

City of Bondurant
2018 Annual Parks and Recreation Report
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Parks

This past year, the City Administrator and I have been working to advance the **Highway 65 Underpass Project**. Design work has progressed and an additional \$400K in funding was secured through a Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant. The City also applied for a State and Federal Recreational Trails grants and a Prairie Meadows Legacy grant in 2018. While only the TAP grant that the City Administrator wrote was funded, I have personally learned from each grant application and I hope that will help with the future applications that I write. I will be submitting the Recreational Trails program grants as well as the Prairie Meadows Legacy grant in 2019 for this project. My goal is to receive around \$400,000 this year, so the City may begin preliminary work on the Underpass.

In 2018, the City also submitted to the REAP grant program for the acquisition of the **yellow house that shares the block with City Park** and for the **Down's Property Acquisition** on the corner of Hubbell Ave. and Grant Street. Had REAP been funded at the legislatively-required level, our applications scored well enough that we would have received funding for both projects. This gives us encouragement to submit again in 2019. While both projects were not originally funded, the City received word in late 2018 that the **City Park Acquisition** would be partially funded with leftover funds from the grant program. This funding, plus the funding from the Pleasant Grove Park Project that cannot be used should allow the City to purchase and demolish the yellow house.

The development of the sports fields at the **Bondurant Recreational Sports Complex (BRSC)** has also been a focus of 2018. The City Administrator and Public Works Director met with Little League and the Soccer Club representatives to lay out the fields on the property the City acquired in spring of 2017. The project is graded and will have to be regraded a little because of flooding. Seeding should take place this

Eagle Park was cleared and graded in 2018, and trees will be planted in the fall, as well as native grasses and butterfly gardens. As per the Park, Trails and Greenway Master Plan, the City will also be planting a number of trees in the park over the next few years and, at some point, would like to create some soft walking paths and educational areas for residents and visitors to learn more about our native plants, shrubs, and trees.

The Parks and Recreation Board worked with residents of **Efnor Estates Neighborhood** to develop the plans for their neighborhood park. While a "park kit" is included in the Parks Plan and has been used in the past, the Board thought it would be good to work with the neighborhood and let them determine how to spend the allotted budget for the space (\$60K). After receiving design plans from a couple of different playground installers, the neighborhood eventually decided on a plan from Boland Recreation, who have done many of the other neighborhood parks in town. Installation of the playground and the grass mats as the fall surface was completed in October of 2018. The park is now open for all residents and visitors to enjoy. I plan to have a grand opening ceremony in the spring when the weather gets a little nicer.



The floods during the summer months proved that the land dedicated to the Pleasant Grove neighborhood park would not be a sufficient space to place any sort of recreational equipment. Though the City had funds (\$60K) in the budget to develop this space, the project has been put on hold until a new space has been made available.

Recreation

The 2018 recreation season kicked off with a couple of popular events within the Des Moines Metro. Our Annual **Cribbage Tournament** attracted about 20 participants who really enjoyed using Reclaimed Rails as our host location. In the future, I would like to hold more card/board game tournaments at Reclaimed Rails, especially during the winter months to get participants out of their homes. The second popular event is the Annual **Poker Tournament** that was held at Founders Irish Pub. The buy-in for this event was \$20. Unfortunately, there was only room for 70 participants and I had to turn away a line that went out the front door of the bar (20-30 people). In 2019, I plan on having pre-registration for this event to guarantee seats for those that take the time to pre-register.

Another popular winter event is our **Trout Stock** at Lake Petocka. Around this time of the year, I tend to receive numerous calls every day asking if the lake has been stocked and if the ice is safe to fish on. Our 2018 Trout Stock took place on February 3rd. The Iowa DNR, led by Ben Dodd and Tyler Stubbs released hundreds of trout into Lake Petocka, while I was there to hand out snacks and hot chocolate to the ice fishers. I am always amazed at just how many people come out for this event. I estimated the attendance to be between 150-200 people.



Our **Winter Chowder Bike Ride** was a success despite the snowy weather. Around 100 people showed up to ride the Chichaqua Valley Trail down to Berwick and back. New in 2018 was the addition of a warming station at the Berwick Congregational Church. Riders were able to stop at the halfway point of the ride to warm up and enjoy some brunch and hot chocolate before making the journey back to Bondurant. After the ride, both Reclaimed Rails and Founders Irish Pub had chili and chowder for participants to enjoy. Ben Fuller provided a fun photo booth for riders to take advantage of, and we got some really fun pictures! This is one of my favorite events each year and I would like to continue to improve upon it. In the future, I want to have some kid-friendly events (snowman building? snowball fights?) added to this.



Our **Mother/Son Fun Night** at Anderson Elementary had over 30 couples attend. 2018's theme was "Luau" and it was great to see everyone in their island best! Ben and Kathy Fuller provided professional photos for everyone and games like "limbo" and volleyball were a big hit! Snacks included Goldfish, Swedish Fish, and beach ball lollipops. Around \$300 was spent on supplies and decorations and each couple paid \$20 to register for the event. The theme for the 2019 event will be "sports."

A new event for 2018 was **St. Patrick's Day Fun** in collaboration with the Bondurant Community Library. This was during Spring Break at school, so the librarians and I came up with fun crafts and games for children ages 3-12 to participate in. In my opinion, the best event was the scavenger hunt that tested the children's knowledge of the library and the holiday. Snacks in the form of clover-shaped cookies were provided and over 120 kids took advantage of the offerings.

Unfortunately, the weather wreaked havoc on our **Live Healthy Iowa 5K** in 2018. Partnering with Nicole Kennedy from Live Healthy Iowa, this race has been held annually in Bondurant for the past four years. We had over 200 runners and walkers from all over the Des Moines Metro registered for this event, but thunderstorms caused the race to be cancelled. Nicole and I held out for over an hour at the Fire Station with the runners, but ultimately decided that it was not safe to be outside in the storm. Live Healthy Iowa had no make-up date available and were able to refund registrants their money. Later in the month, we were able to host our very first **Live Healthy Iowa Kids Track Championships** at Bondurant-Farrar High School. Kids from around the area had a chance to register for up to three track and field events and compete with others in their age group. Winners of every event received a ticket to the State Championships in Marshalltown. The BFHS track teams and coaches volunteered to help with the event and it was a wonderful experience for the young runners. Over 90 children had pre-registered for the event and more were able to register on site. The 2019 date for this event has already been booked with the High School.

The **Youth Fishing Derby** took place on the Iowa DNR's free fishing weekend. Due to the weather, the event was postponed to Sunday instead of the usual Saturday morning. Even with the postponement, 78 people attended the derby and many of them actually caught at least one fish. A raffle was held for those in attendance with prizes donated by the Bondurant Civic Club, Blank Park Zoo, Iowa Cubs, Athletico Physical Therapy, Rockstar Satellite, and Generational Guns. The City provided mini donuts, granola bars, and fruit snacks for everyone. This event is sort of an enigma for me. In 2017, we only had about 30 people attend. I do wonder if a Sunday morning might be better for everyone than a Saturday morning. I may have to toss this around for 2019.



The summer was a great opportunity to try some new programs and activities for all ages to enjoy. In June, I partnered with **Creative Genius Art to provide an art camp** for elementary-aged children. We had ten children sign up for the camp, but I made the mistake of scheduling it during SummerFest, so I believe that is why numbers were not as high as expected. Another fun drop-in event was **Wet N Wild Kickball**. I bought little kiddie pools, a Slip N Slide, and a big bouncy ball to use as bases and home plate. It was a great way to cool off during the sweltering summer heat. The parents I spoke with afterwards were thrilled to get their kids outside and asked for more games in the parks, which I plan on for summer 2019.

For the adults, I partnered with Reclaimed Rails and threw a couple of **Bags Tournaments**. Each team paid \$10 for the double elimination tournament and players got a discount from Reclaimed Rails on their beers. The event was held on the beautiful back patio of Reclaimed. A total of 30 teams participated in these tournaments and I plan on holding more in 2019.

Our Touch-A-Truck event continues to be very popular with the little ones. Attendance was well over 500 and we had close to 20 trucks, racecars, and construction equipment for them to check out. Refreshments were provided by Just Chillin', a local food truck.



My favorite program every year is our **“B” Safe Kids** class. With help from the Bondurant Emergency Services Department and the Polk County Sheriff’s Department, our goal with this class is to teach incoming Kindergarteners about various aspects of safety including, fire, poison, stranger danger, bus, and bike. Each participant pays \$20 for the three day program and get a certificate and t-shirt when they “graduate”. Without the support of the Emergency Services and Sheriff’s Departments, this event could never happen. In 2019, I hope to have online registration available, and we may have to raise the cost of the program.

Our **Movie in the Park** event was Disney’s “Coco”. Due to weather, the event was rescheduled twice and attendance was only about 30 people. I have reached out to various businesses about sponsorship, but most seem uninterested. Licensing fees for these movies can be costly. I paid \$425 to show this movie. We do now have our own screen, so I would like to be able to use it, but I am not sure how to fund it. I have reached out to the Parks and Recreation Board to help me with this task.

The **Bondu Spook-Tacular** event at Lake Petocka has run its course. The weather is usually awful during this time and less businesses and organizations are volunteering to participate. Those that did come out were various church groups, the Mother’s Club, and a few different Girl Scout Troops. Around 100 people braved the cold and the wind in 2018. For 2019, I am looking at partnering with BrickHouse Fitness to do some sort of similar event that can be held indoors. Hopefully, a change of scenery will bring back businesses and organizations and more residents can participate.



Our partnership with the **Blue Jay Basketball Club** is still running strong. Over 200 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grade boys and girls registered to play in the recreational league in 2018. Like 2017, our online registration garnered much more attention than our annual registration night. We may skip the registration night in 2019. We seem to have an issue with jersey retention. I usually have to order more jerseys each year and we should be at the point where we should not have to order so many. As of right now, we are at our limit on number of players. We do not have the gym space to put together any more teams. This could be a problem if the City continues to grow, especially with all of the young families moving to town.

Weather seems to have been a major problem in 2018. Our **Merry & Bright Parade** was unfortunately cancelled due to rain/sleet. 18 floats/cars/walkers were registered for the parade, along with the Polk County Sherriff’s Office and the Bondurant Emergency Services Department. The **Santa Social** was still held at the Library, where 80 community members attended. Unfortunately, that is quite lower than

expected, but again, the weather played havoc. Members who attended got to meet Santa and work on Christmas-related crafts.

We also had a few **Kids in the Kitchen** events throughout 2018 that were well attended. The average attendance was about 20 per class. For these events, I partner with Allysa Balantini, the dietitian from the Altoona Hy-Vee. She brings all of the ingredients and supplies needed to cook easy recipes that the kids can follow. I am basically there to help supervise and be her assistant. For these programs, we use the Library Community Room free of charge. It is the perfect location for events like this and we always encourage parents and children to go check out the library when we are done.



2019 Ideas/Plans

Iowa DNR Hunting Classes

Bags League

Spring Break Art Classes

Pickleball (Portable nets are cheap. Can use school gyms in summer/fall)

Summer Camp in the Parks (Would like to use some neighborhood parks for this and not just City Park.)

Yoga in the Park (We had this a few years back, but it was not well attended. Maybe partner with BrickHouse?)

Bike Parade during SummerFest (Bike Safety, Trail Etiquette, Bike Parade led by Kurt)

Dance lessons at Founders?

Eagle Park updates continuing