



Presented January 4, 2016

## Town Council Report for December 2015 Parks and Recreation Activity Highlights:

### *Park Programming*

- *Zions Nature Center (ZNC)*: During the month of December and even with the Holidays, we still had 781 visitors to our Center and participants in our programs (at various locations in the park system and community). Two-hundred and thirty-one of these (231) were unscheduled walk-ins to our Zionsville Nature Center. As per our practice, we try and offer drop-in visitors staff-led impromptu programs and our Park Naturalist and her Part-Time Staff interacted with 54 of those visitors in this manner; the remaining walk-in visitors just enjoyed the exhibits/animals and unstructured conversations with our Park Naturalist and/or our part-time ZNC staff.

Final 2015 figures are still being compiled and cross-checked and will appear in the annual Park Department report, but it appears in our first full year of operation with our new Park Naturalist (after the 2014 retirement of our previous full-time person at the Zion Nature Center) our participation numbers appear to be back at, or perhaps even slightly above the 2013 and earlier levels. They certainly have not significantly dropped in any case. The comparison is complicated a bit as our professionally trained and certified new staff person found that it appeared the previous attendance documentation system used by the center staff and volunteers had the effect of somewhat inflating the yearly participation reports we had been receiving from them.

### *Additional Programming, Partnerships, Other Events in the Parks, etc.:*

- *Lake and River Enhancement Grant (LARE)*: The Zionsville Board of Park and Recreation has decided to submit *another* grant request to the State for this critical 80%/20% reimbursement grant. The submission deadline is the end of January, and if we are fortunate the Town could receive their second grant from this source. Scientific studies, funded primarily from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), had indicated nearly 90 triaxles of soil/sediment a year are falling into Eagle Creek each and every year from our Starkey Park bank-side. This has been primarily in for highly eroding areas and our first \$100,000 grant addressed one of the worst of these (600 feet of 10 foot + high eroded bank). While it is very competitive (over 30 applications the last time we participated), we have high hopes for another grant in the \$80,000 to \$100,000 range depending on what we identify as specific area this next couple of weeks.

### *Other Highlighted Parks Matters*

- *High Water Event on Dec 26 -28*: Heavy rains caused Eagle Creek and other streams to reach the tops of their banks and in some isolated cases overtopped the banks. As is almost always the case due to the floodplain nature of several of our parks and the Zionsville Golf Course (ZGC), there were moderate floodwaters across some of these lower areas. As is often the case at ZGC, the high waters from the stream backed up onto the course. This happens almost every time the stream, reaches even a "bank-full" or pre-flood condition. However only in the very highest floods does the water actually impact the pro-shop building or the maintenance shop, and such has only happened twice since the course has been under public ownership. So as is usual, the only impact was to the course itself and was not building or equipment related. Since it was winter, the vast majority of our carts were already stored for the off-season on high ground. In addition, our staff had pre-moved other equipment pieces and even some pro-shop materials into areas that would make them at least less vulnerable. Fortunately those additional efforts proved to be not needed. Some ZGC staff also occasionally checked on the waters. In addition, the Department's director was on hand in several parks and at various points during the floodwaters' rise to get a feel as to if other measures were needed.