

STAFF REPORT

October 16, 2014

TO: Recreation and Park Commission

FROM: Christine Helweg, Parks & Community Services Superintendent

SUBJECT: Quarterly Update on Slackline Pilot Program - Nine Month Review

4-Month Review Summary

Per the City Council Slackline pilot program approval, the three slackline designated areas, Oak Grove Park, Covell Park and Greenbelt, were inspected on April 1, 2014 by Rob Cain, Urban Forest Manager and David Luckscheider, Parks & Open Space Manager. All the 12-inch diameter and greater trees within each area were visually inspected for any damage from slackline usage. The inspection found no visible tree damage from slackline usage. The only suspect wear was on two Redwood trees at the Covell Greenbelt site. The bark appeared to be scuffed in locations at heights equal to a line connection point. It could not be determined if this was from a slackline or from other causes such as squirrel damage. These trees will continue to be monitored closely as the weather improves and area usage increases.

The greenbelt area north of Catalina Drive and east of Anderson was also inspected. This was a follow up inspection from a report the City received about a slackline being used in this unauthorized area. The report was made on March 12, 2014 and the trees were inspected by Rob Cain on March 13, 2014. The photos below show the strapping marks on one of the London Plane trees. The bark was not torn, but damage could have been caused. This area will be monitored during the spring and summer for any further use.



Covell Greenbelt



Strap marks on London Plane

Overall, the designated areas have not seen any detrimental effects from the Slackline Pilot Program. With the weather improving, the areas will be watched for increased usage and possible tree damage. No further action was recommended at that time and the sites are continuing to be monitored during the pilot period.

9-Month Review

There continues to be no visible signs of damage or trauma to any of the trees in the three approved pilot sites. All sites appear to be used for slacklining activities, with the majority of the users having the appropriate protective equipment.

The main issue that City staff is still experiencing is resulting from slackliners who are using unapproved sites such as Central and Community Parks. During the summer months, Parks & Community Services Superintendent did have to approach slackliners on five separate occasions at Central Park to inform them about the City's policy and approved practices for slacklining in City spaces. On one of these occasions, the user did not have any protective equipment for the tree and had secured a strap directly around the tree. To date, there are a few minor areas of tree damage in Central Park, but nothing to significant or unrepairable.

For the most part, the slacklining individuals have been appreciative of the information provided to them by Parks staff, and have removed their equipment voluntarily.

Additional publicity about the pilot program and the City's requirements for protection of tree and park users was once again distributed in August. Information was distributed through the City's various Facebook pages, the City's web site, the Davis Enterprise and other local print media, and was also picked up locally by Channel 13. Following the article that appeared in the Davis Enterprise, Superintendent Helweg did receive an email correspondence from R. McAdam expressing some concerns about the Village Homes area. Superintendent Helweg provided Mr. McAdam with the link to the City's pilot program for slacklining and encouraged Mr. McAdam to contact the Davis Police Department if the problem should re-occur.

We are not aware of any other communications received by City staff related to the slacklining program to date.

Attachment

Email correspondence from R. McAdam – August 14, 2014

Christine Helweg

From: Richard McAdam [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 14, 2014 2:15 PM
To: Christine Helweg
Subject: slacklining at V.H. green

Christine Helweg,
I read with interest the article in Tuesday's Enterprise about slacklines. We are having trouble with slackliners on the Village Homes green. Some use drugs and alcohol and don't protect the trees. They are abusive and aggressive when asked to leave.

Do you have rules for slackliners at the three city parks? If you do how are they enforced? Can we call the police when our park is being abused? If the city does have rules please forward them to me and print them in the Enterprise.

Thanks for your help,
Richard McAdam