

Wilmette Park District Announces 2025 Lakefront Operations Plan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 21, 2025

Wilmette, IL – The Wilmette Park District is pleased to announce its 2025 Lakefront Operations Plan, incorporating key enhancements in accessibility, pricing, environmental conservation, and visitor experience at South Beach and other Wilmette lakefront areas. These updates reflect an ongoing commitment to balancing community needs with responsible beach and dune management.

"Our goal is to create an inclusive, accessible, and well-maintained lakefront that welcomes all visitors while preserving our natural landscapes," said Dave Merrill, Superintendent of Recreation at Wilmette Park District. "This year's operational updates stem from thorough community engagement, data collection, and valuable input from lakefront staff and the Board of Park Commissioners."

Key Changes for the 2025 Season:

Operational Hours & Beach Access: All Wilmette beaches (Main, South, and Langdon) will be open from 10 AM to 8 PM, aligning with other North Shore beaches and increasing staff presence. ADA-accessible entrances and additional beach wheelchairs will improve inclusivity.

Refined Pricing & Discounts: Beach access fees remain unchanged from 2024, with resident-rate pricing for non-resident guests, discount days, and library-based passes.

Sustainability & Dune Preservation: A post & rope system and strategic wooden fencing will help protect fragile dune habitats while maintaining public access.

Expanded Amenities: The introduction of The Cove—a non-swimming zone for non-motorized watercraft—and additional seating and access enhancements will improve the visitor experience.

The Cove & Dog Beach: The southernmost section of Gillson Lakefront will be divided into two areas: The Dog Beach, designated for off-leash dogs, and The Cove, a designated launch area for non-motorized watercraft.

**WILMETTE
PARK DISTRICT**

1200 WILMETTE AVE.
WILMETTE, IL 60091
847.256.6100



PRESS RELEASE

Commitment to Community Engagement:

In response to community feedback collected throughout 2024, the Park District conducted focus groups led by Public Communications Inc. (PCI) to understand resident concerns and expectations better. The resulting data has helped shape an operational plan that balances safety, visitor access, and environmental responsibility.

"We heard our community's feedback loud and clear," said Megan White, Lakefront General Manager. "By making thoughtful adjustments to our access policies, pricing structure, and conservation efforts, we are ensuring that Wilmette's lakefront remains a treasured space for years to come."

More Information:

For a full breakdown of the 2025 Lakefront Operations Plan, including detailed maps, procedure updates, and renderings of planned enhancements, visit our project page at wilpark.org/SouthBeachOperations.

WILMETTE PARK DISTRICT

1200 WILMETTE AVE.
WILMETTE, IL 60091
847.256.6100

