

# Milwaukee County Exec. Abele: Appoints Guy Smith to lead parks

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*Smith, a 14-year veteran of Milwaukee County Parks, has been serving as interim director; brings leadership, experience and passion to the County*

MILWAUKEE, Thursday, June 7, 2018 – Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele has appointed Guy Smith to head the County Parks department, the County announced today. With 14 years of experience at Parks and a career in natural resource management, Smith will lead the Parks department forward with knowledge, experience and ideas.

“Guy Smith has already stepped up to lead our Parks department on an interim basis, and it’s become clear that he’s the right person for this job,” said Abele. “He has a passion for creating outdoor spaces that are beautiful, educational and fun, and his willingness to serve the County is undeniable.

“Guy has been recognized for his strong capacity for leadership, and anyone who’s met him knows he’s truly an outdoor enthusiast. He has a deep respect for nature, a desire to bring people together through the outdoors and a vision for making our Milwaukee County Parks the best in the nation. We are fortunate to have his talents on our team, and I’m excited to see where he can lead Parks,” he added.

Smith currently serves as interim director at Parks. He joined the department in 2004, starting as trails coordinator. He quickly grew to into supervision and management and transitioned to several roles within the department, including deputy regional manager of land resources and chief of operations. He is currently

serving in his second of two periods as interim director, the first taking place in 2017.

“Guy Smith has a tremendous dedication to our Parks department, and I am excited to see him step into this role,” said Milwaukee County Supervisor Jason Haas, chairman of the Parks, Energy and Environment Committee. “Guy is someone we can collaborate with to ensure our Parks continue to enhance the quality of life for everyone in Milwaukee County.”

Smith began his career as a park ranger with Dane County Parks while attending college at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he graduated with a degree in Natural Resource Management. He then served as a facility manager with the U.S. Forest Service in both Kentucky and Tennessee.

He has served on multiple boards, committees and professional organizations during his career including: more than 10 years as a board member of Groundwork Milwaukee; as a regular conference presenter and board member of the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association (WPRA); and as an active Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) with the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). He earned Project Management Certificates from MATC in 2011 and is a 2017 graduate of the WPRA’s Leadership Academy.

Smith has been awarded several distinguished awards in the field including the MATC Lamp of Knowledge Award, the Public Policy Forum’s Norman N. Gill Award for Individual Excellence Leader of the Future Award and the WPRA Park Section’s Young Professional of the Year Award.

Abele also expressed his appreciation to the Parks leadership team, including Jen Francis, Jim Tarantino, Eddie Santiago and Sarah Toomsen, and all Parks staff for their continued dedication to the mission of Parks and the County.

Smith’s appointment is subject to confirmation by the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors.