

# ANNUAL REPORT

2023



# Staff Bios



**ERIC DITMARS**  
*SUPERINTENDENT OF PARKS & RECREATION*

Eric has been the Auburn Parks Superintendent since 2015. He earned his B.S. in Natural Resources and Environmental Management from Ball State University and has held several positions in the field, including 9 years with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and 12 years as the Park Superintendent for Steuben County. He has a great love for providing recreational and resource based opportunities to the community.



**KELLI WARD**  
*RECREATION MANAGER*

Kelli began working for Auburn in June of 2023. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Sports and Recreation Management from the University of Arizona Global Campus in October of 2022. She served in the U.S. Coast Guard and has since held multiple positions in programming, including the YMCA and the Waterloo Public Library. Kelli has been a fitness instructor for 13 years and loves to share her passion of fitness and affordable programs for the community. Kelli enjoys hiking and adventures.



**ANNA SALAS**  
*RECREATION COORDINATOR*

Anna has been working in program design and coordination since 2011 and joined the Auburn Parks in 2023. With her background working with camps, churches, elder care facilities, and community centers, Anna has honed her ability to identify and create successful programs for all ages. Anna holds a B.A. and a M.T.S. Anna has a passion for those who get overlooked in society and enjoys helping garner interest for the parks department and our programming. When not working, Anna loves creating, cooking, playing, and traveling with her family.



**TERI KNAPP**  
*ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT*

Teri began working for Auburn in June of 2023. Prior to her role with the Parks and Recreation Department, she worked 21 years for the Federal Service. Teri loves to spend time with her family and enjoys gardening.

# Staff Bios



**TIM SMITH**  
*PARKS MAINTANENCE SUPERVISOR*

Tim has worked for the Parks Department for almost 15 years. He studied Natural Resource Environmental Management at Ball State University, and has previous experience working as a USA Health, Safety, and Environmental Engineer and as the owner of a lawncare and landscaping company. He enjoys all aspects of nature, his family, and cruising!



**ABEL SALAS**  
*MAINTANENCE STAFF*

Abel has been a member of the Auburn Parks and Recreation Department since fall 2018. He previously worked with the United Methodist Camping Association for 4 years in Central Oregon and is also a trained chef with years in the food industry. He is native to Lima, Peru and enjoys outdoor activities, volunteering at local non-profits, archery, wood working, and soccer.



**BRIAN STEPHENS**  
*MAINTANENCE STAFF*

Brian began working for Auburn in August of 2022. He enjoys tattoos, concerts, and listening to music.



**JASON MCCLURE**  
*MAINTANENCE STAFF*

Jason is a graduate of Garrett High School and began working for the Auburn Parks and Recreation in 2020. Other endeavors outside of parks include Garrett Camper Sales, Ben Davis, Ingersoll Rnad, and LSC Communications. Outside of work, Jason enjoys golfing, riding bike, and attending concerts.




# SUPERINTENDENT'S Report



The City of Auburn Parks and Recreation Department is very excited to meet the growing needs of our community and has embarked on an endeavor to enrich our facilities and programs for our residents.

This continued focus has broadened the departments community reach over last year by providing exceptional facility services, community outreach, and patron driven programming. Our community is very supportive and encouraged by the progress we have made.

The future of the Parks Department is very bright and will be filled with added amenities, diverse park programs and park updates. The importance of connecting with our community members is a priority as we look to better serve you and your needs.

 [auburnin.recdesk.com](http://auburnin.recdesk.com)  
 Auburn Parks and Recreation  
 auburnin\_parks



**ERIC DITMARS**  
SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PARKS AND RECREATION

# 2023 PARK BOARD MEMBERS

**Tad Boman** | President  
**Lou Metelko** | Vice President  
**Mike Makarewich** | Secretary  
**Logan Zuber** | Member  
**Ben Nordman** | Member



## Mission STATEMENT

The Auburn Parks & Recreation Department shall provide quality parks and facilities, open spaces, natural areas, educational opportunities and services which will enhance the well-being of the citizens of Auburn and surrounding areas.

# Programs OVERVIEW

## Adult Programs

35 programs  
302 participants



## Youth Programs

26 programs  
457 participants



## Senior Programs

27 programs  
312 participants

## Intergenerational Programs

8 programs  
72 participants

## Community Programs

12 events  
over 8,000 participants



## Camps

3 summer camps  
34 participants

# Halloween Walk

2023

4,626 participants  
\$2,013.50 in donations  
\$2,600.00 in sponsorships  
\$4,273.00 in expenses

2022

5,138 participants  
\$2,273.21 in donations  
\$1,600.00 in sponsorships  
\$3,873.21 in expenses

2021

2,511 participants  
\$1,548.52 in donations  
\$1,500 in sponsorships  
\$3,272.44 in expenses

2020

4,696 participants  
\$2,489.04 in donations  
\$2,400 in sponsorships  
\$3,590.10 in expenses





# Christmas Walk

2023

2,555 participants  
\$1,551.53 in donations  
\$2,000 in sponsorships  
\$ 3,159.72 in expenses

2022

3,459 participants  
\$1,136.45 in donations  
\$500 in sponsorships  
\$1,361.00 in expenses

2021

3,418 participants  
\$1,391.00 in donations  
\$1,250 in sponsorships  
\$1,930.86 in expenses

2020

1,717 participants  
\$980.48 in donations  
\$500 in sponsorships  
\$1,950 in expenses



# Softball OVERVIEW

## Total Softball Revenue

2023: \$5,637.50  
2022: \$4,762.50  
2021: \$8,812.50  
2020: \$10,740.00



## Total Softball Expenses

2023: \$5124.00  
2022: \$4,966.69  
2021: \$6,485.89  
2020: \$6,585.60



# Youth Sports OVERVIEW

## Auburn Little League

322 Participants  
39 teams  
282 Games Played

## Rocket Football

133 Participants  
30 Games at Carr Field  
150 Practices

## Auburn Girls Softball

239 Participants  
22 teams  
114 Games Played

# Auburn Trail COUNTS

## RIEKE PARK TRAIL

**Total Users: 37,867**

- January 2023: 1,732
- February 2023: 2,190
- March 2023: 2,504
- April 2023: 3,854
- May 2023: 5,411
- June 2023: 5,769
- **\* July 2023: 5,596**
- August 2023: 5,284
- September 2023: 4,678
- October 2023: 3,812
- November 2023: 2,543

## AUBURN WATERLOO TRAIL

**Total Users: 9,455**

- January 2023: 301
- February 2023: 442
- March 2023: 364
- April 2023: 716
- May 2023: 1,443
- June 2023: 1,246
- July 2023: 1,404
- August 2023: 1,424
- September 2023: 1,021
- October 2023: 651
- November 2023: 485

**\* Auburn Rieke Trail is missing data from June 8th to July 7th**

# Program FINANCIALS

## **Total Program Income for the Non-Reverting Fund**

- 2023: \$30,113.45
- 2022: \$23,605.14
- 2021: \$25,157.05
- 2020: \$23,470.02

## **Total Program Expenses for the Non-Reverting Fund**

- 2023: \$28,907.02
- 2022: \$23,853.83
- 2021: \$23,454.78
- 2020: \$30,722.59

# Rental STATISTICS

## **Total Rental Revenue**

- 2023: \$26,515.00
- 2022: \$29,485.00
- 2021: \$22,166.27
- 2020: \$11,744.00

## **Total Rental Refunds**

- \$419.50 from 3 total cancellations

## **Total Rental Reservations**

- Rieke Lodge: 193 Reservations
- Eckhart Pavilion: 19 Reservations
- Kiwanis North: 19 Reservations
- Kiwanis South: 34 Reservations

# 2023

# SPONSORS

## Back to School Bash

- Auburn Kiwanis Club
- The Brown House
- James Foundation
- Auburn's Best Kids
- Taylor Rental

## Donut Make Me Run 5K

- Steel Dynamics
- Steve Hostetter
- ProActive Spine & Joint
- Kelly York
- Wible Realty
- Baker's Dozen Donuts

## Fishing Derby

- Family Farm and Home
- Beber's Shot and Sinker
- Walmart
- Hoham's Feed and Seed
- ACE Hardware
- Classic City Cookies

## Paws Events

- Hoham's Feed and Seed
- Chow Hound Pet Supplies
- Bark Avenue

## Tree Sale

- Nucor Building Systems
- DeKalb County SWCD

## Fall Break Staycation

- Image of Hope
- YMCA
- Auburn Bowl
- McDonalds
- Culver's
- Pizza Hut
- Arby's
- Taco Bell

## Storywalks

- Kelly York

## Halloween Walk

- Steel Dynamics, Inc.
- Edward Jones
- Business Impressions
- Scheuman Dental Associates
- Auburn Essential Services
- Downtown Auburn Business Association
- Tim Haynes Dairy Farm

## Christmas Walk

- Mike Thomas
- DeKalb Community Foundation
- Steve Hostetter
- Hoagburg Orthodontists
- Big C Lumber
- Nicc and Amanda Cox

# Maintenance UPDATES

The Auburn Parks Department had another busy year and is proud to have worked another year without a recordable accident. This makes the fifth year in a row!

The Eckhart Park Driving bridge replacement project was started late this year and will be completed early in 2024. The square footage in the Rieke Park maintenance building was doubled to accommodate more equipment being stored inside. The Willennar Park playground replacement project was started and will be completed in early 2024.

The maintenance staff continues to mow all the Parks and Recreation grounds. This consists of 18 Parks and properties and totals over 112 acres of cuttable grass. We average around 70-man hours per week and over 2,000-man hours per year on mowing.

Daily park rounds include cleaning restrooms, emptying trash cans, checking for ground trash, and a variety of things including prepping and managing 2 adult softball fields at Rieke Park. We have 5 other ball fields that we maintain and two rentable buildings that we manage and clean after each use. This totals over 3,200-man hours annually.

During the winter months we perform a full service and preventive maintenance on all equipment. The oil and fluids, spark plugs, filters, and bearings are replaced as needed, everything is greased, and detailed cleaning and parts replacement is performed.

This year we were also able to bring in some outside work groups that were a huge help in completing work that requires more people, such as mulching, painting dugouts, picking up limbs after storms, edging sidewalks, and many other projects.

Thank you to the United Way Day of Caring (spread 400 yards of playground mulch throughout our park system), Girl Scouts, FFA (high school), and First United Methodist Church. These groups provided needed help to complete projects. A big thanks to all those individuals who performed over 1100 community service hours with us this year.

# Projects

- Eckhart Park trees trimmed/remove dead branches
- Rieke Trail Tree trimming/remove dead trees and branches
- Remove late falling, blowing leaves along fence lines as needed (winter/spring)
- Put down new mulch around the trees in the downtown area.
- Removed weeds or suckers within the 3' square area prior to mulching
- Rolled all parks as needed
- Aerated all park as needed
- Reseeded park areas as needed.
- Leaf removal and/or mulching in all parks as needed
- Hauled in mulch for Boy Scout Trail in Eckhart Park (7 Loads)
- Mole baits used in Eckhart Park
- Removed unwanted plants/weeds/leaves (general cleanup) all parks
- Helped maintain flower beds at Eckhart Park using community service
- Trimmed shrubs at Van Buren trail, Eckhart, Rieke, and Thomas Parks
- Assisted with programs as needed (Fishing Derby, 5Ks, etc.)
- String trimmed all parks as needed
- Replace Smith Acres Park slide and climbing wall
- Replaced Memorial Park slide and climbing wall
- Replaced playground equipment at Rieke Park: slide, climbing wall, spring toy, pirouette
- Bush hogged Don Lash area in June and September
- Started the installation of playground at Willennar Park
- Checked wooden benches in all parks for damaged/missing boards and replace as needed
- Checked picnic tables for broken boards and missing nuts and bolts
- Hammered in rebar in parking bumpers at all parks (March)
- Hammered in stakes at all playground edging
- Sprayed all fence lines as needed
- Sprayed all ball diamonds infields for weeds/grass as needed
- Checked Rieke ball field lights for any lights not working
- Opened all restrooms by April 15th
- Closed all restrooms by October 15th
- Set-up, tear down Halloween and Christmas Walks
- Power washed all park playground equipment



# Projects continued

- Power washed all open-air shelters (metal roofs, tables, concrete)
- De-cobweb/power washed all dugouts at Rieke Park - North Quad (inside/outside)
- De-cobweb/power washed all dugouts at Rieke Park - South Quad (inside/outside)
- De-cobweb/power washed the outside of the Rieke Park Lodge
- De-cobweb/power washed the outside of the Rieke Park North Quad Building
- De-cobweb/power washed the outside of the Rieke Park South Quad Building
- De-cobweb/power washed the outside of the Office Eckhart Park
- Performed playground inspections on playgrounds
- Spread 400 yards of playground mulch (Day of Caring Project)
- Snow removal on trails, sidewalks, parking areas and sanded as needed
- Parks rounds performed weekends during winter months
- Deep cleaned Rieke Lodge winter months
- Service parks equipment
- Replaced all parking bumpers moved during snow plowing
- Fixed Eckhart Park vandalism issues
- Fixed Smith Acres Park vandalism issues
- Fixed Thomas Park vandalism issues
- Fixed Rieke Park vandalism issues
- Checked trees for bugs, ants, worms
- Checked restroom and buildings for carpenter bees and treated
- Removed all drinking fountains at Rieke Park
- Installed new drinking fountains at Rieke Park
- Removed arbs at entrance at Smith Acres Park
- Removed hazardous trees at Thomas, Eckhart and Rieke Parks
- Planted 18 trees inside the parks system
- Finished Boy Scout bike repair station
- Assisted with 3 batting cage installations/rehab at Rieke Park
- Painted Eckart Park restroom (inside)
- Electric transformer pad installation in Eckhart Park, including concrete and dirt work

# ADA Audit List

## **Smith Acres Park**

- Adjusted restroom door closure so it has a maximum opening force of 5lbs and minimum closing speed of 5 seconds
- Lowered soap dispensers to 44" maximum from center of operable component

## **Thomas Park**

- Adjusted restroom door closure so it has a maximum opening force of 5lbs and minimum closing speed of 5 seconds
- Lowered soap dispensers to 44" maximum from center of operable component
- Adjusted handle or lock on inside restroom doors to remove barriers for handles to be used
- Lowered urinal so the highest part of rim is no higher than 17" from the floor

## **Eckhart Park Restrooms**

- Adjusted restroom door closure so it has a maximum opening force of 5lbs and minimum closing speed of 5 seconds
- Lowered soap dispensers to 44" maximum from center of operable component

## **Eckhart Park Pavilion**

- Adjusted door closure so it has a maximum opening force of 5lbs and minimum closing speed of 5 seconds

## **Memorial Park**

- Adjusted restroom door closure so it has a maximum opening force of 5lbs and minimum closing speed of 5 seconds
- Lowered sink so the highest part of the rim measures no higher than 34" from the floor
- Lowered urinal so highest part of rim is no higher than 17" from the floor
- Added protection against contact of water supply/drainpipes under sinks in restrooms

# ADA continued

## **Parks Department Office**

- Adjusted door closure so it has a maximum opening force of 5lbs and minimum closing speed of 5 seconds

## **Rieke Park Lodge**

- Adjusted door closures so it has a maximum opening force of 5lbs and minimum closing speed of 5 seconds
- Fixed ADA door operators
- Adjusted door closures to allow doors to open to 90 degrees
- Installed 18" vertical grab bars into accessible stalls
- Lowered paper towel dispenser so the center of the operable component is no higher than 44"
- Relocated flush controls to open side of toilets
- Made kitchen accessible - moved trash cans

## **Rieke Park**

- Filled vertical gap from accessible trail to pavilions to less than 1/2"
- Moved picnic tables to allow wheelchair access at South pavilion
- Relocated trash cans inside pavilions so a wheelchair can navigate under the pavilion
- Adjusted restroom door closure so it has a maximum opening force of 5lbs and minimum closing speed of 5 seconds
- Adjusted grab bars in restrooms so the top of the grab bar is 35" from the floor
- Lowered soap dispensers to 44" maximum from center of operable component
- Added 18" vertical grab bars to accessible stalls
- Provided lower latch to water closets where the operable component is no higher than 44"
- Lowered sink to 34"
- Lowered soap dispensers to 44" maximum from center of operable component
- Relocated flush controls to open side of toilets
- Lowered mirrors so the bottom edge of the reflective surface is no higher than 40"