



MERIDIAN PARKS AND RECREATION

ANNUAL REPORT

2020



GET OUTDOORS. BE ACTIVE. PLAY.

LEADING THE WAY



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Meridian is a community committed to quality of life. This commitment has resulted in the City's extensive park and recreation system that offers a wonderful network of 18 regional, community, and neighborhood parks; miles of pedestrian and bike-friendly pathways; recreational facilities; diverse arts and cultural opportunities; year-round enrichment activities; and innovative community events.

Cast a fishing line into a park pond, play a round of disc golf, sign up for a fitness class, join a softball team, take a watercolor lesson, go on a family picnic, grow vegetables in the community garden, or buy fresh vegetables from a local farmer at the Meridian Main Street Market. Meridian Parks & Recreation has a little something for everyone!

In today's world, we can get so busy that it's easy to forget that taking time to enjoy each day is important to our health and wellbeing. Meridian Parks & Recreation is committed to ensuring that our residents have an opportunity to experience outstanding recreational activities and park facilities that help them stay healthy and fit, build relationships with family and friends, and develop a sense of community pride.

This report provides a brief overview of the diverse accomplishments we achieved during 2020 as we adapted to changing circumstances and maintained our laser-focused commitment to "Quality, Community, and Fun."

Enjoy!

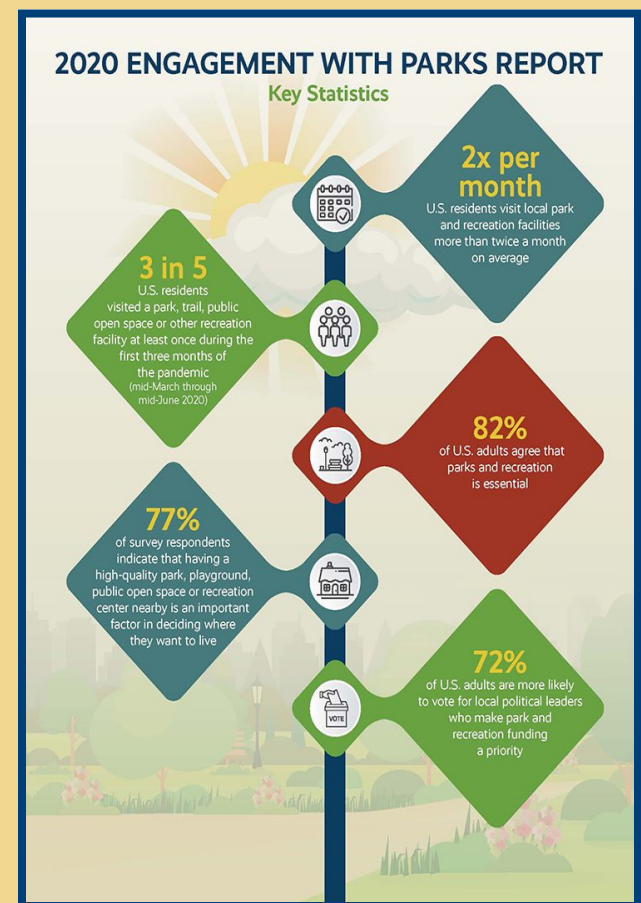
Steve Siddoway

Director, Meridian Parks and Recreation

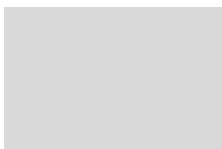
Parks and Recreation: More Important Than Ever

In communities across the country, including Meridian, parks and pathways have seen dramatic increases in use this year as people sought refuge and respite from the COVID-19 pandemic. With public health guidelines recommending staying close to home, urban residents have been using public spaces in unprecedented numbers as places to exercise, be closer to nature, socialize and dine at social distances.

The findings of the National Recreation and Parks Association's *2020 Engagement with Parks Report* confirms the essential value of local parks and recreation, especially in light of the worldwide coronavirus pandemic.



Full Report — <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2020/september/nrpa-engagement-with-parks-report/>



Meridian Parks and Recreation Staff

Director:

Steve Siddoway

Administrative Assistants:

Rachel Myers

Jeannette Sanchez

Vicki Wagner

Recreation Manager:

Garrett White

Recreation Coordinators:

Skyler Cook (Sports)

Maggie Combs (Sports)

Jenna Fletcher (Classes & Camps)

Renee White (Special Events)

Parks Superintendent:

Mike Barton

Parks Maintenance Manager:

Roger Norberg

Year-Round Parks Maintenance Staff:

John Aceves, Jeremy Aldrich, Dave Cereghino, James Christensen, Brad Day, Kevin Gallivan, Phil Harris, Frank Keeney, Wade Maisey, John Meuser, Debbie Miller, Dan White, Kyle Yorita

Parks and Pathways Project Manager:

Kim Warren

Arborist:

Matt Perkins

Arts & Culture Coordinator:

Audrey Belnap

Marketing Coordinator:

Shelly Houston

Volunteer Coordinator:

Chelsea Cantrell

Meridian Homecourt Facility Manager:

Jake Garro

Sports League Site Supervisors:

Ross Cipriano

Ryan Johnson

City Leadership

Mayor of Meridian

Robert Simison

Meridian City Council

Treg Bernt, President

Brad Hoaglun, Vice President

Joe Borton

Luke Cavener

Jessica Perreault

Liz Strader

Meridian Parks and Recreation Commission

Generally meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 5:30 pm at Meridian City Hall. Watch on [youtube.com/cityofmeridian](https://www.youtube.com/cityofmeridian).

Don Gelsomino, President

Jo Greer, Vice President

Keith Bevan

Jennifer Bobo

Camden Hyde (Youth)

Albert Kang

John Nesmith

Autumn Short

Jessica West



Meridian Parks and Recreation

QUALITY

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- A plan is in place and funding has been secured for the **Heroes Park Parking Lot Expansion**. A design has been completed and approved and the project is out to bid. Construction will begin next spring between youth sports seasons.
- A new **pollinator garden** with interpretive panels has been created at Kleiner Park near the community garden. It is filled with a variety of plants and flowers designed to attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.
- Energy-efficient **LED lighting** has been installed at Discovery Park and planning continues on the park's Phase 2. An amenity list and schematic design have been developed with assistance from consultants. Progress also continues on roadway improvement plans to enhance accessibility to the park.
- City Arborist Matt Perkins has begun working on a **Meridian Urban Forest Management Plan** and is designing a **Self-Guided Tree Walk** at Kleiner Park Arboretum. He has added multiple sites to the City's **Tree Plotter Inventory**. He replanted 59 trees, pruned more than 1,225 trees, and removed storm-damaged trees from several parks.
- Work crews installed **new playground surfacing** around the City of Rocks climbing feature at Settler's Park. The durable new bonded rubber soft-fall material replaced the previous flooring which had become worn and weathered over time.
- A new **six-piece outdoor gym** has been installed in Kleiner Park. The new amenity, located near the Meridian Senior Center, was made possible through a participatory budgeting process involving the Mayor's Senior Advisory Council.
- Several **Meridian Homecourt improvements** were made, including the resurfacing of its hardwood floors and baseboards, the replacement of the large curtains used to separate the courts, and a deep cleaning.
- Planning continued for a potential new multi-use **community center and civic block** planned on the site of the current Meridian Community Center in downtown Meridian.
- A donation from Intermountain Pet Hospital funded the springtime installation of new **interactive water spray features** inside Discovery Bark Park's large and small dog areas.
- **New public art pieces** have been installed in City parks — *Illuminations* in Renaissance Park celebrates Renaissance period arts; *Champion's Flame* in Champion Park represents the competitive spirit and references the Olympic flame.



Meridian's Pathway System: A Year of Progress

Meridian's rapidly expanding pathways system continues to improve community connectivity while expanding the range of amenities available to walkers, cyclists and pedestrians.

We were excited to complete the James Court Sidewalk Widening project in fall of 2020, after a years-long effort to obtain multiple easements from adjacent property owners. Located in a densely-populated residential area, the new pathway replaced an existing 5-foot sidewalk with a 10-foot sidewalk, with pedestrian ramps built to current standards. It forged a stronger connection between two existing segments of the Five Mile Creek Pathway: the pathway along the Jackson Drain to the east, and several miles of pathway beginning with the Bud Porter Pathway to the west.

Construction on the City's first-ever trailhead project, the Ten Mile Trailhub, is well under way. Located on the east side of Ten Mile Road at the Five Mile Pathway, the project was catalyzed when ACHD offered a 1.5 acre parcel to the city for development under a permanent license agreement. An entry road, 22-car parking lot, pedestrian bridge crossing of Five Mile Creek, and signaled pedestrian crossing of Ten Mile Road were built in conjunction with the road widening. Since then, the City has added sidewalks, pathways, and concrete pavers. Other additions slated for 2021 include a pedestrian plaza, art installations, and a restroom. Street trees and low-water landscape are contracted for installation next spring. The City envisions this project as a "gateway" to Meridian's pathway system, with the aim to create a stronger identity for the city's pathways and heighten the visibility of our growing system.

The Pine Avenue Rest Stop, located on the south side of Pine Avenue where the Five Mile Pathway crosses to the south, is another recent project which provides users with a small but pleasant rest stop and trailhead-type amenities. New and future features include a drinking fountain, shade trees, seating, a bike repair station, and pathway signage. Staff continues to work with ACHD to transition between the rest stop landscape and an ACHD-led effort involving native plants to enhance the appearance and function of the adjacent stormwater retention basin on this site.

Additional pathway projects in various stages of preparation include the Fairview Avenue Connection, which will add a safer, more defined pathway connection from Five Mile Creek to Lakes Place. Also underway is a small segment of the South Slough Pathway, which will formalize a pedestrian connection from newly developed pathways south of Ustick Road to Locust Grove. Another fast-hitting project that emerged this year was the Whitestone Pathway Connection, near Franklin and Linder. This includes a pedestrian bridge across Ten Mile Creek and a new pathway segment, to enhance safe routes to school and pedestrian connectivity in the area. Work also continues to progress on Meridian's Rail with Trail project, where staff is currently working to obtain easements with the goal of adding a new one-mile pathway segment connecting Meridian Road to Linder.

James Court Project



Pine Avenue Rest Stop



Pathway project development will continue vigorously in FY21 under the leadership of Parks and Pathways Project Coordinator Kim Warren. Fourteen pathway projects have been identified for the new year and kick-off meetings are underway for this batch of infill projects that will fill in missing gaps and strengthen connectivity throughout the system.

COMMUNITY

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Partnering with a variety of local individuals who served as instructors and camp counselors, we were able to offer a full slate of spring and summer **classes and camps** for youth, adults and seniors. These offerings were advertised to the public via our first ever **Virtual Activity Guide**.
- Through efforts of the Meridian Arts Commission, Meridian has ten new **traffic box wraps** created by local artists. More than half were created by West Ada School District students. The Commission is also planning a series of murals on the exterior walls of several Meridian businesses for next year.
- Residents had new options for disposing of fall leaves this year. In collaborations with Republic Services, **leaf collection bins** were placed in 10 Meridian parks during November.
- A life-sized **firefighter-themed bronze statue** by artist Daniel Borup was unveiled at Meridian's new Fire Station #6 in July.
- Using funds raised through the **Holiday Classic Volleyball and Cornhole Tournaments**, our staff provided gifts of clothing and toys to more than 60 pre-schoolers from Meridian's Head Start. 31 volleyball teams and 10 cornhole teams competed.
- On February 14, the public was invited to an **Open House at the Meridian Homecourt** to view its recent renovations, including the new "Bay 5" multi-purpose area.
- The Parks Staff again assisted the local American Legion and VFW in hosting **Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies** at the Rock of Honor. Both of these events were broadcast on Facebook Live for those who wished to view from home.
- The City teamed up with Republic Services to coordinate the annual **Rake Up Meridian** service project. In all, 60 teams of volunteers raked the yards of more than 170 homes.



City of Meridian Enters the Golf Game

On November 9, 2020, Lakeview Golf Club officially came under new ownership and will now be operated and maintained by the City of Meridian. As part of the new agreement, Meridian's Parks and Recreation Department will be responsible for the course's ongoing maintenance.

The land Lakeview Golf Club sits on has been owned by the City of Meridian since 1978, with daily business operations and upkeep managed by a series of local tenants over the years. As its current operator transitioned out of the business, it made sense that Meridian's two recreation agencies -- Western Ada Recreation District and Meridian Parks and Recreation -- partner on this new endeavor. The partnership allows the public course and its assets to be brought into public ownership.

During the next six to nine months, the City of Meridian will work to evaluate the current condition of Lakeview Golf Club and begin to develop a Master Plan for the course. They will be assisted in this effort by experts from the National Golf Foundation, and this planning effort will involve the public, residents and golf members. Along with the new Master Plan, a review of the irrigation system will also occur in the coming months.

Kemper Sports, a third-party golf course management company, will facilitate full management of the golf club and its operations for a six-month period.

Kemper Sports specializes in golf course management and will provide Lakeview Golf Club with a comprehensive range of management services and consulting expertise that will help assure the property operates at its highest potential during the transition and beyond.

On November 18th the City hosted a Virtual Meridian Town Hall Meeting to discuss next steps in the transition process. City leaders, Parks and Recreation staff and representatives from Kemper Sports were on hand to answer questions from the public.

During the meeting Meridian Parks Superintendent Mike Barton explained, "This golf course has been a community treasure for more than 40 years. We're excited to expand on the goodwill and great golf experience it provides our citizens. Through this new collaboration, we're confident the course has a bright future ahead."

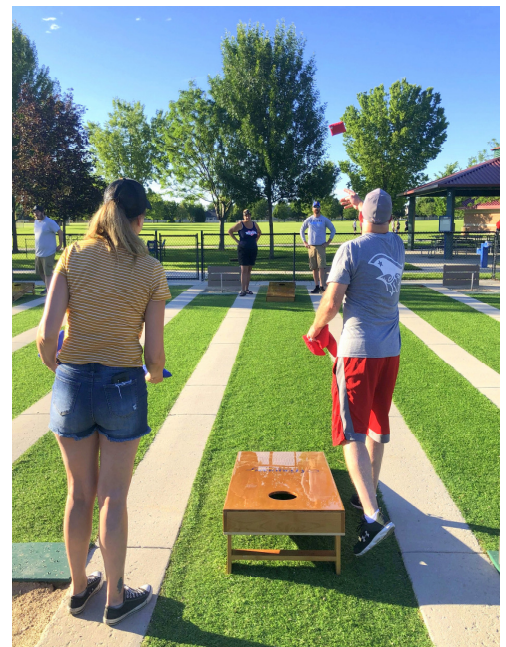
Lakeview Golf Club is an 18-hole Par 72 golf course with 6,521 yards of playing area. It hosts approximately 32,000 rounds of golf per year and features a driving range, pro shop, cart rentals, men's and women's golf associations, junior golf programs, golf lessons and packages, full food and beverage services, and space for special events and programs. Its website is lakeview-golf.com.



Lakeview Golf Club is located at 4200 W. Talamore Boulevard in northwest Meridian

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

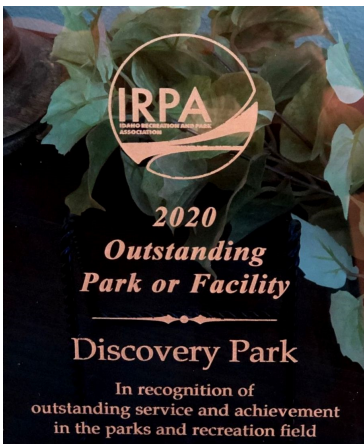
- The **Meridian Main Street Market** was able to hold a successful market season which ran each Saturday from May 23 through October 17.
- Meridian Parks and Recreation hosted its first virtual sports challenge — the **2020 Meridian Challenge**. Participants were challenged to see how many miles they could walk, run, swim or cycle without leaving Meridian.
- Our recreation directors hosted a number of Covid-conscious **sports leagues and tournaments** throughout the year, including both indoor and outdoor cornhole tournaments and two disc golf tournaments.
- **Meridian Art Week** took place September 9—12. The public celebrated by attending free in-person and virtual arts and culture workshops, competing in an at-home chalk art competition, and taking part in the popular annual Meridian Art Drop peer-to-peer art exchange in downtown Meridian.
- In September, we encouraged families to have fun at home by taking part in **The Amazing Meridian Backyard Campout**. We provided a printable booklet online filled with songs, games, campfire stories and recipes ideal for a backyard or living room campout.
- Families competed for top honors in three categories during the **Fall for Meridian Door Decorating Contest**. Cash prizes were awarded for Most Elegant, Most Playful, and Best Halloween Theme, based on self-submitted photos reviewed by a panel of judges.
- Another new event we hosted in 2020 was an **Autumn Scavenger Hunt** where families were challenged to “Find, Spot, and Do” a variety of fall-themed items. From among the families that submitted a completed challenge checklist, one was chosen at random to receive a pizza party prize.



Accolades, Awards & Retirements

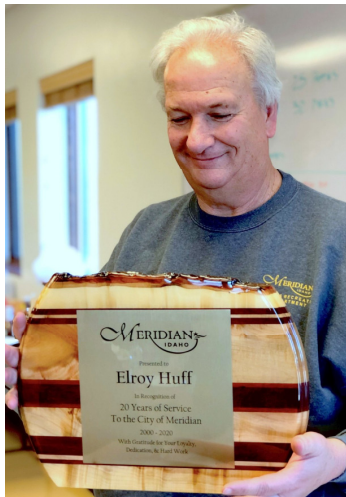


Parks and Recreation Maintenance Crew Chief Phil Harris (gray shirt) was presented by Mayor Simison with a prestigious *Meridian Way Coin* which recognizes outstanding work performance and adherence to the City of Meridian's CARE values. He is pictured with (l to r) Mayor Robert Simison, Parks Director Steve Siddoway, and Parks Maintenance Manager Roger Norberg.



During the Annual Conference of the Idaho Recreation and Parks Association, Meridian's Discovery Park was presented with the group's 2020 Outstanding Park or Facility Award.

February marked the retirement of City Arborist Elroy Huff who retired after 20 years of service to the City of Meridian. He was honored with a reception and presented with a wooden plaque made from wood salvaged from a tree in Centennial Park.



Long-Serving Parks Commissioner Retires with Honors



After twenty consecutive years of service to the City as a member of the volunteer Meridian Parks and Recreation Commission, Creg Steele retired from his position. His departure was celebrated at a meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission as well as at a Meridian City Council meeting.

During the year, Creg was presented with the *Meridian Mayor's Legacy Award* and with a *Citation of Merit for an Outstanding Individual* by the Idaho Recreation and Parks Association.

In addition to his service as a Parks Commissioner, Creg served the City on its Golf Course Advisory Committee, Downtown Revitalization Committee, and Pathways Committee. In the community, he has served as a volunteer coach for youth athletics. For several years, he participated in the Friends of Meridian Parks organization, raising funds for needed park projects.

Creg's favorite projects over the years have involved his work on Settlers Park and Kleiner Park, because of the wide variety of amenities they include and the wonderful assets they have become for our city. When asked why he served the City as a volunteer for so long, Creg replied, "It's for the kids!"

He remains extremely committed to preserving future park space in our community; developing quality neighborhood, community and regional parks; and enhancing the connectivity of our city's pathway system.



Meridian Named to *Best Places to Live* List

Money Best Places to Live 2020

50 Best Places

Get to Know Our No. 1: Evans, Georgia



City of Meridian

No. 3

Meridian, Idaho

In *Money Magazine's* October 2020 issue, Meridian was featured as the third best place to live in America. The rankings are based on factors including the economy, employment opportunities, housing supply, quality of schools, cost of living, and access to recreation.

Using a photo taken at a Meridian Community Block Party, *Money* touted Meridian's high quality of life, its abundance of parks, and easy access to recreational opportunities.

You can view The Best Places to Live in America list at: <https://money.com/collection/best-places-to-live-2020/>

How Meridian Parks and Recreation Saved Christmas! *(See photos on next page...)*

Of all the changes and adaptations our department made this year in response to the pandemic, the ones we are perhaps most proud of involved innovations in our annual *Christmas in Meridian* celebration.

With a lot creativity and a can-do attitude, we developed a full menu of activities families and children could safely enjoy.

Our Santa's Mailbox program took place as usual, with staff members rather than volunteers responding to the more than 1,300 letters we received. The Downtown Business Decorating Contest continued as usual, too!

Our Christmas Tree Lighting in Generations Plaza became a virtual Facebook Live event. And our Children's Winterland Festival was replaced by the Winterland in the Bag drive-by event where grab bags filled with craft kits, games and other treats were handed out to 500 children.

New this year were our Zoom with Santa program where children could enjoy virtual chats with Santa, and the Meridian Ornament Drop which put a holiday twist on the Meridian Art Drop concept. We also created an interactive Community Christmas Lights Map to highlight highly decorated homes.

Photos Clockwise:

Santa's Mailbox

Zoom with Santa

*Virtual Christmas
Tree Lighting*

*Meridian Ornament
Droop*

*Winterland in the
Bag Giveaway*

*Downtown Business
Decorating Contest*



Photos Left:

We also made time for charitable giving, purchasing gifts of clothing and toys for more than 60 local Head Start pre-schoolers and collecting a truckful of donated new toys through the Salvation Army's Angel Tree Program.



This Annual Report is published by
Meridian Parks and Recreation

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