations and Community Programs

The Chambers at City Center

The Chambers at City Center hosted 8 public input meetings, 14 homeowner association meetings, 3 rentals for private groups, 79 city department reservations, monthly Planning and Zoning Board and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meetings, 10 INWDSTK meetings, 4 Chamber of Commerce Regional Issues meetings, and 29 events and meetings for Woodstock Arts. The total utilizations this year is 171.

Dupree Park Pavilions

The pavilions hosted 58 reservations this year and 2 City of Woodstock employee picnics.

Commemorative Bricks 48

Commemorative Bricks were installed at The Park at City Center. The commemorative brick program was established in 1997, in celebration of the City's centennial. The program is an opportunity to enrich the lifestyle of the City of Woodstock residents. The program helps beautify the city and enables individuals, companies, and organizations to honor someone. The purchase of a commemorative brick includes a custom engraved brick placed around the fountain in The Park at City Center, a brick locator map, and a certificate.