

# PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

To the Citizens, the Select Board, and the Town Manager:



The start of last year had many community members still reeling from the flood of December 2023. It was the same for the Recreation Department. Our ice rink liner floated away with other things, and Hippach Field was left with a lot of debris from being under 10 feet of water. Equipment was ruined, scoreboards permanently damaged, and the Howard Hippach field house needed major repairs. JCS Carpentry worked to restore this historic building to its former self. The entire deck, floors, most interior walls, insulation, lattice work was damaged or missing, and the list went on. We are thankful for our staff who worked diligently, assessing the damage and cleaning things up. We are grateful to the many volunteers who assisted and other Town departments that jumped in and helped.

Due to this catastrophic event, we worked hand in hand with FEMA, contractors, and others, replacing or repairing for the majority of the year. The grounds at Hippach Field were reseeded, fertilized, new field silt was brought in, and a Nevco scoreboard installed. There was extensive electrical damage to be dealt with at every building and court. The pool deck, filters, pump lines, and system were replaced. We were thankful to still hold swimming lessons there this summer, along with several mini sports camps, and be the home field for over eleven baseball teams.

Although the flood affected some programs and kept them from being held, we implemented several new ones, and successfully carried out 49 programs reaching community members ranging in age from infants through seniors. This provided over 52,100 hours of community participation in our programming and events. These numbers do not include drop-in use for recreation, outside organizations utilizing our facilities to provide additional opportunities for our community, or the many reservations at Walton's Mill Park. Involvement in recreational activities and events has a proven positive impact on our mental, physical, emotional, and social health and wellness.

We are grateful for the Bjorn donation we received in 2021 that we have been using for park masterplans and matching grant funds. This year we used \$10,000 to help convert Philbrick Park Field and the Little League Field at Hippach to 50' x 70' softball and baseball fields. In addition, six portable mounds were purchased to allow diversity of play.

The Parks and Recreation Department continues to partner with the RSU #9 Food Pantry and Anita's Hope Backpack program. The Food Pantry serves an average of 90 families each month, while the backpack program provides for an average of 150 children twice a month. They are a blessing in this community and both wonderful partners.

Former director, Matthew Foster, resigned in October to take a supervisor position with the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands ATV Program. We wish him the best and are thankful to have had his leadership for almost 14 years. His goal was to make "Farmington the healthiest and happiest community in Maine" and it continues to be this department's goal. Our staff assist in this daily and our success is due to our employees who are dedicated to serving the community.

A special thank you to Cameron McAllister, who directs several of our youth sports leagues, working with hundreds of children; to Emily O'Donnell, who continues to keep Farmington's flowers blooming; and to Charity Sargood, for her endless knowledge of all the grounds and buildings. These three and our seasonal employees are truly the backbone behind our work. It is our privilege to serve the people of Farmington.

For more information, please give us a call, email us, stop in, check out our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/farmingtonrec](https://www.facebook.com/farmingtonrec) or sign up for a program at <https://farmingtonme.myrec.com>

Respectfully Submitted,

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Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation