

What's Up, College Station? Transcript

Season 4, Episode 43

Grace Hollowell: What's up, College Station? I'm Grace Hollowell, and today I'm joined once again by Jeep Wentsch, the recreation supervisor from our Parks and Recreation department. Hi, Jeep.

Jeep Wentsch: Hi, Grace.

Grace Hollowell: How are you doing? Welcome back. It's been a while.

Jeep Wentsch: Yeah, I'm happy to be back, so thanks for having us.

Grace Hollowell: Yes, it is always a good time. Now, for our guests who may not know who you are, tell us a little bit about yourself and what you do.

Jeep Wentsch: Sure. Like you mentioned, I'm the recreation supervisor for special events with our parks department. So I oversee a vast majority of all of our special events that are happening at our facilities, in particular, Wolf Pen Creek Park. So think of our Starlight concert series, iHeart America, but we also rent out that space to other groups that may be throwing on their own fundraisers, 5Ks, carnivals or concerts. I help spearhead and organize all of those programs for the community.

Grace Hollowell: Professional fun.

Jeep Wentsch: You said it best; I agree.

Grace Hollowell: What is your favorite part about your job? I know we were chatting a little bit before we started here, that it's a busy time, and then we're just heading straight into Christmas and not slowing down. But it sounds like you get to do something new every day.

Jeep Wentsch: Yeah, absolutely. I love to see everyone being engaged at different levels, whether it's them learning a new skill and joining a program or casual walking on trails, just being able to help facilitate and coordinate those things and making sure that our community members have access to free concerts or opportunities that might be a little bit more inaccessible elsewhere. I just find a lot of joy in being able to participate in that.

Grace Hollowell: How do programs like these, especially for free, help benefit our community and our residents here?

Jeep Wentsch: Times are tough now more than ever, at least in the last few years. Having free programs is super important for our families. It's one less thing to worry about, and it might be able to relieve a lot of stress off someone's shoulders. You have a really long week

at work, and maybe school's been hard for the kids and they've been just as busy as everyone else with sports and extracurricular activities. It all starts to pile up. If you know that there's a free concert, a free movie, or a free event that you can go to right after work, it can kind of flow into your day in a natural progression and just ease that burden a little bit. I think it's a great thing for our community.

Grace Hollowell: What changes for you this time of year or when you're planning an event? Today we're talking about the movies in the park. What changes to the smaller events like this as opposed to planning for Starlight or iHeart America larger-scale events?

Jeep Wentsch: Part of it is how quickly these holiday events happen in succession. Summer has finally come to a close; we're back to school, then Halloween, then Thanksgiving, then Christmas. There's a fall break in there, football games in the mix. There's just a lot going on. It makes for a little bit of a busier time, but the holidays are something most people really love—whether it's Christmas or the winter time in particular, or just finally a break from the heat of the summer and transitioning into the later part of the year. It's always welcomed as something that people are going to enjoy, and I'm grateful that I get to be a part of that. It just means fewer breaks for now. So work real hard, and then when the holidays actually get here, we get a nice little break.

Grace Hollowell: It makes you feel like you enjoy them more.

Jeep Wentsch: Exactly. I get to really be a part of it. Whereas maybe for some others they get to participate in Christmas activities, which is great, I get to put them on and participate, so I get a little bit of both, which is really nice.

Grace Hollowell: For those who may not be familiar with the Movies in the Park event, can you tell us a little bit about what makes this event so fun and special for our community?

Jeep Wentsch: We've had our movies in the Park event on and off for several years now. This was an opportunity for us to relook at the program and see when we want to bring it back, but how can we maybe differentiate it from years past? The end goal is to utilize our amphitheater space at Wolf Pen Creek and create a free opportunity for adults, families, anyone that's interested in whatever movie we're showing to come out and enjoy the park, enjoy being outside, and have that opportunity to do it for free.

Grace Hollowell: This year we're bringing a classic, one of my favorites to the big screen with Jurassic Park. What inspired you all to choose this movie for the return of movies in the Park?

Jeep Wentsch: Our goal was really to go for a cult classic, something that everyone knows and everyone really enjoys for the most part. At this point, I think we're on Jurassic Park nine, however far we are in the series, but it all started from this original movie. Our goal is that the community will resonate with that. It's really easy to do, especially with family-

friendly films, and we don't want to negate the importance of those opportunities, but this is one where we felt we could reach a greater audience. We're coming in with a classic, something that many people have already seen but wouldn't mind rewatching, and we wanted to take a risk and do something really cool: Jurassic Park.

Grace Hollowell: It's a fun one to watch with a group of people. I remember seeing it at a drive-in when I was a kid, and that's a core memory that sticks out to me. Being a little afraid, but it was also a fun scary. I had all my friends, my family was there and other people, and I remember jumping at the same parts and everybody being involved. It's a good group activity.

Jeep Wentsch: Absolutely. Like you said, there's a little bit of fear in it, but it's also very compelling. It's a really interesting story, too. When you kind of break it down, it's like, man, could this really happen in real life? It just really makes you think. Fun fact for those that don't know, this movie was directed by Steven Spielberg, so just another credit to add to the list of this being an amazing classic that we should all come out and see for free.

Grace Hollowell: John Williams did the score. He's one of my favorites. Great film. What can attendees expect from this year's event? Are there any new activities that are being brought?

Jeep Wentsch: Yes, absolutely. We are going to have a costume contest for three different groups, and we are also going to hold a little trivia contest. Both of those are going to happen prior to the movie, and then the movie will start promptly at 7:30. We do encourage those to come a little bit earlier if they want to participate in those additional activities. We will also have one of our food trucks on-site for some additional concessions that people can purchase separately.

Grace Hollowell: Now for the costume contest. How can people participate, and what categories are there?

Jeep Wentsch: We do encourage people to register ahead of time at CSTX.gov/registration. Our three categories are a 12 and under category, 13 and up, and then family/group costume. So if the whole family wanted to come as a particular scene or a family of dinosaurs, that's fine. If you just wanted to do an individual solo, we've got the 12 and under and the 13 and up. We encourage anything within the Jurassic Park film franchise for the costume contest. It doesn't need to be tied to the original movie, so if you're a fan of Chris Pratt and the Jurassic World series and want to dress up as him, that's fine. Anything that just screams dinosaurs is highly encouraged.

Grace Hollowell: Do you have any tips for creating a standout dinosaur or Jurassic Park character costume?

Jeep Wentsch: Obviously we've got the iconic blow-up dinosaurs—love to see those. I would also encourage someone to try and go for a realistic dinosaur in terms of some feathers, maybe see some plumage out there. I would love to see that. Maybe embracing the face paint and trying to mimic scales. I think all of those would be really cool ways to stand apart from the crowd.

Grace Hollowell: Maybe work on a roar.

Jeep Wentsch: Exactly. Can we get a full face mask that opens up? The possibilities are endless, and I'm excited to see what everyone comes up with.

Grace Hollowell: Me too. As far as the trivia goes, what kinds of questions can participants expect?

Jeep Wentsch: All I can say is that they will be relating to the movie and the franchise itself, but you'll just have to come and find out for yourself. Come and participate. We are going to have prizes for first, second, and third place, not just for the trivia, but each of the costume contest categories. Come and give it your best shot and you can walk away with something fun.

Grace Hollowell: As far as food and refreshment goes, I think you mentioned there will be some food trucks there available. Are people allowed to bring their own snacks with them or is that not allowed?

Jeep Wentsch: We will have free popcorn while supplies last for the first groups of people that come into the park. We will also have our food truck Kids Treats available, selling concessionary-type snacks like funnel cakes, snow cones, and popcorn—all sorts of goodies. Families can absolutely bring their own in, too. Coolers under 48 quarts are allowed. We just ask that no glass and no kegs be brought to our event.

Grace Hollowell: The movie is going to be shown on a 32-foot inflatable screen. What makes watching a movie outdoors such a unique experience?

Jeep Wentsch: It's just one of those classic fall activities that people yearn for when the weather starts to get a little cooler. Anyone could stream this movie at home; we all have the capability of watching anything we want on demand anywhere. But there's something about coming to one of our most iconic parks with an amazing backdrop of the amphitheater and the moat, being under the stars a little bit and feeling the crisp air on your skin. I feel like it creates a more immersive experience and is slightly more memorable than just staring at a small screen in your hands.

Grace Hollowell: What should attendees bring with them? Are blankets, lawn chairs, and picnic baskets welcome?

Jeep Wentsch: All of those are welcome and highly encouraged. Definitely bring something to sit on. We just ask that no one bring any canopies or umbrellas—things that might obstruct someone's view. Please leave your pets at home as well. We love them, but we want to make sure that this is as accessible for everyone as possible. Definitely bring a blanket, maybe your favorite flannel, something to cozy up in for sure.

Grace Hallowell: Dinosaur onesie? Maybe.

Jeep Wentsch: Highly encouraged, especially if it's got a big fluffy tail that you can use as a pillow.

Grace Hallowell: Walk us through the schedule of events. What time should people arrive to the park?

Jeep Wentsch: Gates will open at 5:00, and we will start the costume contest shortly after. We anticipate that taking a little bit longer since we have the three different categories, and then trivia follows at 7:00. Come around 5:00 or 5:30 if you want to enjoy all the activities. If you're really just there for the movie, it starts sharp at 7:30, so try to get there at least 15 to 20 minutes before we start the movie.

Grace Hallowell: For people who aren't familiar with Wolf Pen, where do they park?

Jeep Wentsch: As with all of our special events at the amphitheater, we have designated parking at Post Oak Mall where the old Macy's is. There are also opportunities to park at our Meyer Senior Center and along Colgate Drive. Just make sure that you're obeying any and all parking signs and laws. Definitely park at the mall and walk on over so you can feel like you're immersing yourself in the experience.

Grace Hallowell: Just like when the gates are open to Jurassic Park.

Jeep Wentsch: 100%. Exactly.

Grace Hallowell: How do events like this help support the Parks and Recreation Department's mission to bring the community together?

Jeep Wentsch: The goal is to show a classic movie that many of us have already seen. Maybe this is going to be a really good opportunity for some of our younger audiences, or audiences that aren't familiar yet, to experience this amazing moment. The Parks Department is all about creating these opportunities and letting the community seize on them. We wanted to create this space where you can feel like you're participating in fall-related events, getting a break from the summer, being outdoors, and you don't have to pay much or anything at all since it is a free showing. We are excited that with our costume contest and the trivia, it's not just a movie-watching experience—you get to participate a

little bit more. All of those factors came together for our movie in the park idea, and we thought this sounds like a success, so let's bring it back and do something cool.

Grace Hallowell: Are there any other events happening at Wolf Pen this season that people should keep an eye out for?

Jeep Wentsch: Our biggest one of the season is going to be the BCS Marathon. That'll happen on the second Sunday of December, and they will be running throughout the Bryan-College Station area, starting and ending at Wolf Pen Creek. If you're a runner and super excited about that, definitely encourage you to sign up and join the festivities.

Grace Hallowell: If you're not a runner, come and spectate. I have some friends that are avid runners and do marathons, and sometimes when they're feeling it, having that crowd cheering them on is what keeps them going and helps them finish.

Jeep Wentsch: Absolutely. Based on what we saw last year, they've got the runners' village, which kind of turns into a little block party. It's a fun time. They've got a DJ out there, refreshments for the runners, and it's an opportunity for families, fans, and those there to support the runners to meet up in person. It's a really cool experience. If you've never experienced it before, I definitely recommend checking it out.

Grace Hallowell: Before we get into our lightning round one more time, when is the movies in the Park event and where can people find out more?

Jeep Wentsch: Movies in the Park is Friday, November 6th. Gates open at 5:00 p.m., followed by our costume contest and trivia. The movie starts sharply at 7:30. This is at Wolf Pen Creek Amphitheater. Feel free to park at Post Oak Mall, walk your way over, bring some blankets, bring your own refreshments if you like, and get excited to watch this awesome film.

Grace Hallowell: We have a Jurassic-themed lightning round this week. Are you ready?

Jeep Wentsch: Absolutely, let's do it!

Grace Hallowell: T-Rex or Velociraptor?

Jeep Wentsch: Velociraptor for sure.

Grace Hallowell: If you could bring one dinosaur back, which one would you choose?

Jeep Wentsch: I don't know if you're gonna like this: none of them. Have you seen them? They're terrifying. I'm glad that we don't live with dinosaurs today. They're really cool and I love them, but I don't want to share a space with them.

Grace Hollowell: That is a good answer. Who would you want on your team during a dinosaur escape?

Jeep Wentsch: Probably Superman. Like I said, have you seen them? We're going to need some real superpowers out there to protect ourselves.

Grace Hollowell: What is the best movie snack?

Jeep Wentsch: Peanut M&Ms—the yellow bag. And popcorn, of course, but you mix them all together. And a Diet Coke.

Grace Hollowell: Got to have the Diet Coke. Finally, if you could name a dinosaur after a College Station landmark, what would you call it?

Jeep Wentsch: Oh my gosh, that is a really good question. How about the Wolf Pen Creekasaurus?

Grace Hollowell: Wolf Pen Creekasaurus. Perfect. Thank you so much for joining me today.

Jeep Wentsch: Yeah, thanks for having me, Grace, I appreciate it.

Grace Hollowell: And that's What's Up.