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Longmont's Dry Creek Park not ready for prime time

So grass can take root, park will open in spring 2013

By **Victoria A.F. Camron** Longmont Times-Call
Posted: 04/02/2012 12:41:27 AM MDT
Updated: 04/02/2012 01:01:30 AM MDT

LONGMONT--
The first phase of Dry Creek Community Park is nearly finished, but it will be another year before the park opens to the public.

"We've got to establish all the turf," said Paula Fitzgerald, Longmont's parks and open space manager.

The park, at Clover Basin and Grandview Meadows drives, will include a playground, picnic areas, multipurpose fields and a cricket pitch.

A cricket pitch?

That request came from the public when the park was being designed, Fitzgerald said.

"Who would think Longmont's a big cricket area, but it is," she said.

Arun Tholudur, a Longmont resident who belongs to the Coal Creek Cricket Club, said the two local cricket clubs, with three teams each, likely will use the cricket pitch every weekend from mid-April to mid-September after the park opens next year.

The teams' current field at Garden Acres Park isn't adequate, he said.

"The field is not big enough, but we're making do with it," Tholudur said.

When Dry Creek park is available, he would like to partner with the area schools to teach students about cricket. Eagle Crest and Blue Mountain elementary schools, Altona Middle School and Silver Creek High School all are a short walk from the park.

"My hope is I can conduct some coaching clinics," Tholudur said.

Another feature of the park will be an 18-hole disc golf course, another request that came forward during public discussions, she said.

The one-year wait is important, Fitzgerald emphasized, so the city doesn't have to reseed the park in another year. Grass on sports fields, in particular, needs time to develop deeper roots, she said.

To help deter people from using the park prematurely, barricades will block the parking lot, the



American Civil Constructors laborer Enrique Ascevedo works on sprinklers for Dry Creek Community Park's irrigation system on Wednesday. (Matthew Jonas)





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playground equipment will be wrapped in plastic, and a lot of fencing will be installed, said Jim Overlin, project supervisor for American Civil Constructors.

This week, employees installed irrigation heads.

When pipes were put in earlier, the employees marked their locations with GPS, Overlin said.

After the workers filled the fields with a mix of sand, compost and fertilizer, they used the GPS markings to find the pipes, then marked with posts where to dig to access the pipes again.

Overlin wanted those posts to be accurate within five feet.

Pointing to one pipe, an obviously pleased Overlin remarked, "It looks about an inch off to me."

The playground, on the southeast side of the park, will meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards with a poured rubber surface.

"You can take a wheelchair across it," Overlin said.

Although the equipment is in place, swings won't be installed until the park is ready to open, to reduce the temptation.

But it's too late for any children to be the first on the slide.



American Civil Constructors superintendent Al Lagunas and foreman Rene Juarez dig for irrigation heads at Dry Creek Community Park. The company used GPS to mark and locate pipes for sprinkler heads. (Matthew Jonas)

"Anytime we install a playground, I'm the first one down the slide," Overlin said.

'A small city'

The first phase of Dry Creek Community Park is budgeted at \$3 million, Fitzgerald said.

"Building a community park is a lot like building a small city," Fitzgerald said, explaining that a lot of the expense comes from what you can't see, such as irrigation and plumbing.

For the first 12 years of Fitzgerald's 18-year career with the city, the

parks department focused on creating neighborhood parks, which cost about \$1 million.

After building three phases of Sandstone Ranch Park on the city's southeast side, the parks department decided to start on Dry Creek Community Park, Fitzgerald said. The city really needs more of the multi-use fields for soccer, lacrosse, football and rugby that it will include.

"We're really, really short of that," Fitzgerald said.

The second phase of Dry Creek Park will include the building of an outdoor swimming pool south of the parking lot, she said. The pool is expected to cost \$6.5 million, she said.

The long-range plan for the park includes a recreation center on the southeast corner, something that would require the city to issue bonds to build.

Fitzgerald can't even say when the next phase will be built, because money for park improvements comes from building permits. When construction is down, as it has been for the past few years, little money goes into the fund, she said.

"You can't spend more than you've got," Fitzgerald said.

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MikeRochip · 1 week ago

Meanwhile, the hundreds of people that use the dog park everyday are thankful for the drainage pond with a fence the city gave us.

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1 reply · active 1 week ago

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thetruthhurts12 · 1 week ago

totally agree MikeRochip. Why don't we have a dog park on par with the Great Bark Park in LaFayette, or the dog parks in Louisville or the fabulous dog park in Fort Collins off of horsetooth. The airport rd dog park is an after thought of the parks department...at best.

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