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TO: Kevin Dorn, City Manager, City of South Burlington
FROM: Ashley Parker, City Project Manager *AP*
Cc: Tom Hubbard, Deputy City Manager
SUBJECT: Current Status of Open Space Projects and Funding
DATE: October 7, 2019

At the end of the fiscal year 2019, the Open Space Project Fund expenditure balance was approximately \$881,723.66 with approximately \$89,856.32 spent on improvements, land stewardship, and projects; and \$247,271.74 spent on the loan repayment.

The Open Space Task Force had created a list of Open Space Priorities that were both project specific and on-going for the following City Natural Areas: Red Rocks Park, Wheeler Nature Park, and the Underwood Parcel. Attached is that original document with an added update column indicating current project status. Below is a snap shot of which projects or related tasks have been completed to-date, as well as those projects that are underway for possible FY20 completion.

The projects/tasks completed to date are:

Red Rocks Park:

- Professional invasive plant management services throughout the growing season, including training of the VYCC crew and City volunteers through the Weed Warrior Program.
- VYCC completed trail improvement and invasive plant removal projects.
- Design and installation of new wayfinding signage in the park, including directional and interpretive signs (ongoing).
- The Winooski Valley Park District completed installation of new trail signs and had partial oversight of the VYCC crew.
- Received trail assessment and initial prioritization for future trail improvements.
- Began site survey work to aid in planning and design of stormwater and erosion control projects.
- Initiated conversation with state and local permitting authorities to discuss permitting requirements for the needed work at the park.
- Held successful Weed Warrior event.
- Held two successful Community Hike events that were led by two natural resource professionals. Part of City effort to assist in educating the public on natural resource issues and gather public input on the Update to the Management Plan. Began collecting



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survey responses to track public input on natural resource management issues at Red Rocks.

- Reviewed and provided input on CWD tree removal request at the pump station. Negotiated \$3,000 to go towards the slope stabilization, stormwater management, and trail re-routing projects around the pump station.
- Bike racks were installed at the park as part of the general park maintenance budget and not from the Open Space Fund. If additional bike racks are needed, staff will consider funding them through the Open Space Fund.

Wheeler Nature Park:

- Professional invasive plant management services throughout the growing season, including training of the VYCC crew and City volunteers through the Weed Warrior Program.
- VYCC completed trail improvement and invasive plant removal projects.
- The Winooski Valley Park District completed installation of two new bridges and had partial oversight of the VYCC crew.
- Completed a wetland delineation of the entire Wheeler parcel, including the Wheeler Homestead.
- Initiated a review of existing wayfinding signage, and began design of new signage.
- Commissioned an evaluation of the park's trail system to assist staff in prioritizing and phasing out trail projects.
- Held two successful Weed Warrior events.
- Began work with a UVM NR206 group to draft interpretive signs for the park.
- Bike racks were installed at the park as part of the general park maintenance budget and not from the Open Space Fund. If additional bike racks are needed, staff will consider funding them through the Open Space Fund.

Underwood Parcel:

- Completed wetland delineation for the entire parcel.
- Initiated invasive plant removal management on the parcel – consisting of site assessment and planning for next season.
- Staff worked with Common Roots to identify 4 acres of tillable land on the parcel.
- Engaged with a South Burlington Vermont Master Naturalist group to begin an ecological assessment of the park to help staff better plan for use of the site.
- Internal review of previous parcel Master Plan, the wetland delineation information, and information from the ecological assessment to determine next steps for implementing pieces of the Master Plan.



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Projects Underway for FY20 Completion:

Red Rocks Park:

- Stormwater evaluation and site analysis to identify need and location of future stormwater management facilities to compliment trail and other needed site improvements.
- Implement three priority trail improvement projects, including the formalization of a side trail, closure of CWD metal staircase and other unnecessary trails, and installation of relevant stormwater infrastructure.
- Complete design work for shoreline stabilization project, to potentially include new plantings and riprap.
- Complete design work for the parking lot formalization project, to potentially include paving, striping, signage, fencing, and new gate.
- Complete design work for the beach culvert protection project, to potentially include a swale and a removal of the partially exposed pipe on the beach.
- Finish installation of the wayfinding signage (namely interpretive and kiosk signage).
- Completion of another season of invasive plant removal work, including work by professional consultant, VYCC, and the City's Weed Warrior program.
- Draft Update to the existing Red Rocks Park Management Plan prepared by the Management Plan Task Force.
- Submission of grant application(s) to supplement Open Space Funds for the trail improvement/stormwater work at the park.
- Continue Community Hike series at the park (schedule at least 1 hike).

Wheeler Nature Park:

- Receive trail assessment report and begin phasing trail improvement projects. Compare report to projects previously identified in the Open Space Priorities spreadsheet, and integrate that spreadsheet into the project prioritization.
- Fabricate new wayfinding signs for the entire park and complete installation.
- Completion of another season of invasive plant removal work, including work by professional consultant, VYCC, and the City's Weed Warrior program.
- Continue Community Hike series at the park (schedule at least 1 hike).

Underwood Parcel:

- Draft and release an RFP for design and engineering of access and connectivity pieces of the parcel's Master Plan, including the formalization of existing trail network, small parking area, picnic grove/pavilion for enjoying the view, shared use path connecting the South Pointe neighborhood with Nowland Farm Drive, and pump trail.



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- Finalize design concepts, including any required permitting, and hopefully initiate construction in the fall of 2020.
- Initiate invasive plant removal work, including work by professional consultant, VYCC, and the City's Weed Warrior program.
- Continue Community Hike series at the park (schedule at least 1 hike).
- Begin the design of wayfinding signage – identify the location of all signs and begin design of what information we need to display. This could be rolled into the design of the access and connectivity elements, or done in partnership with either the Master Naturalist program or UVM NR206 class.