

WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

Waukegan Park District Awarded \$400,000 State Grant for Bevier Park Renovation

Waukegan, Illinois (July 8, 2022) – Governor JB Pritzker announced that the Waukegan Park District has been awarded a \$400,000 Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant from the State of Illinois to assist in the renovation of Bevier Park, located at 2255 Yorkhouse Road. Bevier Park will be transformed with a new nature-themed playground, a discovery dock, and a sand beach with a kayak and canoe launch. Additionally, the baseball field will be enhanced with new backstops, bleachers, and dugouts; the basketball courts will be resurfaced; and the disc golf course will be improved.

The OSLAD program, administered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), can provide up to half of a project's funds and, combined with the investment of local matching funds, will support more than \$56 million in park development projects and land acquisitions statewide. The OSLAD program began in 1987 and has invested \$433.5 million in 1,816 park projects. The program receives dedicated funding from a percentage of the state's Real Estate Transfer Tax.

Construction at the property where Bevier Park is located began in 1969 with the development of a pond and continued in 1971 with improvements, eventually becoming an official park in 1973. Today, Bevier Park consists of 30.4 acres with a Nature's Classroom, Henry Pfau Callahan Disc Golf Course, a pond where the Waukegan Park District's fishing derby is held annually, among other amenities. Bevier Park is named after Bevier Butts, who served as Director of the Recreation Department for the City of Waukegan for 26 years.

In his announcement, Governor JB Pritzker stated, "Investments in our local parks are investments in our communities. Park projects don't just create jobs and boost local economic development — they open the gateway for a healthier, happier Illinois. Every family in our state deserves nearby access to outdoor public spaces where they can gather with their friends and neighbors — and enjoy some sunshine, too."

Janet E. Kilkelly, President of the Waukegan Park District Board of Commissioners, stated, "The Waukegan Park District is thankful that the State of Illinois recognizes the importance of this project for our community and will be supporting us financially. The community will benefit significantly from the renovation of Bevier Park."

Jay Lerner, Executive Director of the Waukegan Park District, stated, "The Waukegan Park District is grateful for the financial support from the State of Illinois and Governor JB Pritzker. The grant will help fund our efforts to transform Bevier Park with improvements to existing amenities and the construction of new features."

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About the Waukegan Park District

Established on December 26, 1916, the Waukegan Park District (WPD) has 53 properties and more than 742 acres of land, including the 18-hole Bonnie Brook and 9-hole Greenshire Golf Courses. Properties are managed to the highest environmental and conservation standards. Facilities operated by the WPD include the Field House Sports, Fitness and Aquatics Center, Waukegan's Greg Petry SportsPark, Waukegan Skate Park, BMX Track, SplashZone, Percussion Playground, recreational centers, disc golf course, dog exercise area and agility course, outdoor sports fields, picnic areas, playgrounds, splash pads, and sports courts including basketball, tennis and pickleball. A full range of programs and services are offered year-round for all ages, from infants to seniors, as well as special need populations. Healthy lifestyles, wellness initiatives, and a connection with the outdoors and nature are integrated throughout programs, services, and special events. Arts and cultural activities are provided by the Jack Benny Center for the Arts, Waukegan Symphony Orchestra and Concert Chorus, and the Waukegan History Museum. We offer something for everyone!

A member of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD), Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA) and the Park District Risk Management Agency (PDRMA), the WPD employs 66 full-time and 290 part-time, seasonal, and temporary employees and is recognized by the IPRA as an Exceptional Workplace.

Nationally accredited by the NRPA Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) and State accredited through the IAPD Distinguished Agency Accreditation, the WPD has received the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Triple Crown Award for receiving the GFOA's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, Popular Annual Financial Reporting Award, and the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. The WPD was awarded the NRPA National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management in 2013, and was named a Gold Medal Finalist in 2012, 2013, 2019, 2021 and 2022.

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