



PARK RANGER ANNUAL REPORT

2024



**MADISON
PARKS**



Rangers patrol docks, piers, boat launches and beaches to ensure all park users have equal access to lakes and waterways.

2024 RANGER STAFF

- **Jason Vroman** - Supervisor (*Former*)
- **Steve Dray** - Supervisor / (*Former Lead Ranger*)
- **John Ringwood** - Lead Ranger (*Interim*)
- **John Gibbons** - East District Ranger
- **Rah Filla** - West District Ranger
- **Harmony Danielson** - Park Ranger/PEO (*Former*)
- **Will Goss** - Disc Golf Ranger (*Former*)
- **Matt Norton** - Disc Golf Ranger
- **Michelle Breimon** - Hourly (*Former*)
- **Annie Youngwood** - Hourly
- **Louie Brien** - Hourly
- **Nick Hellrood** - Hourly (*Former*)
- **Sean Wenkman** - West Ranger
- **Andrea Grant** - East Ranger

Annual Highlights

- Collaborated with Parking Enforcement to hire a shared position of Park Ranger/Parking Enforcement Officer.
- Hired one new hourly Park Ranger
- Put four electric patrol vehicles into service for Park Rangers to move about the city.
- Worked with Parks Operations, Engineering and MPD to clean up Zeier Park
- Completed redesign of three new disc golf holes at Elver Park
- Implemented a bike patrol unit for greater access to parks and community outreach
- **105** Disc Golf kits checked out
- **12,720** visits to parks by Ranger staff
- **94** unhoused individuals referred to services; **19** of which accepted help from street outreach teams
- **943** enforcement contacts made by Rangers in Parks
- **459** Parking tickets issued.
- **5,139** permits checked at dog parks, disc golf courses, lake access sites and cross-country ski sites. **89%** compliance rate.
- **27** Parks Alive events attended and staffed by Rangers.
- **2** Junior Ranger Events
- Countless hours of snow removal put in at nine off leash dog park areas.

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City of Madison Park Rangers

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2024 RANGER RECAP

Rangers had a great year, expanding our ability to reach the needs of the ever-growing community. We traded in four gas powered vehicles for four electric patrol trucks to visit parks and engage the park users.

It is always helpful to be able to retain seasonal staff from year to year and the Ranger work unit was able to keep most of our staff from our previous 2023 recruitment. We are so thankful for them. We were excited to add one seasonal Ranger to our team as well.



Paul Quinlan conducts periodic training sessions with Park Rangers to enhance their plant identification skills

Rangers continue to collaborate with our street outreach partner, Catalyst for Change (CFC), in a partnership that has proven invaluable for both Rangers and individuals experiencing homelessness. Park Rangers are often the first point of contact for those in need, guiding them toward essential resources. CFC plays a crucial role in following up with referrals and guiding individuals through difficult and sometimes very complicated situations. Over the past year, Rangers have referred nearly 100 individuals to CFC for support, with at least 19 accepting services and actively working toward securing housing.

We also worked with MPD, Madison Fire, National Alliance on Mental Health, and others to enhance our level of training in medical, crisis mental health, and equipment trainings to help prepare Rangers for all that the job throws at them.





EAST DISTRICT RANGER RECAP

East district parks were full of life in 2024, and Rangers got to be in the middle of many of the outreach activities. Rangers attended community events such as National Night Out, Trunk or Treat and several Parks Alive Events. Rangers assisted Olbrich Botanical Gardens guests with parking during many of their evening events as well.

CENTRAL DISTRICT RANGER RECAP

The Parks Central District is the busiest area of the city, making it a frequent focus for Ranger response. For this reason, our most seasoned Ranger is typically assigned to this district.

Penn Park saw the addition of a futsal court and the restoration of its basketball courts, bringing positive improvements to the neighborhood. Meanwhile, both large and small events at McPike, Vilas, and Brittingham parks proceeded smoothly, with no major incidents. Ranger Ringwood continued to collaborate closely with Central District officers to address issues as they arose. However, overall, the Central Parks remained relatively calm throughout the year.



WEST DISTRICT RANGER RECAP

At the end of 2022, District Park Ranger Rah Filla was hired. Ranger Filla has done an amazing job learning all aspects of the job. They have also taken the lead on our outreach programs, most notably participating in the Parks Alive Events and in November kicking off the long-awaited Junior Ranger Program. Ranger Filla has done a great job coordinating Madison Police Department West and South District Community Officers and West Parks Operations leadership to connect and enhance the service Rangers can provide for the community.



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LEAD RANGER HIGHLIGHTS

PARK CLEANUPS:

Rangers have worked closely with park operations staff, city engineering, community development, the Madison Police Department, and other agencies to address these challenging situations. Cleanup efforts are often difficult, as they frequently involve biohazards, personal belongings, and individuals who may be unwilling to leave. Rangers must carefully navigate these complexities to ensure a safe and welcoming park environment for all.

RECRUITMENT & ONBOARDING:

Welcoming new Park Rangers and watching them grow in their roles is one of the most rewarding aspects of the job. However, learning doesn't end with initial training—we actively encourage professional development for both new and experienced Rangers. This year, we provided crisis intervention training for two additional Rangers, while seven others completed chainsaw training. Additionally, all full-time staff enhanced their skills by participating in self-defense training, ensuring they are well-equipped for the challenges of their roles.

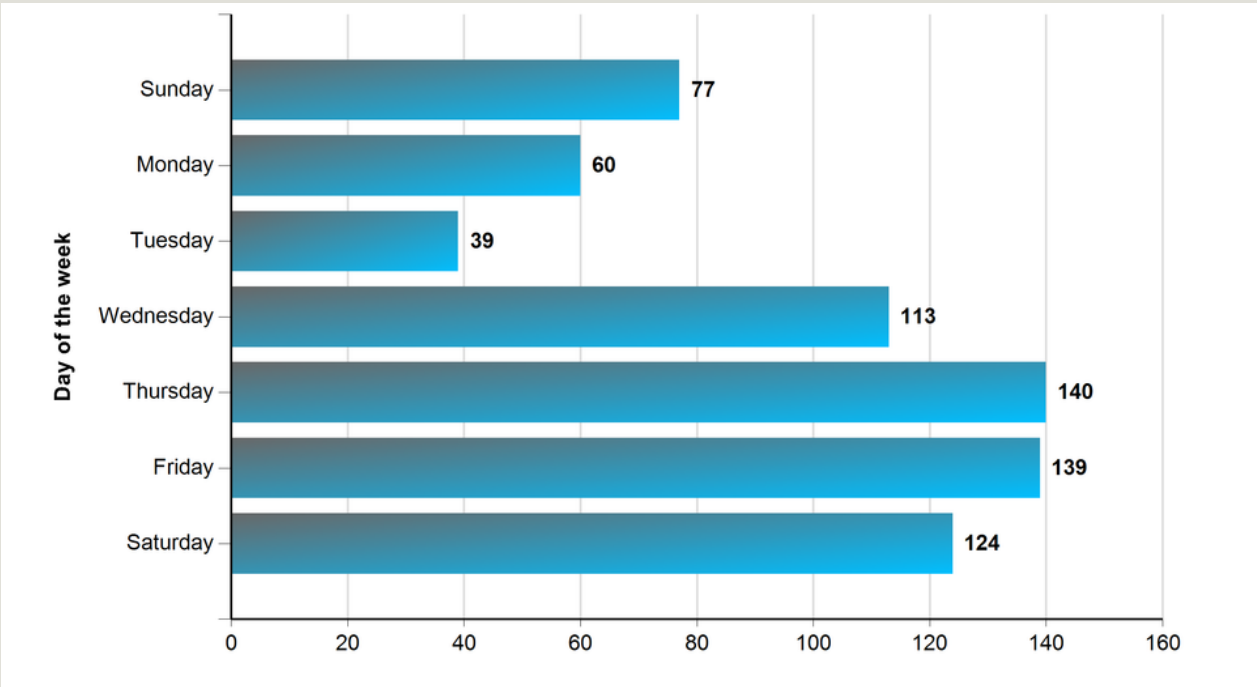
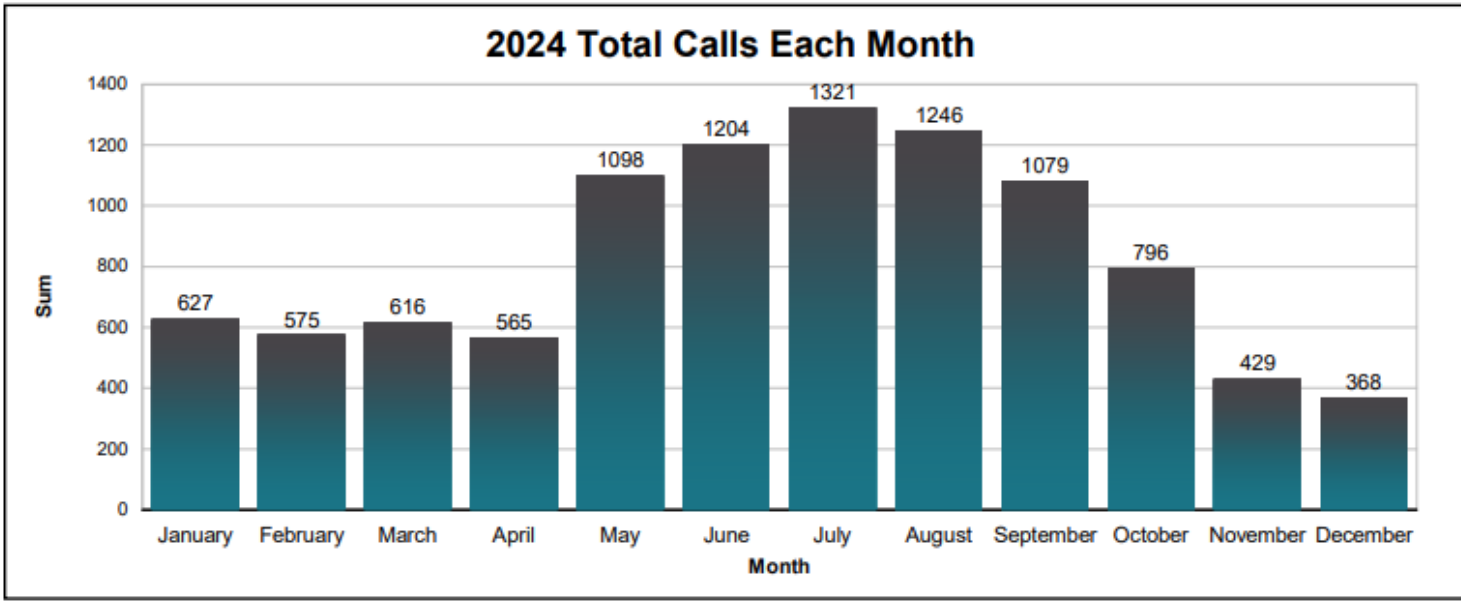
WILDLIFE IN PARKS:

Park Rangers received frequent reports of coyote sightings in various central and west parks. As the year progressed, the coyote's behavior grew increasingly concerning, prompting a decision later in the year to attempt trapping and rehabilitation. Rangers and Animal Services worked together to set and monitor a trap, but their initial efforts were unsuccessful. Ultimately, in a coordinated effort involving city parks operations staff, Park Rangers, and Animal Services Officers, the coyote was safely contained within the tennis courts at Vilas Park and transported to the Dane County Wildlife Center for rehabilitation.

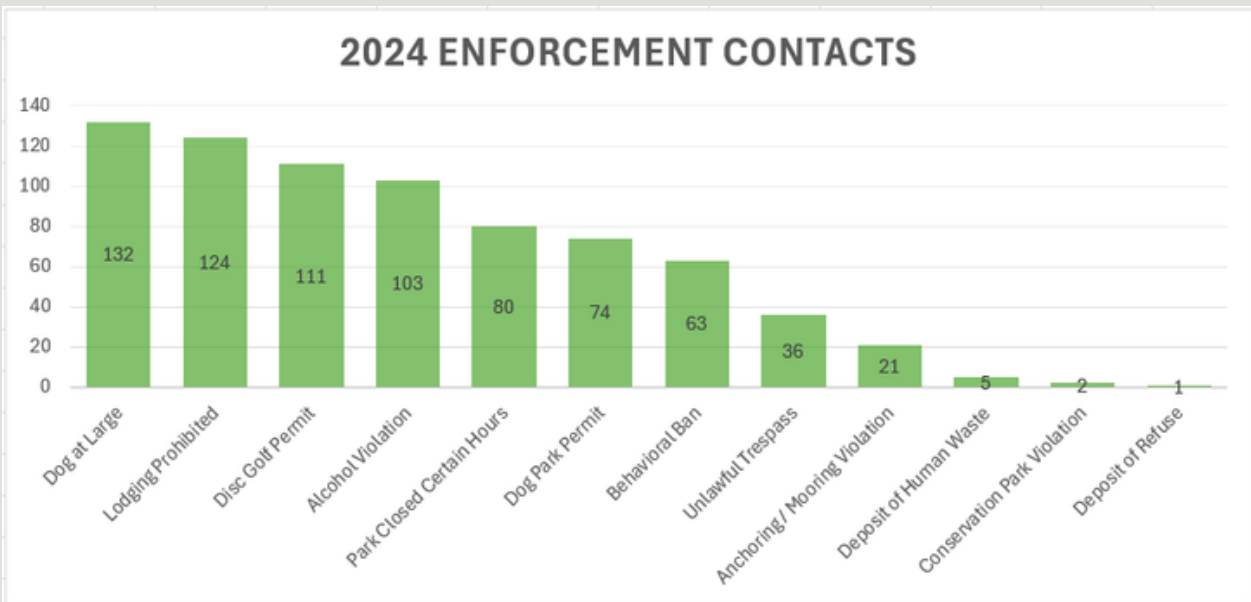
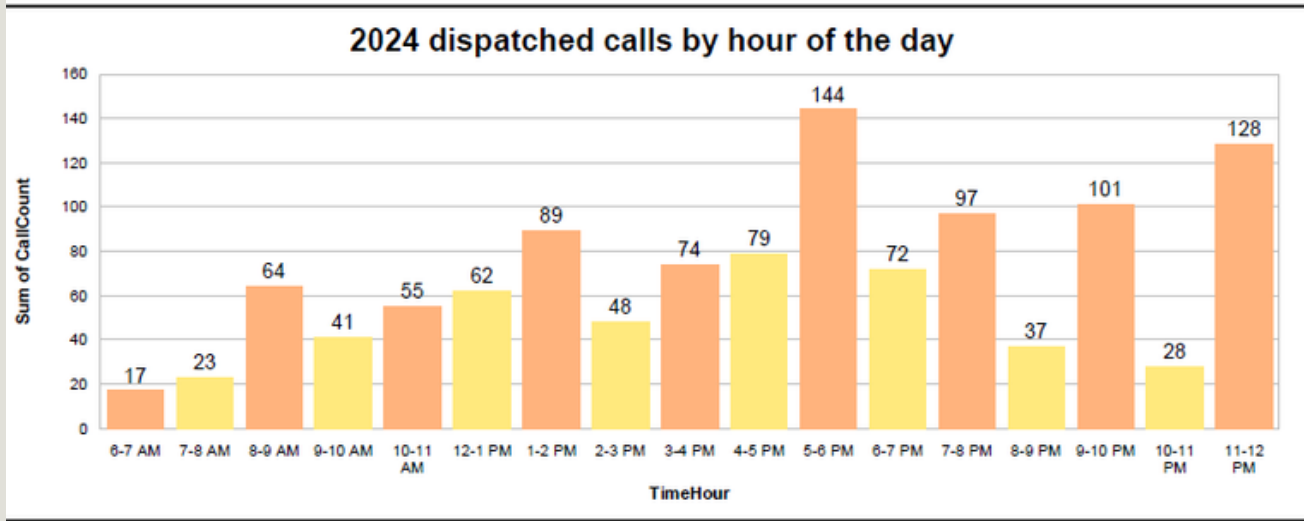


2024 RANGER STATISTICS

2024 Total Calls Each Month

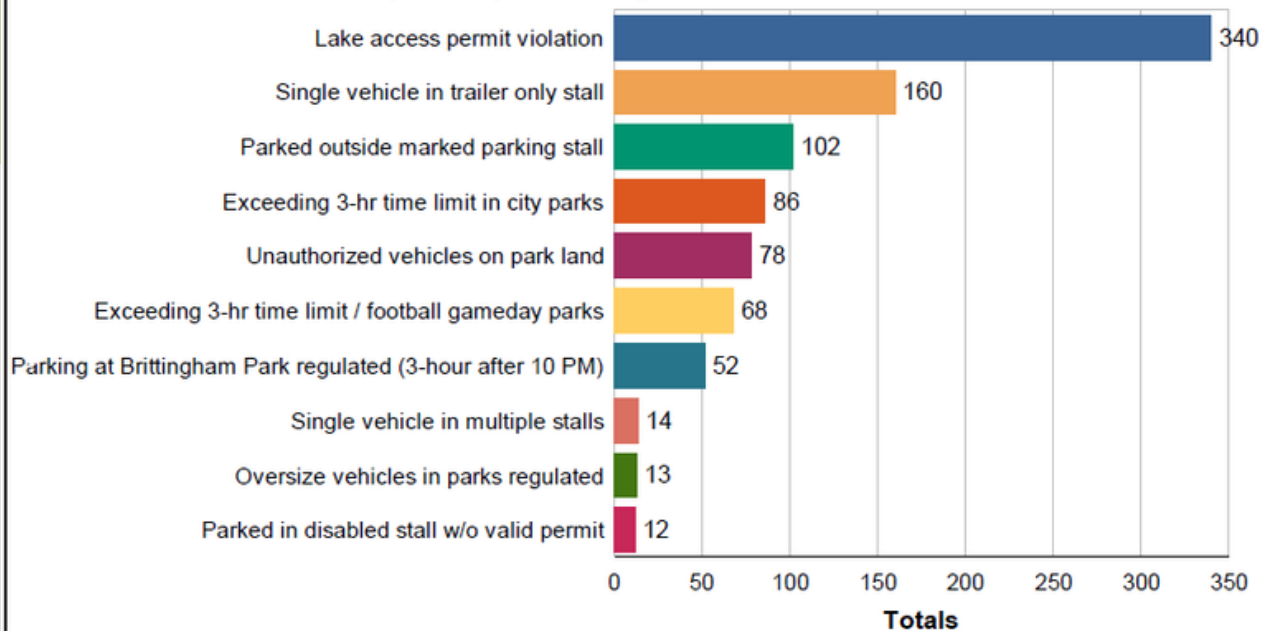


2024 RANGER STATISTICS

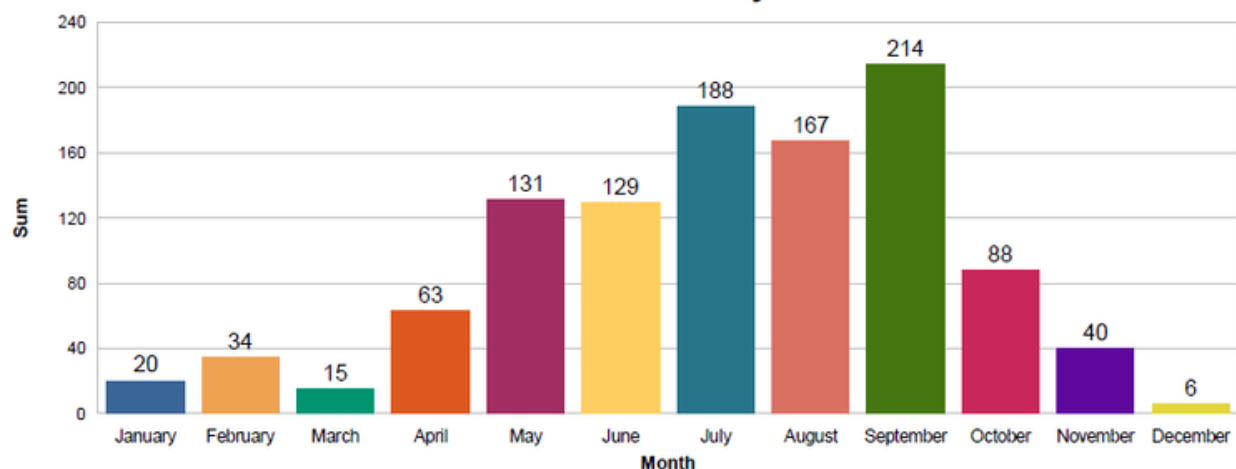


2024 RANGER STATISTICS

Top 10 parking tickets issued



Total citations issued by month



DISC GOLF UPDATES



ELVER

The redesign planning for disc golf course holes 2 through 4 began in 2023 and continued into 2024, with rangers collaborating closely with parks operations staff and course designer Patrick Blake to bring the project to life. Over the course of the year, the area for the new fairways was carefully cleared, tee pads were poured, baskets were installed, and turf was planted, all contributing to an improved playing experience in a more desirable section of the park. With the completion of three new holes, the course was officially unveiled during a Grand Re-Opening celebration on November 20, 2024!

HIESTAND

City parks ecology team and conservation workers with the help of volunteers have started the huge task of removing invasive buckthorn and honeysuckle under the oaks at Hiestand Park. This is the start of an oak savanna restoration project that will include reintroducing fire, sowing savanna seed, weed management follow-up and replanting native vegetation like Hazelnut and Bladdernut. It's a process to restore this land. This work will protect and ensure the regeneration of these majestic white and bur oaks that make Hiestand park so special.



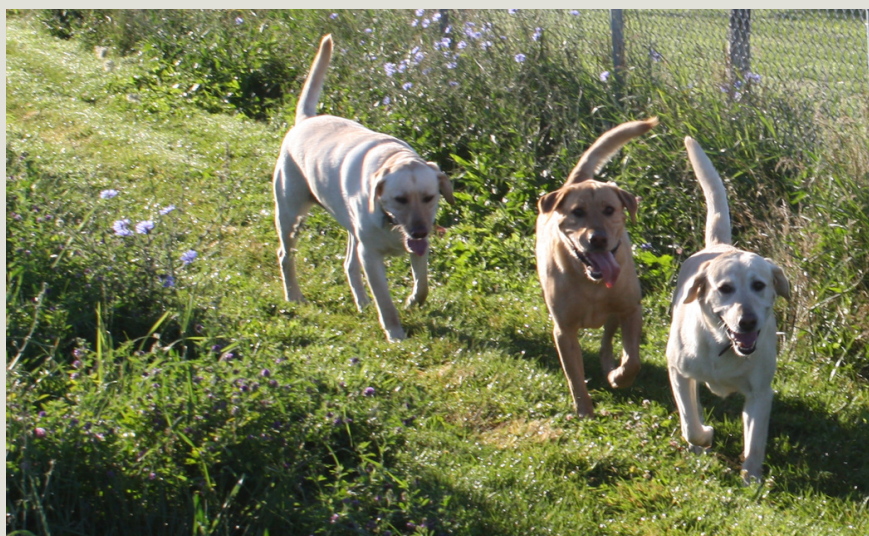
DOG PARK UPDATES

The Madison Parks System features nine fenced-in dog exercise areas where permit holders can let their dogs run off-leash and socialize. These spaces provide a valuable benefit to both dogs and their owners, especially within an urban park system. In fact, the vast majority of Madison residents live just minutes away from an off-leash dog park.

Each year, dedicated volunteers donate their time to clean up the dog parks, with this annual event typically taking place in early April—2024 being no exception.

Several improvements were made to the dog parks in 2024, including the removal of hazardous “widow maker” trees, fencing upgrades and replacements, and the installation of a double gate at Warner Dog Park to enhance safety.

Park Rangers also play a key role in maintaining these spaces, including clearing snow from paved surfaces at dog parks across the city. With nine parks to manage—and often just one Ranger with a shovel—it’s no small task! If you see a Ranger out and about, be sure to say hello—we’d love to chat and, of course, meet your dog!



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City of Madison Park Rangers

**MADISON
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