

Foundation for Dane County Parks
5201 Fen Oak Dr.
Madison, WI 53718



Foundation for Dane County Parks

Newsletter provided
thanks to sponsorship by:



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THANK YOU for Celebrating Bill Lunney's Conservation Legacy

Bill Lunney, President and co-founder of the Foundation for Dane County Parks, recently "retired" after 30 years of service as Parks Commission Chair and over 50 years of conservation leadership. He helped guide and build one of the best park systems in the Midwest, which has grown from 3,500 acres to over 15,000 acres.

A fundraising event for the Foundation and the Friends of Dane County Parks Endowment to celebrate Bill and his wife, Judie Pfeifer, was held this fall at the Lussier Family Heritage Center, adjacent to the recently renamed William G. Lunney Lake Farm County Park.

Thanks to all those who attended, sponsored, and donated, the event raised a total of \$80,000 for our parks! "Together we have crafted a necklace of green adorning our county that will be here for many decades and centuries to come, and we're not done yet," Bill said in his speech.

Dane County is experiencing rapid growth and our available land is dwindling, which is why Bill said we need more parks and accompanying buffer areas "to assure that our investment in those resource areas is not compromised" and to "give us even more robust green space for the future." Bill also stressed the importance of parks and the outdoors on physical and mental health, adding that "healthy parks lead to healthy people, which lead to healthy communities." He said to sustain these resources and promote the parks, "we need to increase our volunteer base" and "engage every generation in our cause" by building community support.

"Love your parks, learn from them, cherish them, advocate for them, support them with time and money, but most importantly enjoy and appreciate them for the wonderful resources they are," Bill said.

A video recording of the entire event and Bill's speech, in which he presents a "road map" for the future of the parks, can be viewed at danecountyparks.com/LunneyCelebration



Together... We are Shaping a Bright Sustaining Future Built on a Strong Foundation

Dear Parks Friend and Supporter,

As 2019 comes to a close, we thank you for your continued support of the Foundation for Dane County Parks and the Friends of Dane County Parks Endowment Fund. You are helping us reach our shared vision of a permanent, reliable source of income that will continue the stewardship of our land. As our county parks, trails, and green spaces continue to increase in popularity, so do the challenges.

See the report insert in this newsletter for our have exciting news. In 2019 our endowment started paying back. We awarded 11 grants from the interest earned to support Parks Friends and Partners and with your help we will continue to build the endowment toward our next goal of \$1 million dollars. We also are successfully spearheading the Accessible Piers Project for 8 county parks. This would not have happened without your support. The work of the Foundation for Dane County Parks totally depends on the charitable support of people like you. Your investment helps support the vital work of our volunteers, the true stewards of our land, and shapes the quality of life in our communities for generations to come.

We are asking you to consider a tax-deductible gift to the Foundation for Dane County Parks. You will make a commitment to the greater good of our community now and into the future.

Thank you,

Bill Lunney, on behalf of the Foundation for Dane County Parks Fundraising Committee

P.S. Your year end tax-deductible donation can be mailed in the enclosed envelope to our Endowment Fund at www.madisoncommunityfoundation.org/danecountyparks.

\$1,000,000

\$900,000

\$800,000

\$700,000

\$600,000

\$500,000

\$400,000

\$300,000

\$200,000

\$100,000

2019 Marks the 50th Anniversary of the E-Way

The Nine Springs E-Way (renamed the Lewis Nine Springs E-Way in 2012) was initially conceived as a critical urban corridor by Professor Phil Lewis as part of a design funded project by the National Endowment for the Arts in 1969. That \$9,500 grant funded a project to show how a community's existing natural and cultural resources could be identified and accentuated to elevate environmental awareness and to provide a permanent recreational corridor system in which the residents could enjoy and appreciate the significance of preserving critical environmental corridors.

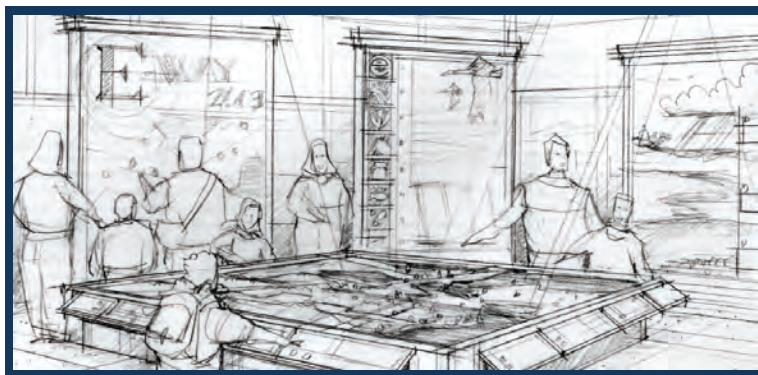
The proposal led to a 21-mile E-Way that linked many of Dane County's natural and cultural features. The term E-Way was chosen as a symbol for an educational, ecological, esthetic, exercise, and environmental system. The system linked 21 "nodes of diversity" like pearls on a necklace to expose users to their natural surroundings and to inspire solutions for human habitation that has minimal impacts on our life-supporting systems.

The E-Way has proven to be an effective tool to promote local awareness of the knowledge about Dane County's natural and cultural resources. Originally, the Lussier Family Heritage Center was envisioned as a site where the public could learn about preserving the E-Way and learn about the significance of environmental corridors within park and open space planning.

One central piece to establishing educational exhibits at the Heritage Center is a three-dimensional model of the E-Way created by Professor Phil Lewis and his students. The model still exists and is stored at the Robertson Road Park facility. It is approximately 12' by 8' and could be exhibited on the floor or wall. The model needs some restoration work and, more importantly, interpretation.

If you would like to support the efforts to restore, interpret, and move the E-Way model to the Heritage Center, Foundation for Dane County Parks board member Andrew Lewis and his wife Pam have offered a matching grant of up to \$10,000. The Lewises are in need of financial support, a donation of work space for doing the restoration of the 8'x 12' model, and recommendations on student interns or design firms capable of doing the restoration and interpretation.

Any interested parties are encouraged to contact Andrew Lewis at ablewis7@gmail.com.



Friends of Dane County Parks Endowment Grant for SWTU

The Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited held a work day on Saturday, November 2nd.

About 20 volunteers planted oaks and cut willows for one purpose-- to improve the health of two trout streams. Funds for the project came from a \$950 grant from the Friends of Dane County Parks Endowment Fund through the Foundation for Dane County Parks.

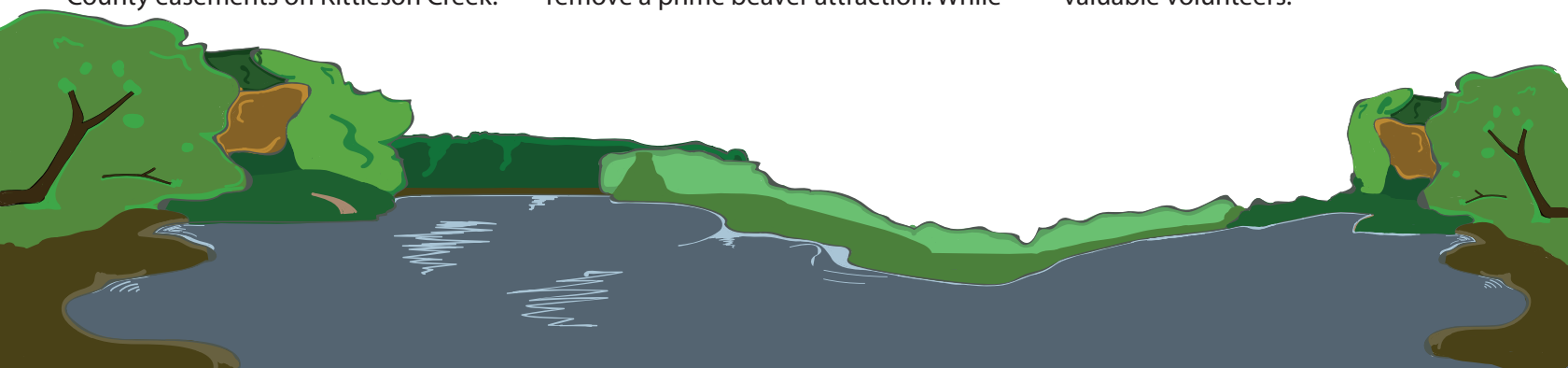
The volunteers planted 40-45 swamp white oaks on three permanent Dane County easements on Kittleson Creek.

The oaks provide a more stable, long-lived source of shade for the stream and are a tremendous source of invertebrate life. These oaks also allow for the growth of stream bank -stabilizing and wildlife supporting native grasses and flowers.

They also cut and treated dense stands of young willow on Pleasant Valley Creek, an extremely important headwater stream of Kittleson, which supports an excellent population of trout. While cutting the willows improves the fishability of the stream the more important reason is to remove a prime beaver attraction. While

beavers are very neat and industrious creatures, their dams can be major problems, leading to warming water, sedimentation, and obstacles to fish movement.

The willows were extremely dense and made for a tough work day. Winter had arrived and a howling south wind was bitterly cold. The Foundation for Dane County Parks was proud to sponsor this project to conserve one of Dane County's unique and precious natural resources and support our valuable volunteers.



Mraz's County Parks Bucket List

What started as a visit to Dane County's newest gem, Morton Forest near Mazomanie, turned into a "bucket list" of parks for one Madison couple.

get creative finding fun, healthy things to do together in the winter.

So when they saw a newspaper article about Morton Forest, they decided to explore its trails overlooking the

Driftless Area in November 2017.

That's when Jeanne came up with an idea for them to go to all of the Dane County Parks that either had biking or hiking or paddling opportunities as a convenient way to be active year-round.

Nearly every weekend through August 2018, Jeanne and Michael opened up

their map, went on an excursion, and checked off another park from their list -- over 20 in total. They said they only missed parks that were primarily boat launches or that were flooded.

"For us it was a nice way to be moving outside and seeing beautiful things in nature," Michael said. "The cool part is we got to see how wonderful the

parks are and the transitions of every season."

Memorable sights included a blanket of shooting stars during the spring ephemeral bloom at Yahara Heights County Park in Waunakee, sandhill cranes and an eagle's nest at Lussier County Park near Fish Lake, pheasants at none other than Pheasant Branch Conservancy in Middleton, and expansive views of the Driftless Area from the Festge County Park overlook near Cross Plains.

Along their hikes they also read signs about the history of these places and discovered connections to their own lives. For example, Jeanne's family used to hold reunions at Mount Horeb's Stewart Lake, which she learned was the first Dane County Park established in 1935. Their bucket list was also an excuse to stop and see parks they'd driven past before, like Donald County Park, which became one of their favorites.

"We love to be outside, and we are missing having a goal like that," Jeanne said this fall, over a year after their Dane County Parks adventure. "Conservation and green space are really important to us. We wish everyone would do it -- it's a nice way to enjoy the parks," Michael added.



Michael and Jeanne Mraz stopped at Ferry Bluff State Natural Area after their Dane County Parks adventure, and they continue to explore the beautiful parts of our county and state.

Jeanne and Michael Mraz have always enjoyed outdoor activities, especially mountain biking at CamRock County Park in Cambridge, hiking at Indian Lake County Park near Cross Plains, and cross-country skiing. But the lack of snow in recent years meant they had to

Shooting stars in bloom at Yahara Heights County Park. Both photos are courtesy of Michael and Jeanne Mraz.

