

## Disc Golf @ Creaser Park

The Town of Coventry Parks & Recreation Department is installing Phase 1 of an 18-hole disc golf course in Creaser Park. Phase 1 includes holes 1-9 and a practice hole and is the easier, more family friendly portion of the course, mainly on flat lands starting in the general area of the main entrance and parking area. The back 9 (Phase Two) will be more difficult as it is mostly along the trails deep in the wooded areas of the park. .

**The project was included in the 2015 Capital Improvement Plan, with LOCIP as the funding source, proposed by the Coventry Parks & Recreation Department. It was approved at Town Meeting by the taxpayers that spring.**

Prior to investing further effort in this project, so we made the decision to wait until the DEEP lease which expired in Nov. 2017. **The lease was renewed in April of 2018. We received permission from CT DEEP in May of 2018 to move forward with the design stage**

We engaged the services of Disc Gold Professional designer Karl Molitoris, a champion disc golfer and course designer, who most recently designed the Nichols Field course in East Haddam. He had been advising us since July of 2016 when our student intern Leah Whitaker initiated the project's research phase. The High School Cross Country Coach was consulted in August and their route was factored into the design.

**Town Council discussed the project on Oct 1, 2018. Recreation Commission approved the final design at the October 11, 2018 meeting.**

On Thursday, Nov. 29<sup>th</sup> DPW leadership met with the Recreation Director and the course designer on site to begin to discuss installation requirements, with plans for DW to assist when available over the winter if conditions allow. Our goal is to have at least 3 baskets & tees installed by the spring which will allow us to evaluate the construction proves and results before we continue with the other holes.

The following is a basic summary of our plan:



The installation of an 18-hole disc golf course at Creaser would include the construction of tees and the installation of signs and baskets. A few tree branches may need to be trimmed or removed near a few tees and baskets, especially near eye level range.

**Tees:** Each hole would have one tee. The tees would be made of crushed gravel. On a few of the proposed holes, existing asphalt pathways could be marked with paint and used for tees. On the rest, gravel tees 4" thick measuring approximately 5' x12' would be built flush with the ground. We estimate that a maximum of 18 tees of this size would be required.

**Baskets:** Each playable hole would have a basket mounted on a pipe that slides inside an anchor pipe that gets cemented into a hole measuring approximately 8" in diameter and 18-24" The basket pipe and anchor pipe each have collar tabs that line up and are securely locked with a padlock.



**Signs:** Tee signs are very important to help first time users find their way through the course. Each hole would have a sign indicating the number, length, recommended flight path and par. In addition, a rules sign and information board should be installed before the first hole. The signs can be constructed with a variety of materials although we believe it would be preferable to construct signs with a natural appearance to fit in with the surrounding area. Commercial signs designed for disc golf are also available from several sources.



**Maintenance:** After installation, the maintenance needs for a disc golf course are primarily grass mowing. Unlike weekly mowing usually required for ball fields, mowing for disc golf can be minimal or close to none at all. The targets are made of welded steel anchored in concrete and need no regular maintenance. In the unlikely event that one of the targets is damaged beyond repair or stolen, they can be replaced for around \$350. Much of the area of the proposed course is underutilized and not highly maintained. Under the proper supervision of the town staff, Scout groups and volunteers would be eager to undertake an initial cleanup of these areas and then maintain them as trash-free zones. With 2-3 anchor placements per hole, wear and tear on any one area is reduced. Walking pathways used by players may need occasional maintenance to prevent erosion and soil compacting.

**Design:** An 18-hole course would cover approximately 20-30 acres (Creaser Park has 57 acres), depending on design. The rough rule of thumb for total space needed is about one acre per hole. A significant advantage of disc golf is its ability to utilize areas that are not very desirable or usable for other activities such as woods choked with non-native foliage, rocky areas and slopes. In addition, a disc golf course need not be an exclusive use area – it can co-exist amicably with other active and passive recreation uses such as hiking, dog-walking, etc. Finally, the relative portability of baskets and signs allows the park department to inexpensively relocate the course to another site as the needs of the park dictate.

**Safety:** A disc golf course at Creaser would increase foot traffic in the Park at random times during the day and steadily during evenings and weekends. The influx of purposeful visitors would discourage the presence of individuals who are only in the park to cause mischief and perhaps engage in crime since Creaser Park is in a remote setting. Areas that are infrequently used and considered unsafe would be "opened-up" by the course.

**Conservation:** Disc golf can be an environment-friendly sport. Unlike traditional golf, a disc golf course may not require trees to be removed; grass mowed and watered daily, plants uprooted or non-native species planted. Many courses can be designed to fit into the existing flora of the park like Creaser. The impact of a disc golf course on the surrounding area is minimal. Each hole has multiple pin placements, ensuring that no one area gets constant foot traffic (this has the added benefit of providing new challenges to players). In addition, disc golfers overall tend to take great pride in where they play, helping reduce potential litter on the course. In the long-term, a disc golf course would also help in the preservation of the park by giving young people in the neighborhood a stake in its preservation and protection.

**Recreational Needs:** A disc golf course would provide an inexpensive form of recreation for people of all age and skill levels and be a much needed addition to the recreational facilities at Creaser Park. Disc skills, and in particular disc golf, have been incorporated into nearby town athletic curriculums. Unfortunately, there is currently no disc golf course in Coventry in which physical education staff can teach basic disc golf skills. Given the high density of middle and high schools in the general vicinity of the park, the installation of a disc golf course would provide an important recreational resource for the schools surrounding the park, as well as for the wider community. The Parks & Recreation

Department will be able to facilitate groups interested in organizing clinics, youth and adult leagues, and tournaments. For the growing number of disc golfers in Coventry, the presence of a disc golf course in the town limits would obviate the need to travel to play and would give them a base from which to further promote the sport.

### **Disc Golf Facts**

There are now just over 5000 Disc Golf courses in the United States and Canada according to PDGA.org. Nearly all installed by city and county parks departments. They have found that there are few recreational activities that offer the high benefit-to-cost ratio of disc golf. Disc golf has relatively low capital and maintenance costs compared with other recreational installations, is environmentally sound, is played year-round in all climates and is enjoyed immediately even by beginners of all ages.

Disc Golf is played much like traditional golf. Instead of hitting a ball into a hole, you throw a more streamlined looking Frisbee® disc into a supported metal basket. The goal is the same: to complete the course in the fewest number of shots. A golf disc is thrown from a tee area to each basket, which is the "hole." As players progress down the fairway, they must make each consecutive shot from the spot where the previous throw has landed. The trees, shrubs and terrain changes in and around the fairways provide challenging obstacles for the golfer. Finally, the "putt" lands in the basket and the hole is completed.

Disc Golf is an activity that everyone can play. In studies measuring participation in recreational activities, "throwing a Frisbee" has consistently been a top-ten activity. A disc golf course serves a broader portion of the community than many narrower interest activities with higher cost, skill or fitness levels required to even begin to play. Men and women, young and old, families with small children – all can play disc golf. Because disc golf is so easy to understand and enjoy, no one is excluded. Players merely match their pace to their capabilities and proceed from there.

Many courses are located in city or regional parks where citizens play free. Most private and several public facilities will charge up to \$5 per day to play, or earn passive income from annual passes and/or fees to enter the park. The equipment itself is quite inexpensive – discs designed for golf sell for \$8-\$15 each and only one is needed to get started.