

Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

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“Keeping the City Parks Green”



Parks are a city's most valuable green space. To keep it green and lush this summer and fall has been a challenge.

“You water what you can and you hope what isn't watered will go dormant and survive until next spring,” said Pat Mrsny, City of Norfolk Park Superintendent.

There are underground sprinkler systems in parts of Liberty Bell Park, all of Veterans Memorial Park, the Ta-Ha-Zouka Park sports fields and the green space at

7th and Norfolk, 5th and Braasch, and First and Norfolk Avenue. The US Bank space and other city owned areas along 13th Street and around the library, the roundabouts, auditorium and police department are all watered automatically.

Most of the non-watered grass that has stayed green has been in shaded areas like those found in Central Park and Johnson Park. Grass also stayed healthy around the water soaked areas at Skyview Lake. With all of the automated watering systems there was enough grass growth that the city's lawn mowers were kept busy most of the summer.

There are grassy sections of the park system that weren't able to be watered and have turned brown, like west Ta-Ha-Zouka Park where there wasn't enough rain to keep it growing and green.

“We take care of a lot of sprinkler systems and we spend considerable time and effort keeping them working properly. There will be some non-irrigated areas that we probably will have to re-seed as we expect some of that grass will not come back but most of it will,” Mrsny said.

Park maintenance workers kept the flowers in city areas watered and blooming all summer. There are watering hoses in Johnson and Ta-Ha-Zouka Park but some of the flower beds in the roundabouts and at Skyview Park had to have water hauled to them by way of a watering truck. Keeping everything alive and blooming was quite the job with weeks of hot weather, wind and no moisture from rain.

"We haul water to water the downtown flower pots and beds and the flower beds and young trees throughout the parks. We spent more time this season hand watering these flowers, shrubs and trees than any time in the past that I can remember," Mrsny said.

Newly planted trees at Veteran's Memorial Park need ample watering until their roots are established. Even the larger trees have to be watered this summer.

"We try to water all the younger trees that we can. I know we have lost some very mature trees this season and the dry conditions played a part in that. Usually these mature trees can handle a good amount of dryness but if the tree has some other issues which in itself wouldn't kill a tree, the added stress of a very dry season could be the factor that helped push the tree over the edge," Mrsny said.

As workers drag hoses and set sprinklers around vulnerable perennial plants and small trees, they know there's no real substitute for what's needed most. A good rain.