


DATE: September 13, 2018

TO: Dane County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Laura Hicklin 

RE: Racial Equity & Social Justice and Sustainability Accomplishments

The Land & Water Resources Department is committed to both the racial equity & social justice (RESJ) and sustainability initiatives of the County. The following are highlights of our 2018 accomplishments in these areas.

RESJ – 2018 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Created a LWRD RESJ team, which meets regularly to communicate our commitment and to ensure that it is well understood throughout the organization and by the public.
- Focus on recruitment of staff that reflect the diversity of the communities we serve:
 - Hosted 4 Simpson Street Free Press interns. We host the interns so that they:
 - Have an increased awareness of natural resource careers.
 - Have an increased awareness of local outdoor opportunities.
 - Promote both natural resource careers and outdoor opportunities to underserved communities.
 - Began development of a “youth certificate” program to increase involvement of diverse youth in natural resources and recreation.
 - Created a pre-apprenticeship arborist certificate for our Operation Fresh Start Crews, which includes job training and shadowing.
 - Worked with OEI and Employee Relations on an alternative selection process that led to the hire of an OFS graduate who had also completed our pre-apprenticeship arborist certificate.
- Implemented a storm drain mural program using accessible communication tools.
- Improved transportation to our parks and events, including free shuttle service to the Parks & Trails Unite Festival (in partnership with the Sierra Club) and identifying all Dane County Park properties that are accessible by bus and bicycle (http://www.danecountyparks.com/documents/POSP/POSP_Transportation_BikeTrlsAndBus.pdf).
- Continued to offer annual “free days” for Dane County Park uses that require a permit (disc golf, dog park, boat launch, Tenney lock, mountain bike and equestrian trails).

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- Improved our brand and visibility by producing communications that consistently include images that reflect the diversity of Dane County residents.
 - Implemented a “fruit tree program” that used census data to identify neighborhoods with the highest percentage of SNAP recipients relative to our park properties and used this data to prioritize fruit tree plantings at Lake View Hill County Park, Mendota County Parks, and the Lewis Nine Springs E-Way.

SUSTAINABILITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Partnered with Dane County UW-Extension to create a “Fen Oak Sustainability Team” to coordinate our efforts and to use our building and grounds as a public demonstration site.
- The sustainability team successfully applied for a water conservation practice and education grant from the SMART fund. This project will install an irrigation system for the Master Gardener program, which is estimated to save about 1141 gallons of water annually. The project also includes permanent outdoor displays and other educational materials on water conservation.
- Solar panels were installed at Fen Oak and we’re currently working on a permanent display that will show energy savings and related educational content.
- Design is underway for a new parking lot at Fen Oak that will include infiltration best practices and will serve as a demonstration project.
- The rainfall simulators arrived and will be used by LWRD, Dane County UW-Extension and other partners to demonstrate stormwater infiltration on various surfaces. Here’s a video demonstration of the tabletop display: <https://youtu.be/rwhbL8dVeHQ>
- Completed construction of a timber frame shelter at Indian Lake County Park using timber harvested and milled from our properties.
- The Madison Area Municipal Stormwater Partnership (MAMSWaP), which Dane County is part of, launched the leaf-free rain alerts in 2017 to help residents remove street leaves before storms.