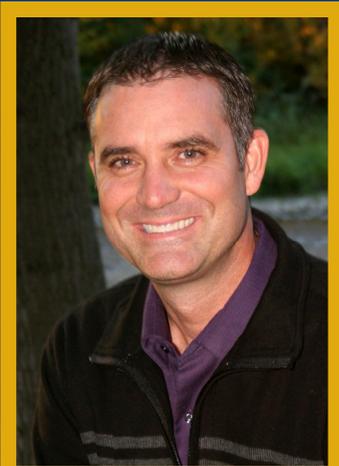


2015 Annual Newsletter



**Parks & Recreation
Department**

Welcome



Steve Siddoway
*Director
Meridian Parks and
Recreation*

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Parks & Recreation By the Numbers

The year 2015 was a wonderful year for parks and recreation opportunities in the City of Meridian! I hope you enjoy this edition of our annual newsletter, as we highlight some of the projects that have made a difference to our community this year.

We have seen many important projects come to fruition this year, including the new dog park—Storey Bark Park—and the new tennis complex in Settlers Park, which also includes three courts dual-striped for Pickleball players. Of all the many projects I am proud of this year, the one I would like most to highlight for you is our new Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

The Parks & Recreation Master Plan has been a monumental effort over the past 12 months that will help guide our direction over the next decade. The master planning process included community and stakeholder meetings, a public survey, a comprehensive inventory of our parks, trends analysis, goals & objectives, and concept plans for three future parks. You can read more about our planning efforts on page 11. The Master Plan was adopted by City Council on December 15.

I invite you all to rediscover and enjoy the many aspects of Meridian Parks & Recreation—from fun community events like the Winter Lights Parade held earlier this month, to our growing sports programs, to the variety of activities and classes in our Activity Guide, to our parks and playgrounds.

Have a very merry Christmas and may 2016 be full of wonderful recreational opportunities and lasting memories for you and your family!

Steve Siddoway

Our Mission

The Meridian Parks and Recreation Department's mission is to enhance our community's quality of life by providing innovatively designed parks, connected pathways, and diverse recreational opportunities for all citizens of Meridian that create lasting memories.

Parks and Recreation Staff

Director:
Steve Siddoway

Recreation Coordinators:
Jake Garro
Colin Moss
Garrett White

Parks Superintendent:
Mike Barton

City Arborist:
Elroy Huff

Parks & Pathways Manager:
Jay Gibbons

Marketing Coordinator:
Shelly Houston

Parks Maintenance Foreman:
Roger Norberg

Parks Maintenance Staff:
Jeremy Aldrich
Jeremy Anselmo
Dave Cereghino
Brad Day
Kevin Gallivan
Phillip Harris
Frank Keeney
John Meuser
Debbie Miller
Dan White
Kyle Yorita

Recreation Staff:
Ross Cipriano
Brian Schreiner

Administrative Assistants:
Ali Aldape
Rachel Myers
Jeanette Sanchez

City Leadership

Mayor of Meridian:
Tammy de Weerd

Meridian City Council:
Keith Bird*, Joe Borton,
Luke Cavener**, Genesis
Milam, Charlie Rountree,
David Zaremba

* Liaison to Parks Department
** Liaison to Parks Commission

Parks & Recreation Commission:
President: Matt Stoll
Commissioners: Treg Bernt, Sharon Borton, William Fitzgerald, Kent Goldthorpe, Phillip Liddell, John Nesmith, Creg Steele, Jo Greer
New Commissioners: Craig Robinson, Hannah Sturtevant



Recreation Coordinator **Garrett White** (below) was named the City of Meridian's *Supervisor of the Year* for 2015.

Parks Maintenance Foreman **Roger Norberg** was presented with a Meridian Way Coin by Mayor Tammy de Weerd for his ongoing demonstration of the City's core values of Customer Service, Accountability, Respect, and Excellence.



Parks and Recreation Staff



Supervisor of the Year Garrett White

A Year of Achievements

Parks and Green Space

2015 was a banner year for the Meridian Parks and Recreation Department!

On April 24, we hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony and family tennis fair to celebrate the completion of our new tennis court complex in Settlers Park. The complex, which has been in nearly constant use, includes seven full-sized tennis courts and three mini courts, designed for dual use by both youth tennis and pickle ball players.

Additional improvements in Settlers Park included a replacement of the safety surfacing at Adventure Island Playground, a new drinking fountain with a bottle filler, and security system upgrades.

Other parks and public spaces received welcome enhancements during the year, as well. Kleiner Park received a much-needed shade structure to shield its concession stand from the heat of the summer sun, as well as additional pond fountains. Work was also done on its splash pad plumbing, amphitheater, and parking lot drains.

The Parks and Recreation Commission is continuing to work with the Kleiner Park Trust to explore additional shade options for Kleiner Park — an important park amenity desired by many park patrons.

Our 3rd Annual Gene Kleiner Day Celebration on June 13th included unveiling of a new bronze statue designed after Gene Kleiner's grandson, Ben. It is located near the playground and splash pad.

New charcoal grills for public use, purchased with proceeds from the Parks and Recreation Department's Disc Golf Fall Classic event in October 2014, were added to picnic shelters in Tully and Storey Parks.

Closer to City Hall, the Parks crew installed sidewalk markers to identify significant stops along the new Historical Walking Tour route.

Thanks to Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, Idaho Avenue received a new stretch of sidewalk. It will enhance the safety of pedestrians and children walking to and from nearby schools and community centers.

Several of Meridian's parks also have a new safety feature. As part of the City's *HeartSafe Meridian* initiative, 14 automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) have been placed in City parks and ball fields for use by citizens during medical emergencies.

After successfully completing hands-on training provided by the Meridian Fire Department, every member of the Meridian Parks and Recreation staff is now CPR and AED certified.

The *Heartsafe Meridian* program is a long-term plan to increase the public's awareness of sudden cardiac arrest and promote early access to EMS, CPR, and defibrillation.

Settlers Tennis Complex Grand Opening



Unveiling of Ben Kleiner Statue

While several additional City parks are in the early planning stages, our highly anticipated dog park opened in the summer and has been a welcome addition to our park system.

Storey Bark Park, Meridian's first dedicated dog park, celebrated its grand opening with a large leash-cutting celebration on August 12th. People and their pets enjoyed live music, prize drawings, vendor booths, goody bags, and the opportunity to explore the park for the very first time. Among its most popular amenities are a collection of agility items donated to the park by Intermountain Pet Hospital, a local veterinary clinic and pet lodge.

“Pawsitively” Award Winning

In late November, Meridian's Storey Bark Park received the 2015 Outstanding Facility & Parks Award from the Idaho Recreation and Park Association.



Since its opening, the dog park's popularity has continued to grow. On Halloween, the park hosted the *Howl-O-Woof Pooch Parade & Costume Contest*, attended by more than 75 costumed dogs and their owners. In December it is serving as the collection site for the *Food for Furry Friends* holiday pet food and supply drive. Items collected from the public will be distributed to Treasure Valley pet owners in need through local food banks and shelters.

Storey Bark Park

Grand Opening: August 12, 2015



A Year of Achievements

Pathways & Trails

Pathways and trails, and the connectivity they provide, continue to be a top priority for Meridian residents. An updated Pathway Network Map was adopted from amendments made to the Pathways Master Plan by City Council in May 2015.

During the year, work continued to secure easements, agreements, permits and design documents to extend the portion of the Five Mile Creek Pathway segment that will run between Badley and Fairview Avenues.

Opportunities are also being evaluated for full implementation of the Five Mile Creek Pathway from Interstate 84 to the Canyon County line. Funding was secured in FY16 to pursue easements to fill the gaps in the pathway from Black Cat to Eagle Roads. As part of the project, three sections of sidewalk adjacent to Linder Road, E. James Court and Pine Avenue will be widened to provide pedestrian access between existing pathway segments.

We worked with the Ada County Highway District (ACHD) to install a HAWK signal on Meridian Road at East James Court for Bud Porter Pathway users to cross safely to connect to the Jackson Drain Pathway.

We also continued to assist the City's Community Development and Public Works Department with implementation of the Meridian Rail-With-Trail Action Plan, with the ultimate goal of creating an east-west pathway connection using the existing rail corridor.

Urban Forestry

Our urban forestry efforts during 2015 included the planting of 146 new trees; 30 of these were planted in the rapidly developing Kleiner Park Arboretum.

Our downtown tree box replacement project continued, with seven additional tree boxes replaced and three trees rehabilitated.

In April, the Parks and Recreation staff celebrated Arbor Day with a student tree planting at Ponderosa Elementary School. At this event the City was presented with its 13th consecutive Tree City USA designation by a representative of the National Arbor Day Foundation.

In October, Meridian once again partnered with Idaho Power to hold a shade tree giveaway designed to help homeowners increase the energy efficiency of their homes. In all, 205 trees were given away. Since its start in 2013, 965 shade trees have been given to Meridian residents through this program.

Meridian Pathway



Hawk Pedestrian Traffic Signal

Sports

Meridian's adult sports programs continued to grow at an impressive rate during 2015, with full-capacity league play and tournaments in basketball, softball, flag football, and volleyball. In all, we ran nine sports leagues with 531 teams comprised of 5,111 players.

To accommodate this growing participation, the beginning and ending dates of several of the sports periods are being adjusted to allow for four seasons of league play rather than three, as previously provided.

One of the program's ongoing challenges remains the need for additional outdoor playing fields and indoor gym space. Fortunately, we've been able to establish a use agreement for gym space with the Meridian Boys and Girls Club for when its new facility opens in 2016. We've also negotiated similar use agreements with Heritage Middle School and with the future Victory Middle School being constructed on Stoddard Road.

In the meantime, the Parks and Recreation staff continues to take great care in grooming and maintaining the City's playing fields and sports venues during their period of heavy use.

In the near future, the Herald Cox softball field at Storey Park will receive new lighting and a new Recreation Manager position will be filled by an individual who will supervise the Department's functions involving sports programming, class offerings and special events.



Camp Mer-Ida-Moo Field Trip

Classes, Camps & Activities

Again during 2015 we offered a full slate of classes, camps, and activities designed to appeal to people of all ages and interests.

Our camps were especially popular. The Camp Mer-Ida-Moo sessions at Prospect Elementary School were full every week and several participants had to be referred to Siena Elementary where space was still available. Our Outdoor Adventure Camps filled up quickly, as well, and had a waiting list for nearly every week. We also added two new camps during the year — a Learn to Love Lacrosse camp and a Dairy Days Dancing Parade camp.

Among the new classes we added this year were Beginning Boys Hip Hop, Chair Yoga, Gentle Movement Stretch, Let's Choreograph, Dance Fusion, Dance Fit, Boys Break Dance, and Foundations of Creations — Ancient World and Discovering Folklore.

For the musically-inclined, we ran our fourth season of Outdoor Musical Theater programs in the Kleiner Park Band Shell. In addition to being used for musical theater camps and rehearsals, the band shell served as the venue for performances of *Aladdin* and *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*.

Seniors also took advantage of our Parks and Recreation programming, taking day trips with us to visit scenic Shoshone Falls and to enjoy an outdoor dinner-theater production of *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* at the Starlight Mountain Theater in Garden Valley.



League Softball

A Year of Achievements

Special Events

We like to think that no one puts on better local events than the Meridian Parks and Recreation Department, and fortunately, Meridian residents are always up for a fun celebration!

We kicked off our event season in April with Unplug & Be Outside Week which featured a variety of family activities in Meridian parks. For Arbor Day we held a tree planting with the students of Ponderosa Elementary School. CableOne Movie Night celebrated its 9th successful season without any cancellations due to weather. Our Gene Kleiner Day symphony concert was preceded by the unveiling of a new statue in Kleiner Park, and our Independence Day Celebration featured a fireworks display put on in partnership with the Meridian Speedway.

Our Kleiner Park Live Summer Concert Series drew satisfied audiences despite unusually high summer heat, and the successful Fall Classic Disc Golf tournament prompted us to consider setting up a 9-hole winter disc golf course in Kleiner Park, joining those already in use in Settlers and Bear Creek Parks.

Two of our traditional events underwent changes this year — the Community Block Party switched venues from Settlers Park to the more spacious Kleiner Park, and the Barn Sour Fun Run was moved from June to August, to a weekend with fewer competing events. In addition, our first ever Howl-O-Woof Pooch Parade and Costume Contest attracted nearly 100 costumed dogs and their owners to Storey Bark Park on Halloween.

By far our largest and most attended events were our Trunk or Treat & Dance to the Beat event, which we hosted in conjunction with the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, and the Winter Lights Parade and other events that combined under the Christmas in Meridian banner.

Several other events, coordinated by other organizations, took place in our parks, as well. In all, the City issued 54 Temporary Use Permits (TUPs) for events including car shows, cook-offs, charity walks, Easter egg hunts, church events, and other community gatherings.



Arbor Day Tree Planting



Trunk or Treat & Dance to the Beat



Children's Winterland Festival

Our Volunteers

The active participation of our many volunteers, community partners, and event sponsors helped make our accomplishments during 2015 possible.

During the year, volunteers donated approximately 1,813 hours to Meridian Parks and Recreation Department projects, resulting in a cost savings of nearly \$36,125 to the City. They painted shelters, wrapped trees, planted flowers, assembled picnic tables, hung holiday decorations, and kept the streets safe during parades and special events.

In October, we hosted a Volunteer Appreciation Barbeque in Kleiner Park in order to thank the men and women who help keep our parks safe and welcoming by volunteering as part of our Park Ambassador Program.



Our heartfelt thanks go out to the many schools, churches, scout troops, civic groups, businesses, and individuals who donated time or talent to us during the past year.

Groups or individuals wishing to volunteer in our parks can call us directly or visit the new website www.justserve.org to find specific opportunities.



2015-16 Commissioners: (Lt. to Rt.)

Craig Robinson
Sharon Borton
Phillip Liddell
Jo Greer
Creg Steele, Vice President
Matt Stoll, President
Hannah Sturtevant
Treg Bernt
John Nesmith (Not pictured)

Meridian Parks and Recreation Commission

The Meridian Parks and Recreation Commission is a citizen advisory group that, along with our City Council Liaison, advises the Department on park planning, capital improvements, policies, recreation programs and budgeting issues.

In addition to serving in this advisory role, they help plan and participate in a variety of community events designed to promote Meridian's parks, pathways, recreational offerings and special events.

They generally meet on the second Wednesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at Meridian City Hall. Their meetings are open to the public and agendas are available at the Parks and Recreation Office the Friday prior to each meeting.

You can learn more about the Commission on the Parks and Recreation Department portion of the City of Meridian website at www.meridiancity.org/parks_rec.

Photo Gallery



Veterans Day at Rock of Honor



Howl-O-Woof Parade



Youth Farmers Market in the Plaza



Community Block Party



2015 Parks Tour



Settlers Tennis Complex Opens

Planning for the Future

Throughout 2015, our staff has been moving through the multi-step process of updating the City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan — a document that will provide the framework which will allow us to most effectively respond to the needs of our growing community. As part of this process, we diligently gathered valuable public input via a number of methods, including focus groups, citizen surveys, stakeholder meetings, and through an interactive online opinion-sharing site.

Using the feedback we gathered, coupled with the assistance of national experts from GreenPlay, LLC and our own observations and expertise, we assessed the current state of our parks and recreation programs and facilities, determined our communities needs for the coming decade, and charted out a plan for achieving our vision of the future. Documents relating to the new Master Plan can be accessed online on the Parks and Recreation portion of the City of Meridian website at www.meridiancity.org/parks_rec.

We also began developing concept plans for several of our future parks, including the Borup property, our 77 acres in South Meridian, and the future Margaret Aldape Park along the Boise River.

New neighborhood parks in development also received a great deal of our attention during the past year. These include the new parks in the Bainbridge and Bellano Creek Subdivisions.

Our search also continued for additional gym space, as we have filled our current facilities to capacity with our adult sports programs, which continue to grow in popularity. Potential partnerships with the YMCA and the Boys and Girl Club are being explored, as well as other potential priority use agreements.

In the coming year, we will also welcome a new Recreation Manager position to the Parks and Recreation staff, in response to the consistent growth and increased workload associated with our department's recreation division.



Master Plan Elements

Department Mission, Vision, Values

Park Classification System

Existing Parks and Recreation Inventory

Define Level of Service Goals

Community Outreach and Public Participation

Recommendations and Strategic Goals

Strategic Action and Implementation Plan

Staffing Plan and Department Organization

Urban Forestry Management Strategy

Pathways Plan Recommendations

Park Concept Designs

Draft and Final Plans, Presentations and Deliverables





This ***Annual Newsletter***
is published by the
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