

**Milwaukee County Parks**

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Date: November 20, 2019

To: Guy Smith, Executive Director of Milwaukee County Parks

From: John R. Nelson, Safety, Security & Training Manager

Subject: After Action Report: 2019

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Our Park System is vast with numerous amenities that offers open green spaces and natural areas to be shared and enjoyed by ALL citizens and visitors to Milwaukee County. It is our goal to ALWAYS provide a safe and positive and memorable experience for all those who utilize the parks and lakefront. The Ranger program, now in our 10<sup>th</sup> season, continues to emerge and be extremely successful and operate at a superior level on a daily basis.

The continued objective of our mission for 2019 was to maintain order in ALL park spaces in Milwaukee County. This focus creates an atmosphere for individuals and families alike, so they may enjoy our nationally recognized Parks System, without fear for their safety and well-being. We were able to be successful in our mission again through courteous and positive interactions with patrons, Law Enforcement Agencies, and neighbors of their respective parks. A plethora of meetings and communications, specifically, with the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office (MCSO),

aided in better strategies, communication, and a strong partnership.

In 2019, there were 2 (two) Full-Time Rangers, 9 (nine) seasonal Rangers, along with the second year of our program utilizing a Park Worker-3 position (four on staff) performing various duties. We had a basic patrol deployment plan that worked as a *guide* for daily assignments and as a home base. Our patrol efforts were fluid, pro-active, and reactive to issues and trends in an attempt to ensure safe parks for all. Most of all, our patrols were effective. We also continued a plan of at least two (2) Rangers being deployed on late shifts during the weekends for the summer (at least till midnight, many shifts till 2 A.M.), ensuring that many late night rentals were monitored, as well as our parks and parkways being patrolled after parks closed at 10 P.M. For a majority of our shifts, regardless of time frame, we continued a “Two-Ranger Squad” to ensure the safety of our staff along with being more proactive with issues and patrols. In addition, we continued this as a safety pre-caution for when Rangers work later into the night and may be approaching vehicles and or subjects in our parks/parkways.

### **RANGER SEASONAL STAFF HOURS**

For the 2019 season, 57.45 HOURS OF OVERTIME WAS PAID differentiating from years 2013 through 2018 when there was 35 hours paid combined. We were able to accomplish our tasks efficiently, effectively, and still barely having anyone work over 40.0 (UNLESS IT WAS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY) hours per week.

*NOTE: Due to extreme high temperatures in July (16 days of 85 degrees or above in addition to FOUR Special Event Days and the addition of camping at Whitnall Park overnight), some staff were mandated and approved to work overtime to ensure the safety of our staff as well as the community in addition to be proactive in after-hours Pool patrols to minimize Trespassing and entering without permission and without supervision, aided in the spike of this Overtime. Staff again should be commended with being extremely flexible, moving shifts, off days, and work beyond their normal Seasonal employment to accomplish this monumental task. Shift hours were immediately reduced when inclement weather approached. In 2019, our Seasonal Staff budget was significantly decreased from 2018. As of this writing, we are awaiting reimbursement of over 2000 hours that were billed/coded to Red Arrow, Winter Farmers Market, Disc Golf, and China Lights, thus, maintaining and being under our budgeted goal (some have been applied). As another year has come and go, there again were **NO sick call-ins and NO sustained citizen complaints.** Very few complaints are received if any, and when received, investigated thoroughly, and unfounded.*

### **PARK PATROL HOURS**

Due to the large number of parks, the overall size of the Milwaukee County Parks System, and the actual usage at each park, not every park requires as many patrols to ensure order and maintain public safety. Additionally, not every park generates calls for service by Rangers/Law Enforcement or other emergency services.

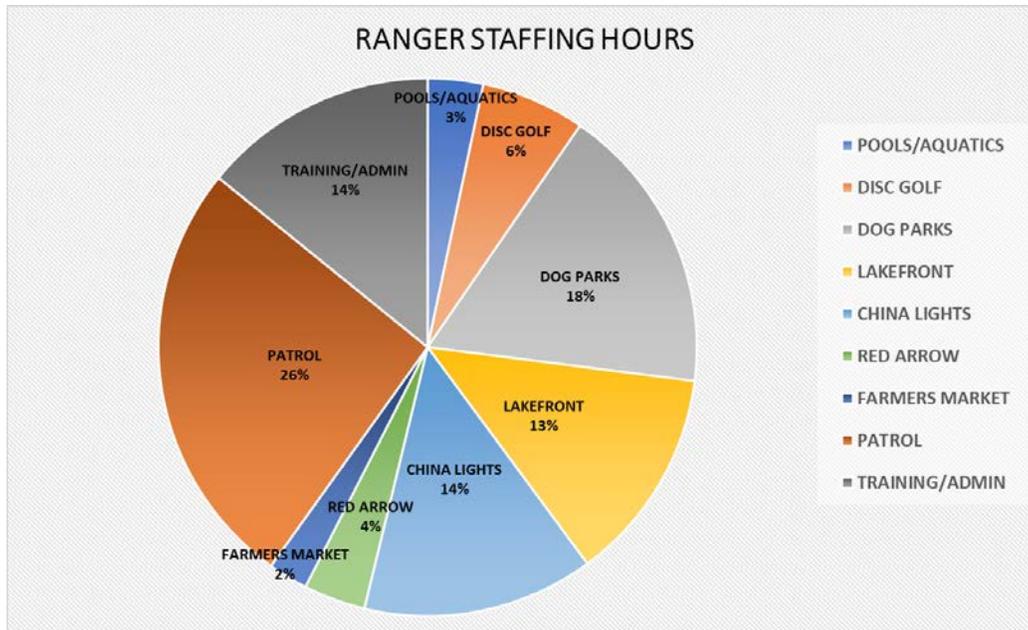
The Ranger deployment plan is divided into Park Patrol Zones encompassing the entire Milwaukee County Parks System. This was done to ensure consistency of regular patrols to parks in addition to the response time to calls for service. Rangers are given specific instruction of areas to patrol by SST management based on, but not limited to: requests from citizens, Law Enforcement, Parks management and constituents, annual events that continually draw large crowds, as well as personal observation from Ranger staff.

Significant patrols by Ranger staff were again conducted at the Dog Exercise Areas (set a Divisional Record in permit fees collected) as well as the Disc Golf Courses. Enforcement of these areas were vital to another successful season of DEA and Disc Golf fees.

Rangers are required to complete an entry on their Activity Log(s), specifically focusing on how many patrons were in the park, what activities were occurring, and if law enforcement was present. Rangers were also encouraged to speak with the patrons and neighbors and hand out their business card(s). Most importantly, staff were visible in our Parks System and provided excellent Customer Service!

In addition, several saturated patrols were conducted this summer at Dog Parks and Disc Golf Courses to gather information such as, but not limited to: Patrons/Permits checked, Dailies Sold, Annuals Sold, Patrons that Refused to Pay, etc...

The following is a breakdown of how Ranger hours were allocated:



### AQUATIC SAFETY INITIATIVE

	Avg. High Temp.	Actual High Temp.	Total Precipitation
<b>JUNE</b>			
2012	81	92	1.09
2013	78	88	5.80
2014	74	87	6.34
2015	73.2	91	2.49
2016	77.9	91	3.49
2017	80.2	94	5.21
2018	74.5	95	5.62
2019	72.9	85	4.42
<b>JULY</b>			
2012	87	103	3.96

2013	87	95	1.55
2014	77	89	2.31
2015	79.3	94	1.60
2016	82.8	94	1.76
2017	80.5	91	3.69
2018	82.0	94	2.83
2019	83.6	94	3.17
AUGUST			
2012	81	96	3.97
2013	84	95	3.27
2014	77	85	5.69
2015	77.8	92	3.46
2016	75.9	94	3.59
2017	77.9	86	1.63
2018	81.3	94	5.68
2019	79.2	90	3.53

As a proactive measure, I, along with the SST Coordinators, our Lead Rangers, Park Rangers, and Park Worker 3's posted on pool decks when the weather was forecasted to be 85 degrees or higher. For 2019, in June, July, and August, there was a total of 22 days (16 days in July alone) at or above this threshold (*10 days above 90 degrees*) as compared to 24 days in 2018. These deployments were focused on the safety of patrons AS WELL AS the safety of staff assigned. There were aquatic areas that Ranger staff focused on due to prior years calls for Law Enforcement service and staff safety issues, they were, but not limited to, Washington Pool, Kosciuszko Pool, and Schulz Aquatic Center. The staffing plan placed two Ranger's at each location; this was extremely effective and minimized the safety risk to patrons and staff. If staff was limited on a certain day, correspondence was initiated with the Aquatics Program Manager (Jodi Pritzlaff) to receive her input on the locations of where Ranger staff should

patrol/post for that specific day. Placement of staff is very fluid per daily Incidents and/or trends that present themselves.

The Ranger program was responsible for 334.25 hours patrolling Pool decks or responding to Incidents at our Aquatics Facilities. Only a handful of documented Incidents occurred requiring Ranger involvement, for example: Rangers having to escort patrons from Kosciuszko, Cool Waters, Schulz Aquatic, (numerous citations issued by MCSO at Cool Waters this year) after refusing to follow orders from Aquatics Staff, fighting, theft, etc. There were over 26 calls for service for the Sheriff's Office alone to respond to our pools/Aquatic Centers during the months of June to August with several occurrences of citations being issued or subjects arrested. (Information provided by MCSO's Law Enforcement Analytics Division)

In addition, as in years past, e-mails and phone calls were sent to respective Law Enforcement Agencies' requesting increased patrols and presence during these high temperature events for patrol of not only when Aquatic areas are open, but after hours as well to deter .

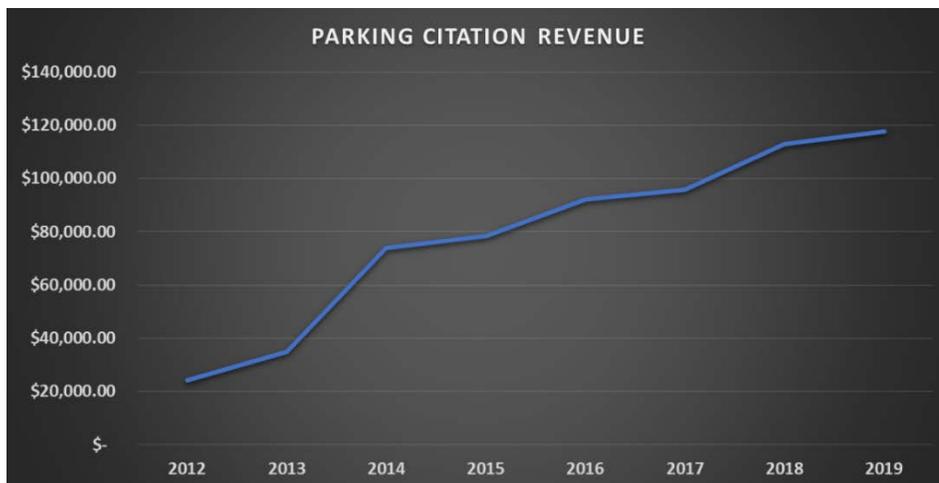
The Milwaukee Police Department and local municipalities did an admiral job this summer as they ALWAYS responded when requested and were proactive with issues inside and outside the pool areas to maintain order.

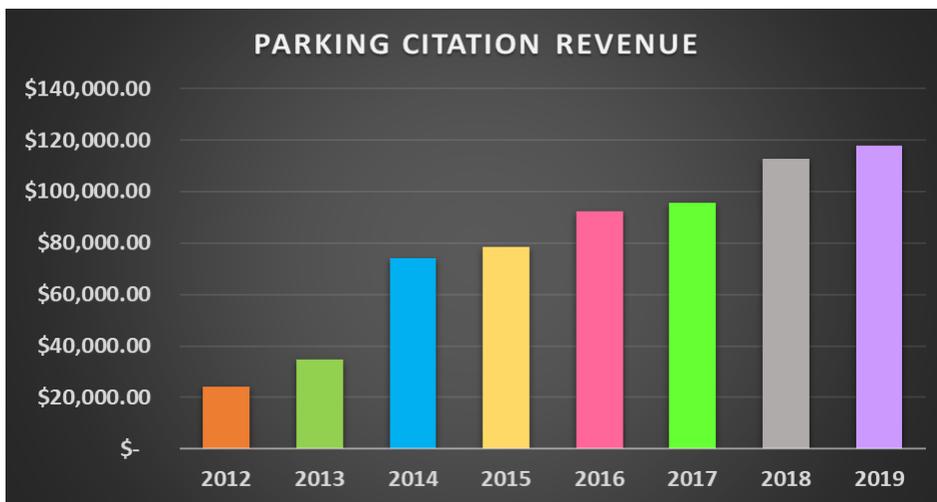
### PARKING CITATION SUMMARY



In 2012, **1098** citations were written. In 2013, **1008** citations were written. In 2014, **2242** citations were written and 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018, **2694**, **3406**, **3431**, and **3976** citations were issued respectively. Although this was not a primary focus of the Ranger Program, pro-active enforcement of these ordinance violations is paramount. For 2019, there was a total of **4116** citations issued. It was always our goal that the citations decrease, however the pattern of behavior of patrons violating our parking ordinances, continues year after year.

This is still an **increase** of **274.9%** from 2012, a **308.3% increase** from 2013, an **83.6% increase** from 2014, a **52.8% increase** from 2015, a **20.8% increase** from 2016, a **20% increase** from 2017 and a **3.5% increase** from 2018.





Issued citations have increased every year for the past 7 years. *Over the past 8 years, Ranger staff has written a total of 21,971 citations totaling \$768,985.00.*

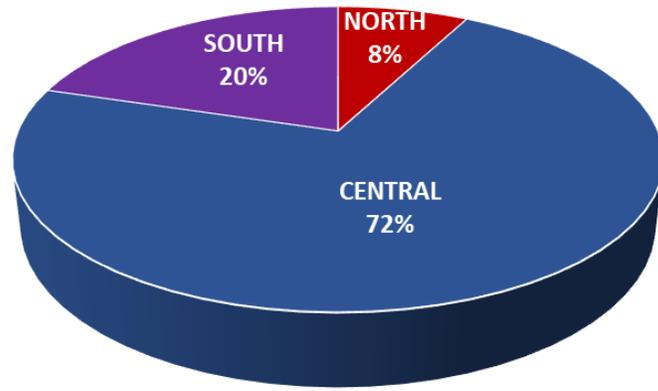
ALL the fine men and women of the Ranger program are to be commended for their performance and due diligence.

We again partnered with Sheriff's Office Administrative personnel this year to receive payment for citations, and to be able to track the status of unpaid citations. Currently we receive \$29.00 for every paid citation and lesser amounts for contested citations determined by Court Administrative staff.

ALL the monies collected from these citations are returned to the Parks general fund.

The following is a breakdown of how many citations were issued at per Region:

## CITATIONS BY REGION



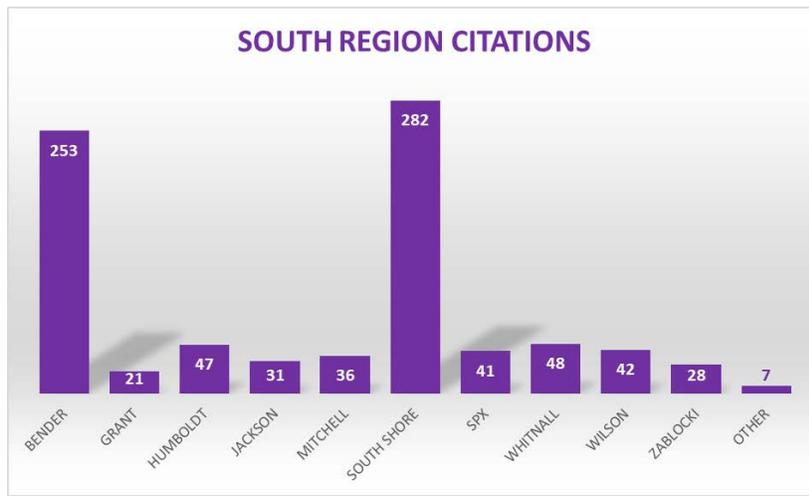
■ NORTH ■ CENTRAL ■ SOUTH

## NORTH REGION CITATIONS

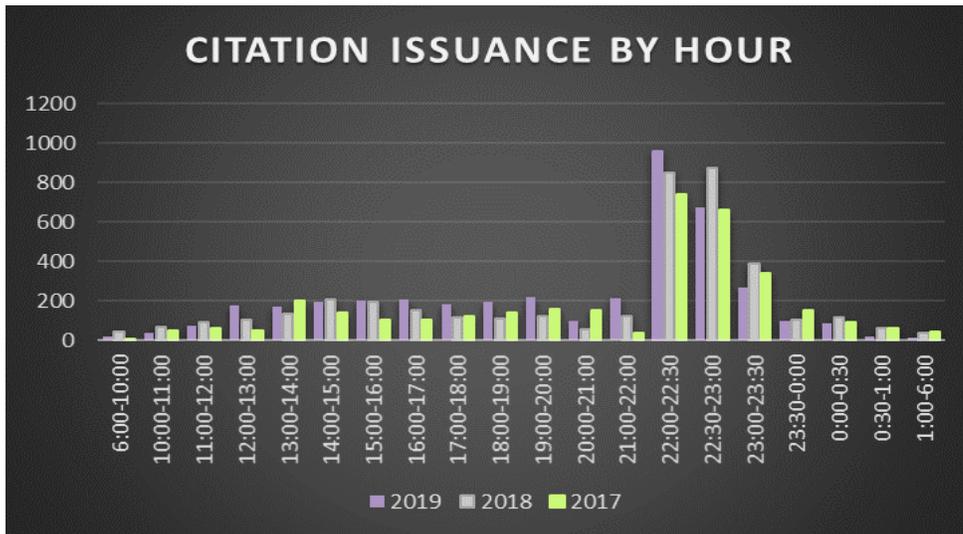


## CENTRAL REGION CITATIONS

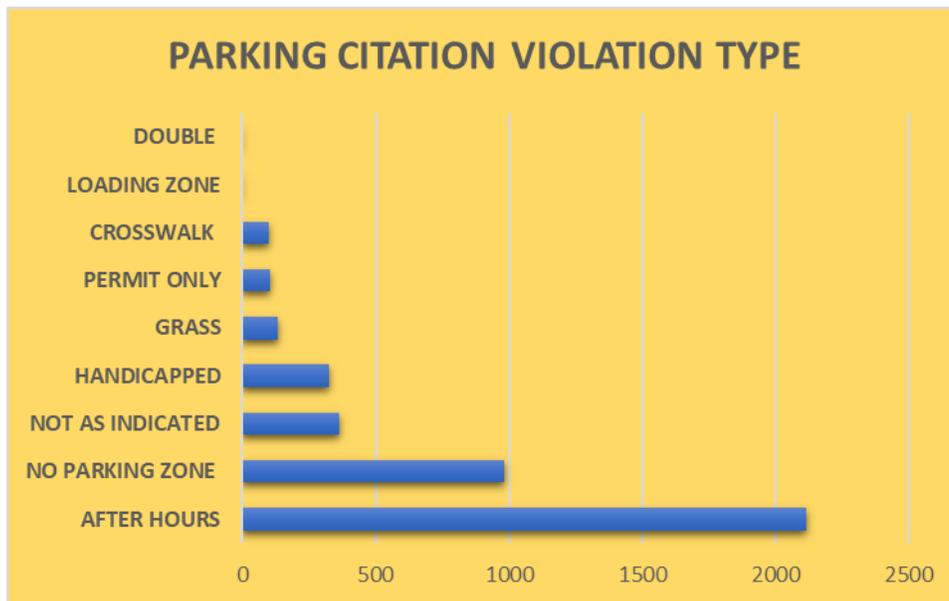




In addition, the following Chart provides the breakdown of how many citations were issued during Park hours for 2017 to 2019.



The following is a breakdown of which type of violation our citations were issued.



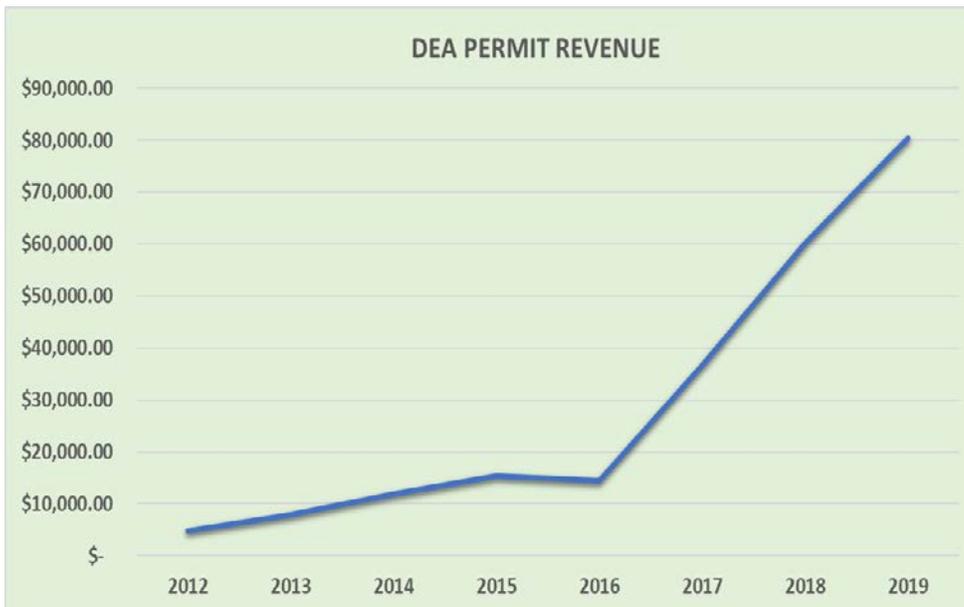
### DOG EXERCISE AREA PERMITS



Dog Exercise Areas continue to be a popular attraction in the Park system and 2019 was a phenomenal year for our staff in collecting permit fees. 2019 total for dog tag sales is **\$80,420.00** as compared to **\$60,125.00** in 2018, **\$36,740.00** in 2017, **\$14,510.00** in 2016 **\$15,320.00** in 2015, **\$11,980.00** in 2014, **\$7,880.00** in 2013, and **\$4,733.00** in 2012. All payments for

permits issued were submitted and logged in their respective areas.

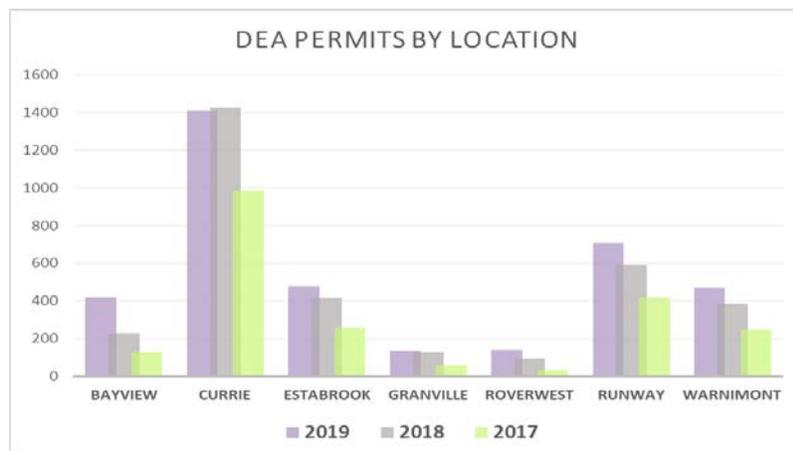
This is an **increase** of **33.8 %** over 2018, **118.9%** over 2017, **454.2%** over 2016, **424.9%** over 2015, **571.3%** over 2014, **920.6%** over 2013, and a **1,598.4%** increase from 2012.

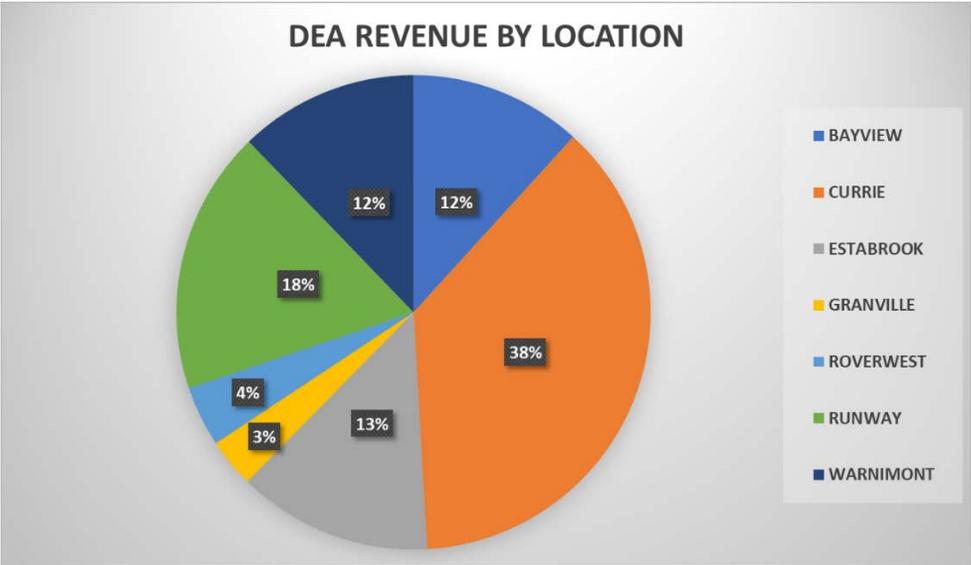
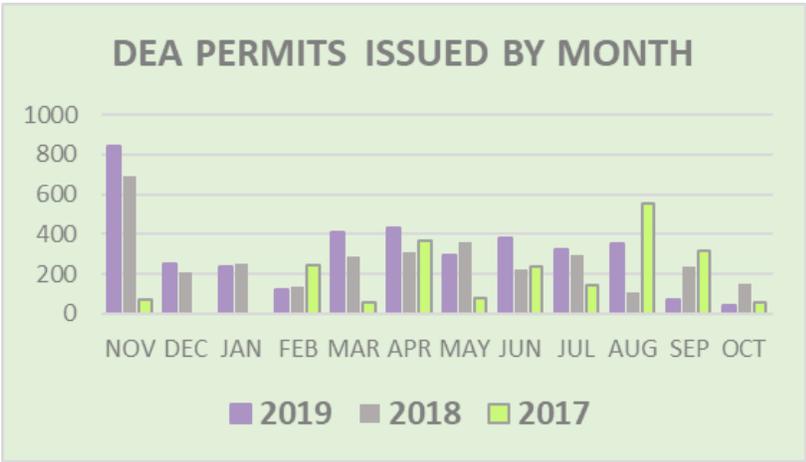


Patrols, at times, were designed to patrol DEA's early mornings and late afternoons in an attempt to increase permits to an array of different DEA users as well as conducting saturation

patrols during high activity times. In addition, several Rangers (especially Lead Ranger Lori Allard) have developed a great rapport with the many patrons who frequent DEA's on a regular basis. By this, they are able to obtain information on issues that may arise in that respective DEA, but more importantly, providing a perceived personalized customer service experience. We also conducted a few other saturated patrols where we had staff at many or all of our DEA's at the same time which included "Black Friday."

Ranger staff issued a total of 4295 Total Permits (2926 Annual, 1369 Daily) in 2018 as compared to: *2176 Total Permits (1899 Annual permits and 277 Daily permits) and 784 Total permits (702 Annual and 82 Daily) in 2016.*





BOAT LAUNCH FEES



Ranger staff patrols of the boat launch areas to verify that citizens utilizing them had proper documentation decreased the past few years.

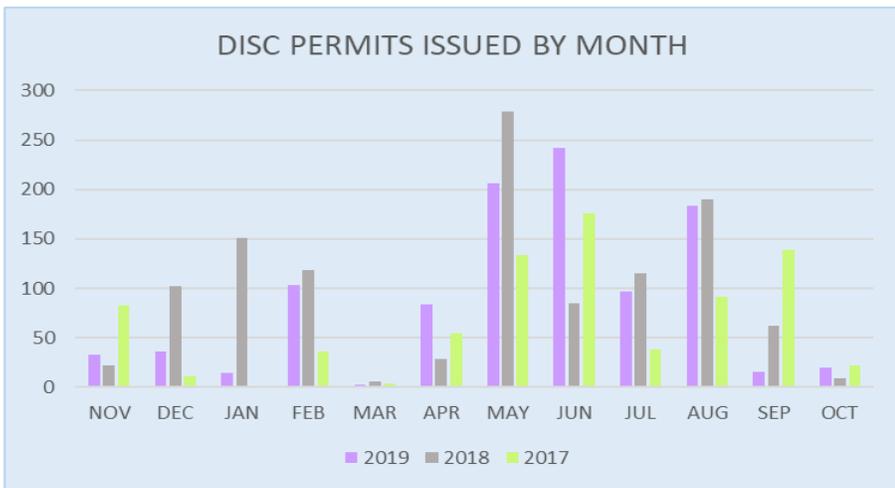
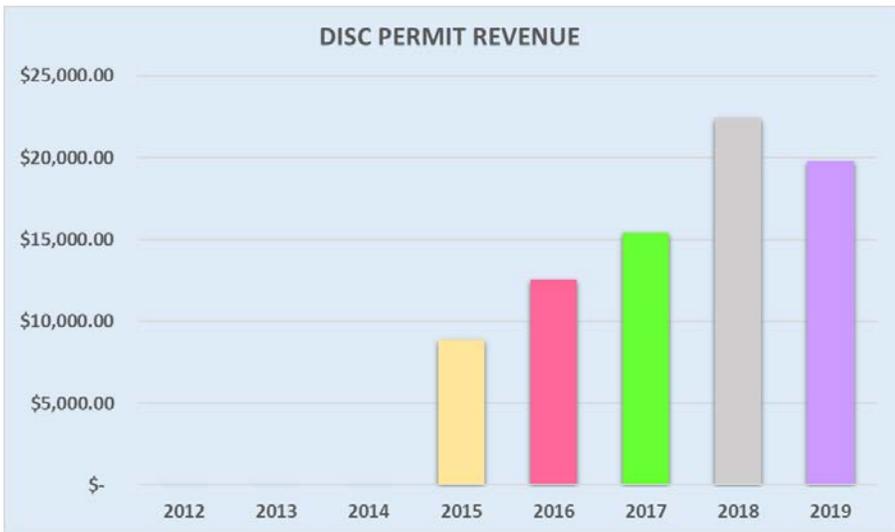
The fees collected have fluctuated and are down from previous years because we have not received as many service calls as previous years. It can also be attributed to that when issuing the Boat Launch permits, SST was unable to verify if that launch fee was ever paid. In addition, boaters were not properly displaying their respective permits, if at all, thus, when placing a launch fee slip on their windshield, we'd receive numerous complaints that their fees were paid, although failing to display it. Therefore, we continued and will continue our patrols, however, we would mainly enforce on employee complaints only. If it was deemed that a permit wasn't issued or paid, the Rangers were instructed to write a citation (346.55(4) Parked w/o Permit) to more accurately reflect violators as there had been a huge influx of vehicles (without a trailer) parked in boat trailer spots.

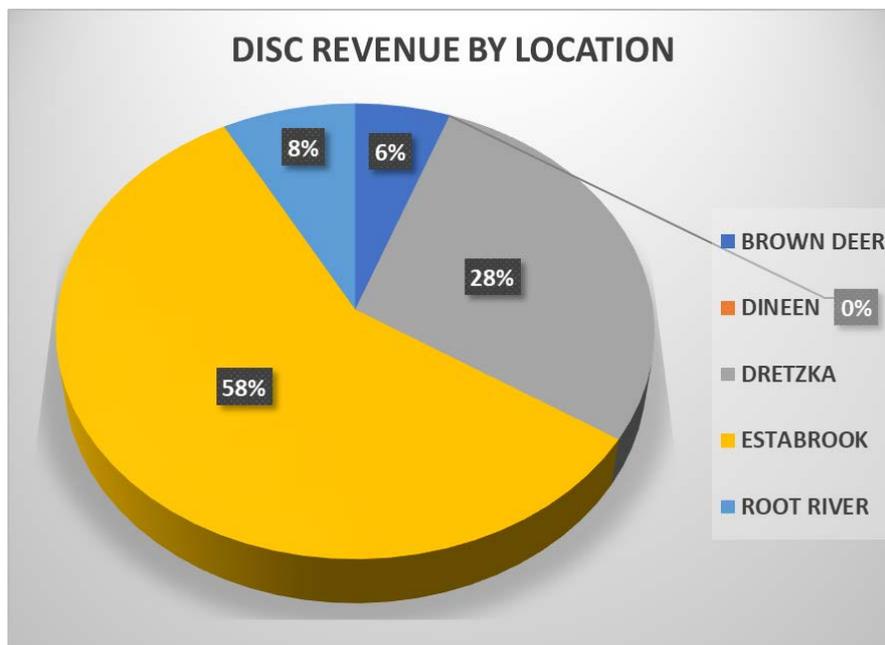
### DISC GOLF COURSE PERMITS



Ranger staff patrolled Disc Golf Courses to educate and actively enforce the policy that was enacted for the 2015 season. Collecting fees and issuing permits are much like the Dog Exercise Areas, however, because of the vast size of the courses and proximity between holes, Rangers continued to patrol the courses by manning Hole #1 (the beginning of each course). Rangers also patrolled by walking the respective courses and at times, using golf carts provided by respective Units. By using these patrol tactics, staff was able to be visible as well as offer a great customer experience to all. The Ranger staff was able to collect **\$19,815.50** in 2019 as compared to **\$22,440.00** (*11.7% decrease*) in 2018, **\$15,445.00** (*45.3% increase*) in 2017, **\$12,540.00** (*78.9% increase*) in 2016, and **\$8,890.00** (*152.4% increase*) in 2015. Ranger staff are often times thanked by patrons for enforcing rules, and have established a working relationship with the numerous Disc Golf patrons. In 2019, Ranger staff continued to work with Organized Sports to identify tournaments and leagues on a more consistent base to enforce their permits as well as hold them accountable to the respective procedures.

Ranger staff issued a total of 1518 permits in 2019:  
*350 Annual permits and 1168 Daily permits.*





### TRAINING FOR 2019

Building off successful years of training, 2019 was just as, if not more successful with offering training, as well as many new Diversity Training sessions and support to our employees furthering their development. Complications with the system were brought forth through employee engagement and the system itself, however, through coordination with us (the Department Admins), the LMS Training Coordinator, and employees as a whole, issues were rectified in a reasonable timeframe for our employees to complete their training(s) and ensure their success. We were again able to partner with Risk Management and Aegis and were able to offer a more variety of opportunities, many of them, at no cost. Hundreds of training classes and developmental opportunities (mandatory and optional) were available to employees from “Accident Investigation” to “Your Attitude, Your Choice” through a computer-based system. Trainings were offered through On-line classes, hand-outs, and

In-Person Trainings. The LMS system provides staff with information, registration, and access to all offered training opportunities. Mandatory/compliance and Safety/OSHA Trainings were assigned to employees on January 1, 2019. We have coordinated with and will continue to work with the Risk Management Parks Safety Specialist on the aforementioned as well as future procedures.

In addition, numerous hours of planning went into another successful (our seventh year) ROADeo as well as have Fit Mask Testing conducted for our employees for the third year in a row. As a whole, Parks completed over 92.07% of their Mandatory assigned Trainings, however, many Parks employees are signed up for their respective Mandatory Trainings until the next few months before 2019 expires.

Ranger staff completed trainings such as Professional Communication Skills (provided by House of Correction), Emergency Vehicle Operation (provided by Lori Allard), Communications/Dispatch Training (provided by Emergency Management) as well as both Nick Kroll and Todd Pisarski completing the Management Development Program (Todd was a class leader and had to present a speech). Gary Huven and Nick also completed a two-day Crisis Intervention Training held at Milwaukee Area Technical College and Lori, Gary, Nick, and Todd will be attending a one-day training of Autism Awareness in Law Enforcement.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2020**

- As our plethora of duties have grown exponentially and the need for numerous staff to be working shifts that overlap and go greater than ten hours, our program has had challenges with accessible vehicles as two vehicles almost assuredly will be headed to the Fleet biannual auction. With that said, we recommend that we be allotted one more (newer) vehicle and replacement of the two others that we have access to or assigned to our division. Our continued recommendation is that each Director be issued a vehicle and then SST have access to them after hours and weekends when needed most. We will continue, as we do with ALL vehicles we use, ensure they are fully gassed, cleaned, and appropriately cared for. Our division completes a Pre and Post Trip inspection of all motor vehicles we use and take appropriate and immediate action if a vehicle needs maintenance. In addition, we need to ensure that our vehicles are equipped with the proper Emergency lighting as well as essential tools such as a PA system and proper First Aid Kits.
- Continue to work with Operations Managers to increase parking signage where possible problem areas are, specifically, the Lakefront areas.
- Continue to have parking lots be re-lined (working with Director Santiago and Operations Managers) for better traffic flow and overall improved parking for patrons. Re-lining these lots **WILL improve the safety** of all patrons and staff as visibility of where to park and where not to park will be extremely clear as well as **clearly defined crosswalks** for pedestrian safety. Some of the parks suggested due to the high volume of traffic are: Mitchell Domes, Estabrook Park, Dretzka, and South Shore.

- ALL Deep Well Pool's and Aquatic Centers ban disruptive individuals for a minimum of a week for verbal disrespect to staff or patrons. Anyone engaging in acts of violence or criminal behavior are banned for the season. This not only sends a strong message to patrons it assures staff that their safety is paramount to Management. This is a continuance of the previous years, however, *needs to be adhered to on a consistent basis.*
- Inclusion in ALL major event-planning meetings, specifically those at the Lakefront as well as the upcoming Democratic National Convention. In anticipation of Parks taking on a bigger role at Winter Wonders after a first year, this would include any plans involving our staff at a very early stage, what specifically is needed and expected of our staff (if applicable). This inclusion also includes China Lights (5<sup>th</sup> Year) as a major event, (over a six week event) and is extremely taxing to our staff on a daily basis for over a six-week period.
- Continue and improve conversations of information sharing and communication regarding MCSO response and engagement from their management as well as their Parks Patrol Unit. Continue to be involved in community relation events such as Safety Days, National Night Outs, etc.
- Continue to have the discussion and move forward regarding the increase of Parking Citation Fees from \$35 to \$40 (structure similar to \$40 to \$50 after 10 days; \$50 to \$65 after 58 days; \$75 to \$100 registration suspension) as the last increase was approved in 2011 for 2012.
- Move forward and finalize the complete process of Full-Time Park Ranger staff issuing Citations regarding Chapter 47 Ordinances. To have access to streamline the process and have the software

installed for certain Ranger staff to utilize and issue these respective citations when appropriate. Actively monitor the dispositions of these citations and the process of where the citation amount is getting dispersed.

- Continue to have discussions and enact a process to maintain and upgrade our current camera system(s) across various Parks locations as well as continuing to work in identifying new locations that would have the proper needs for such a system. Also to discuss a process to streamline the process and allow for quicker response times to getting camera systems fixed.
- To continue collecting all appropriate fees from the Iron Rangers associated with Disc Golf, Dog Enforcement Areas, and Par 3 Golf courses. To continue collecting from these respective areas (by two Ranger staff) would keep the integrity and safety of the collection. With this recommendation, we would request a modest, additional fee from the Concessions Manager (as also requested in 2017 & 2018) to help offset the cost of collection. **NOTE: 26 Collections, approximately 8 hours per collection, 2 staff members per collection, totals 416 hours (does not include drop-offs and pickups from Public Service partners).**
- Request a Third Lead-Time Ranger for the 2021 budget. This Ranger would mainly be a second shift position.
- Increase the Seasonal Ranger Pay Rate to be on a reasonable scale as other similar pay grades (i.e. MCSO Parking Checker) to retain and attract the highest quality Ranger staff possible.
- Continue to grow as a team and recognize our Ranger staff at our 2020 Ranger Appreciation Night which will be our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual and have past Rangers attend as well as current Senior Managers be present.



This concludes the 2019 After Action Report.

Respectfully Submitted,

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John R. Nelson