

PARKS

Charro Ranch Park:

No Hays County Master Naturalist workday this month. Nothing further to report.

Dripping Springs Ranch Park & Event Center -Submitted by: *Tina Adams – Event Center Manager*



Dripping Springs Ranch Park wraps up 2020 with only a handful of events, due to elevated Covid 19 numbers. The DSRP Riding Series Dressage Show was a success and our team worked with the Lake Travis FFA to create an outstanding Show & Go "Outdoor" format for the final goat, lamb, hog & steer show for the year. Thomas Carrol has joined our team of Ranch Hands as part time help for the season. The DS Farmer's Market decided to remain at the triangle for the season.

On December 8, 2020 City Council approved a proposed donation of a Chimney Swift Tower for Dripping Springs Ranch Park. Eagle Scout applicant Alexander Seshan will be coordinating, constructing and installing the project on the north side of the pond far off from the trail toward the park's property line. Chimney swift towers are only successful if they are in quieter locations that do not get disturbed. Hays County Master Naturalist Connie Boltz assigned to DSRP as its MN coordinator, worked with Sashan to identify an appropriate location.

Christmas tree collection and shredding, a free service for the Dripping Springs Community was relocated from the Triangle location to Dripping Springs Ranch Park and is offered from 12.28.2020 – 1.3.2021.

Founders Memorial Park:



Ranck dedication bench was installed on 12.30.2020. The bench and Mrs. Ranck contribution represent the City's first PCS dedication bench program participant.

Rathgeber Natural Resource Park (Not open to the public)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Contact: Lisa Sullivan
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City of Dripping Springs
512-858-4725

City of Dripping Springs Receives \$5.7 Million Park Land Gift

DRIPPING SPRINGS, TEXAS – December 10, 2020 – The Dripping Springs City Council accepted a Donation Deed of 300 acres of land from Dick Rathgeber and Rathgeber Investment Company, LTD this week. This land is located adjacent to the Headwaters Subdivision and will be dedicated to the City as Rathgeber Natural Resource Park.

The future Rathgeber Natural Resource Park will not only protect 300 acres of pristine Texas Hill Country and the convergence zones of Barton Creek and Little Barton Creek, but it will provide public access to passively recreate, immerse in nature, and explore the Texas Night Sky. With the addition of this land, the City's public parkland increases from 271 to 571 acres.

According to Mayor Bill Foulds, Jr., "The City of Dripping Springs is extremely grateful to Dick Rathgeber for his generosity and incredible contribution to the City's current park system. As Dripping Springs continues to grapple with high rates of growth, access to, as well as conservation and proper management of public land, becomes vitally important to the health of the Texas Hill Country. The Rathgeber Natural Resource Park will not only protect and improve an indispensable piece of Hill Country habitat and watershed, it will also provide the Dripping Springs community with a one-of-a-kind opportunity to experience and learn from this majestic and endangered landscape."

The City of Dripping Springs directed an appraisal of the donated property and the appraisal was for \$5.7 million. The donation deed also contemplates a seasonal Use Agreement of a 66 acres area of the park for the Capital Area Boy Scouts of America Council, Dripping Springs.

Kelly Schmidt, Drippings Springs Parks & Community Services Director, says there's much excitement about the potential for the new park and its varied partners. The park project has already received letters of support from Dripping Springs Independent School District, Destination Dripping Springs, Capital Area Boys Scouts, and Hays County Master Naturalist organizations.

Per Schmidt, "While the Dripping Springs community is the biggest beneficiary of this gift, through the contemplated Use Agreement, the Capital Area Boy Scouts will be able to provide seasonal Boy Scout programs for generations to come. It's exciting to think about the many community connections and improved quality of life experiences the park will serve as catalyst for."

The land is not open to the public at this time. The next step is for the City to facilitate the creation of a master park plan. Schmidt says, “We’re looking forward to these next steps. We’ll be working with stakeholders, community members, and outside firms to ensure that Rathgeber Natural Resource Park will be the best in class and offer much to the Dripping Springs community. This gifted land is a gem and we want to ensure that the master plan protects and manages it to the highest of standards.” According to Schmidt, the plan will be created with the following four guiding principles:

- **Protecting/Improving Water Quality** including all efforts to ensure that the two creeks are kept as pristine as possible as the park is created and used;
- **Nature Education** including educational programming, interpretive signage throughout the park, and a future Natural Resource/Interpretive educational center on site;
- **Conservation** including a long-term land management plan that protects existing flora and fauna, restores disturbed land, and employs on-site dedicated Parks and Community Services staff; and
- **Responsible Outdoor Recreation** including the creation of unobtrusive trails and natural gathering spaces, primitive youth camping & outdoor recreation, and low-impact recreation uses & management/conservation principles so that the parkland is enjoyed through uses that complement the intended goal of a mindful Texas Hill Country nature immersion experience without degradation.

The generous land donation was given by area developer and philanthropist Dick Rathgeber, who believes in the philosophy of giving back to the community. Rathgeber says of the donation, “I’m extremely pleased with the plans that the City of Dripping Springs has for the park because it is about as close to nature as you can get.”

The development of the master plan and the creation of Rathgeber Natural Resource Park will take 2-4 years to complete. Partial funding is expected to come from the Hays County Parks and Open Spaces \$75 Million Bond that was approved by Hays County voters in the last election.

For any questions, please contact communications@cityofdrippingsprings.com or call 512-858-4725.

Sports & Recreation Park

Light project being submitted to International Dark Sky Association for review and certification.

Veterans Memorial Park & Triangle

Nothing to report.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Community Events & Programs – Submitted by: *Maggie Martin, Programs and Events Specialist*



Bird City:

The Bird City application has been completed and submitted for review! Thank you to all the contributors in this successful application! We hope to hear back from the review committee in early January for designation!

Its Time Texas:

This year for It's Time Texas we are so excited to bring the spirit in house! The CODS employees will be working together to train weekly for a DS 5K in February! We will log our points along the way using the new app provided by ITT. We will train virtually and in person (socially distanced) and the 5k will be socially distanced in an outdoor setting. If you are interested in participating email me at mmartin@cityofdrippingsprings.com to sign up!

Keep Dripping Springs Beautiful:

December 22nd, we hosted the Holiday Community Clean Up! We had 25 volunteers come to pick up trash along Highway 290. The volunteers were CODS employees, Chamber employees, kids, school groups and families! We were thrilled to pick up almost 200 pounds of trash. A huge thank you to our community for supporting Keep Dripping Springs Beautiful!



Community Services - Volunteer Program:

Girl Scout Silver- Award contender, Autumn Pape, has finished the Charro Ranch Park restoration project! Her work included: fixing all structural and cosmetic issues, refinishing the exterior, and updating information to make it more inclusive to visitors with language barriers or impairments. The goal of the project was to add lasting value to our parks, which she has met, and the new structure will be appreciated by park visitors for the foreseeable future. Her donated work hours and creative contributions were recognized with a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the Parks and Community Services Department!



Event – Christmas on Mercer:



Christmas on Mercer was a huge win in 2020! We were successfully able to hold the event downtown with half of the normal submission of vendor booths permitted and Covid-19 safety precautions were vetted and employed. The event was well received by the community and businesses were grateful for the opportunity to participate yet again in Christmas on Mercer. As has been the case since inception, the Lions Club is the primary partner with the city in the event and serves as the lead. Over the years the City's Parks and Community Services and

Maintenance departments have been tasked with serving as the City's primary logistics and City-wide event coordinators. This year, the City's Communications Director supported and produced all the event's marketing materials, logos and press releases.



Banner Requests & Co-Sponsorships:

- Christmas On Mercer CoDS 12/1/2020 to 12/7/2020
- Buy Local, Chamber of Commerce 12/1/2020 to 12/7/2020
- Shop Local, CoDS 12/1/2020 to 12/31/2020

Farmers Market – Submitted by: *Laurel Robertson, Market Manager*



On December 9, 2020 Laurel Robertson, Dripping Springs Farmers Market Manager was awarded Texas Recreation and Park Societies' Part-time Employee of the Year Award. She was selected from a group of her Central Texas regional peers and honored for her commitment during the pandemic which shepherded the market's recognition and designation as an essential City service. Other notable contributions include managing the "business" of the market to produce a positive balance in their coughers as well as record attendance with very few markets missed. Awareness and popularity of the market continues to grow monthly.

Marketing, Website, Social Media, Branding & Communications

The PCS department continues to expand their website pages to encompass the resource as a tool to provide the full scope of services within the department's span of responsibility. Currently, the "Community Services" aspect of the department is lacking in web presence and ease of service access. Staff is in the process of creating an easier application process and information dissemination platform.

- Road closure requests
- Itinerant Vendor Permits
- Event Permit for events held on city property and events held within City Limits
- Co-Sponsorship Requests and banners at the triangle requests
- Filming Permit (which tend to be last minute in nature – less than 48hrs notice)