

HARKER HEIGHTS PARKS AND RECREATION



ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2021



[HARKERHEIGHTS.GOV/PARKS](https://harkerheights.gov/parks)

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VISION

To Create Community
through People, Parks,
and Programs

MISSION

To provide community
enrichment opportunities
through exceptional customer
service and innovative programs,
and by creating and maintaining
attractive, safe, clean, accessible,
interconnected parks and
facilities.

How do we even begin to recap the past year? Much like every industry throughout the globe, our operations have had to adapt to a constantly changing world.

2021 has seen many of our programs come back to life after very turbulent times for our community, though nothing looks quite the same. Safety and cleaning policies are the backbone of our programming now, and will be for the foreseeable future. But one thing is certain: we are happy to see our community out and about again!

Over the past year, we have improved our Department in many ways that we are very proud of. We will discuss those throughout this report, but I would first like to thank our City leadership for their support.

Thank you to Mayor Spencer H. Smith for his unwavering support of our parks, programs, and staff. His involvement in our department has made us all better stewards of local public lands.

Thank you to our City Council for all that they do. Whether attending events and or programs, helping at a volunteer cleanup, or simply stopping by to say hello to staff and offer words of encouragement. You all have been instrumental in our success during the pandemic.

Thank you to our Parks & Rec Advisory Board. Your guidance has led us to achieve new heights throughout our parks system and citizens are able to reap the rewards of your hard work.

Thank you to City leadership: City Manager, Assistant City Manager, and Department Directors. This year has certainly showed us how important teamwork can truly be.

And lastly, thank you to our parks and program patrons. You are what make this community great. We look forward to seeing you out there!

Jeff Achee



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



WHO WE ARE

PARKS & RECREATION LEADERSHIP

Jeff Achee, Director

Casey Brazzil, Parks & Public Grounds Supervisor

Jonathan Hanson, Recreation Superintendent

Nichole Broemer, Activities & Events Manager

Darrien Nicholas, Athletics/Aquatics Coordinator

Joshua Bruton, Athletics Coordinator

Sara Gibbs, Activities Coordinator

Adam Trujillo, Activities Center Specialist

Nicole Loayza, Administrative Assistant

Henry Nash, Parks Crew Leader

Mike Reinhardt, Athletics Crew Leader

John Leivan, Building Maintenance Crew Leader

26

FULL TIME STAFF

22

PART TIME STAFF

250

VOLUNTEERS



PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD TREE ADVISORY BOARD

Angie Wilson, Chair
Heidi Heckel, Vice Chair
Eva Keagle
Brittany Harris
Jack Palmer
Natalie Austin
Alonzo Williams, Alternate
Yomi Hardison, Alternate

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was assembled in 1995. The Board is composed of six members and two alternates, which are appointed by the City Council. The Board is governed by the Code of Ordinance § 33.35.

The Harker Heights Parks and Recreation Advisory Board shall meet on the second Monday evening of all odd number months, shall have no supervisory function, and shall have no rulemaking or quasi-judicial authority. The Board is organized to advise the City Council on policy and programs.



IMPROVING OUR PARKS



Carl Levin Park Pool Updates

Staff replaced the pool restroom roof with a red metal that matches the new restroom near the playground and added four new permanent shade covers to the Carl Levin Park Pool. The four shade canopies are colored to match the HHPRD logo, which represent the City, People, Parks, and Programs!



ADA Improvements

The Parks and Recreation Department and Public Works Department made changes to the Kern Park playground area and the Community Park batting cages to improve accessibility. Parking spots and sidewalks were added.



Carl Levin Park Pocket Prairie

In 2021, Mayor Spencer H. Smith took the Mayor's Monarch Pledge and, in doing so, committed to taking steps to preserve habitat for the state butterfly of Texas. In order to assist, the Department partnered with the Central Texas Master Naturalists to create the Carl Levin Pocket Prairie. This area will be left native in order to create space for pollinator plants that are beneficial to both Monarchs and dwindling bee populations.



Kern Park Community Garden

To expand upon the success of the Carl Levin Park Community Garden and to create programming at our City's oldest park, staff created a Community Garden at Kern Park.

IMPROVING OUR PROGRAMS



The 'On the GO Heights' Rec Trailer

The Parks and Recreation Department, in partnership with Smile Doctors Orthodontics and Tri-City Property Management, purchased an enclosed trailer that contains a multitude of games and activities for use across the City. This program will allow staff to create programs across the City, regardless of access to parks and City facilities.



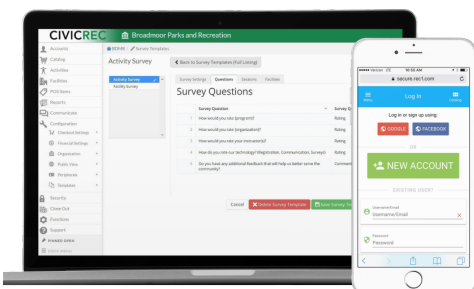
Recreation Kits

As the coronavirus pandemic kept people at home and away from regular Parks & Rec programming, staff made accommodations for families to participate in recreation at home. The Recreation Kits ranged from Earth Day camping to pumpkin carving to water safety.



Movie and Craft Brews at Community Park

Outdoor programming has been in high demand throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Department has adapted in a multitude of ways, including programming that appeals to a wide variety of attendees. In FY21, staff created Movie in the Park with craft brews, in partnership with local breweries: Southern Roots Brewing and Iron Gauntlet Brauhaus. In December, National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation was featured and Jurassic Park was played in July for National Parks and Recreation Month.



CivicRec Software Implementation

Later in 2021, the Parks and Recreation Department will transfer all recreation and facility registrations and reservations to CivicRec. Staff have utilized online rec software since 2012, and this is the first change in provider since that time.

IMPROVING OUR PROGRAMS



Central Texas Youth Sports League

In 2020, the City of Harker Heights and City of Killeen Parks and Recreation Departments made the decision to end their membership in a governing youth sports association and create the 'Central Texas Youth Sports League.' HHPRD youth recreational sports programs will still operate as usual, with an end of season tournament to determine a 'Central Texas Champion' in each age division. Rules and by-laws are still created to enforce the idea that all can and should play in a fun and safe environment.



Tree Inventory and Management Plan

In 2021, the Parks and Recreation Department contracted Davey Resource Group to conduct a parkwide tree inventory and then utilize that data to create a Tree Management and Maintenance Plan. Staff looks forward to continued use of the TreeKeeper inventory software and utilizing this data to sustain healthy tree growth.



Urban Forestry

Harker Heights Parks and Recreation staff capitalized on the success of the statewide Texas Arbor Day celebration, hosted virtually in Harker Heights in 2020, and created programs and public outreach information in regard to urban forestry. This page, on the Parks and Rec website, contains information on the Urban Forestry team, information on the science and effects of urban forestry, and links to the 2020 Texas Arbor Day ceremony.



Farmers Market at City Hall

In response to updated needs at Seton Medical Center, the Department moved the Saturday Farmers Market to City Hall/Recreation Center. This has allowed staff to add additional programming and has further cemented City Hall as our "City Center."

OUR PEOPLE MAKE THE DIFFERENCE



Former P&R Director Jerry Bark Receives TRAPS Dan Whitworth Fellow Award

This is the highest award the Society can bestow. This recipient of this honor has been a member of TRAPS and has given outstanding service to the parks and recreation field for a minimum of ten (10) years, in addition to contributing to the promotion and advancement of the Texas Recreation and Park Society.



P&R Director Jeff Achee Chairs TRAPS Legislative Task Force

Jeff Achee was selected to chair the Texas Recreation and Park Society's legislative task force. This committee is tasked with representing TRAPS in addressing legislative issues, policies, and procedures relating to the park and recreation movement.

Promotions

Henry Nash, Parks Crew Leader

New Full-Time Staff

Darrien Nicholas, Athletic/Aquatic Coord.
Josh Bruton, Athletic Coord.
Deuce McKnight, Parks Crew
Donavan Martinez, Athletics Crew
Domingo Salinas, Parks Crew
Angel Rodriguez, Parks Crew



Athletic/Aquatic Coordinator Darrien Nicholas Receives Recognition from Mayor

Darrien was acknowledged by Mayor Spencer H. Smith as a 'Bright Star of Central Texas' for deescalating and preventing a life-threatening act from occurring between spectators at a youth volleyball game at the Harker Heights Recreation Center.



City of Harker Heights was selected to host statewide Texas Arbor Day Festival on 10th year of Tree City USA Designation; Adam Trujillo Recognized

The Parks and Recreation Department assisted the Activities Center in hosting the annual festival, which had to be virtual for the first time in its history. Activities Specialist Adam Trujillo was recognized by the Texas Arbor Day members for his extensive work on this event.



Staff Receive Aquatic Facility Operator (AFO) Certification

Recreation Superintendent Jonathan Hanson and Athletic/Aquatic Coordinator Darrien Nicholas received their AFO certification from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). This extensive class and exam ensure staff are well-versed in the latest on aquatic facility management/maintenance.

PARKS AND REC BY THE NUMBERS

3,500
EVENT ATTENDANCE



1,677
LEAGUE PARTICIPANTS



\$74,957
ATHLETIC LEAGUE REVENUE



3,132
VOLUNTEER COACH HOURS



87
EVENT VENDORS



3,555
POOL ATTENDANCE



201
SWIM LESSON ATTENDEES



1,306
PARK FACILITY RENTALS



240
MUNICIPAL ACRES MAINTAINED



136
SENIOR REC MEMBERS



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Youth Sports Presenting Sponsor
Smile Doctors Braces

Youth Sports Partners
Dicks Sporting Goods
Chick-Fil-A Harker Heights

Recreation Sponsors
Smile Doctors Braces
Tri-City Property Management

