



Foundation for Dane County Parks
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**SUMMER
2021**



President's Message

Dane County has had only three Parks Directors since the first professional staff was hired in 1970 -- 50 years ago. I had the honor of serving as Parks Commission Chair with all three. The first was Dick Presney; he was a master at working with all elements of the County and County Board. Ken Lepine followed, and during his tenure the Parks System evolved dramatically. Among other accomplishments, Ken initiated the early stages of the volunteer program, our nationally recognized dog parks program and helped build the Lussier Family Heritage Center.

Ken was followed by Darren Marsh who has served as Parks Director for 18 years. Under Darren's leadership and hard work, those programs were improved and many others added. Darren took a successful Parks System and refined it, adding necessary processes and procedures as well as many innovations.

Darren brought our Parks into what I refer to as our "Golden Age," with over 18,000 acres and over 50 recreation parks and wildlife areas. The Parks now support over 19 Friends groups and successfully manage over 4 million visitors per year.

Darren had a vision for the Parks, but he never lost sight of the individual park user and their experience in the park. In addition, Darren was instrumental in helping build the Foundation for Dane County Parks to its current success.

Darren and I worked closely together and he never ceased to amaze me with his positive can-do attitude. He would figure out a way to make an idea work. Darren was the first to arrive at a task and the last to leave. Darren was always giving the credit to others, but in reality he was routinely the major force behind the success of a program.

So we want to express our profound appreciation to Darren for all he has accomplished. He has left footprints that will sustain our Parks for many generations.

Finally, we want to welcome Joleen Stinson as Interim Parks Director and look forward to working with her.



We are honored to be able to recognize Darren's work for our County Parks and thank our volunteers at the September event (see details below and on pages 4-5). Hope to see you there!



9 • 9 • 21

4PM - 7PM


JOIN US!


**CELEBRATING DARREN MARSH &
28 YEARS OF SERVICE TO DANE
COUNTY PARKS**


**WILLIAM G. LUNNEY LAKE FARM PARK
SHELTER 2**


Legacy Forest Sprouts In The Parks Thanks To MCF

As reported last fall, the Foundation is partnering with Madison Community Foundation (MCF) and Dane County Parks to have 281 trees planted in County Parks during 2021. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, MCF chose to recognize their Legacy Society (281 people who have committed to the future of our community with a planned gift from their estate) in a new way. MCF is donating 281 trees, a "Legacy Forest" as a gift to future generations. These trees are helping to replace many that were lost to the invasive emerald ash borer.

 **Spring and Summer Planting:** So far, 59 trees have been planted in McCarthy, Prairie Moraine, and Lunney Lake Farm Parks. In April, 44 oak trees were planted with Operation Fresh Start, Madison College, and the Girl Scouts on Earth Day and Youth Services Day.

 **Fall Planting:** The majority of the trees will be planted this fall in September and October at McCarthy, Token Creek, Lunney Lake Farm, Goodland, Mendota, and CamRock County Parks. These parks are being targeted due to extreme loss of ash trees. The reason for fall planting is that over the summer the trees will develop stronger roots in the county owned gravel bed allowing them greater success this fall. The added benefit is that the trees then are able to be established with less direct care (watering) on a regular basis, allowing a higher rate of success for transplanting.

 **Types of Trees to Be Planted:** Swamp White Oak, Burr Oak, White Oak, Pin Oak, London Plane Tree, Kentucky Coffee Tree, Tulip Tree, Beech, Hawthorn, Redbud, Hackberry Hornbeam, River Birch, Serviceberry, Ginkgo, Dawn Redwood.

 **Event Coordination:** The Foundation is working with Dane County Parks to coordinate planting by several community and business groups. The staff and volunteers of MCF will also plant some of the trees in Lunney Lake Farm Park in the afternoon of Sept. 17.



The Dane County Parks and the Foundation for Dane County Parks are extremely grateful to MCF for this generous and thoughtful donation. This way these lost trees can begin to be replaced and flourish for the benefit of the community and the environment and for generations to come.



Congratulations, Bill Lunney!

The Foundation extends its congratulations to President Bill Lunney for receiving the Rotary Club of Madison's Senior Service Award in July! Bill's work over the past many years epitomizes the notion of "service above self." Learn more about the award and Bill's accomplishments on our blog.

Foundation Endowment Grant Applications Due Oct. 29

The Foundation is pleased to announce that once again it will be awarding grants to organizations supporting interpretation, education, and volunteerism in Dane County Parks. Organizations eligible to apply include Friends groups and partner groups working in the county parks. Also eligible are groups such as community centers and neighborhood centers that conduct outdoor education programs and carry out volunteer service activities in county parks.

Grants range from \$500 to \$2,000. The Foundation encourages applicants to develop programs that address equity, diversity and inclusion. Grant funds can also be used for tools and equipment that support volunteer activities. These grants support the following endowment goals:

Interpretation: Creating awareness and exploration of the cultural heritage, archeology, geography, climate, and natural resources of Dane County.

Education: Engaging children, adults, communities, and organizations in outdoor learning and creativity.

Volunteerism: Supporting and encouraging individuals and groups to contribute their time, effort, and resources for the benefit of the county park system.

The application deadline is October 29, 2021 and recipients will be notified by December 15, 2021. Application materials can be found at foundationfordanecountyparks.org/grants.



A 2020 Endowment grant from the Foundation helped Friends of McCarthy Park purchase equipment to maintain the park's cross-country ski trails.

Endowment

\$1,000,000

\$900,000

\$800,000

\$700,000

\$600,000

\$500,000

\$400,000

\$300,000

\$200,000

\$100,000

Darren Marsh reflects on his career with Dane County Parks

What has it been like to serve Dane County in the role of Parks Director for the last 18 years?

I've had the great fortune to work for a tremendous community that has provided constant and continued support for the parks system. Per the saying "do something you love and never work a day in your life," that is what it has been like for me. Having the opportunity to improve our lands, while planning for the future in parks and natural resources, has been a great experience. Being in a leadership role to support the county's priorities has been especially rewarding. We wouldn't have the park system we have today without the help of our amazing volunteers and partner groups. I've also had a chance to work with very dedicated Parks and Land and Water Resources Department staff who do a wonderful job by helping our customers, making things happen, and taking the park system to new heights. There are many people I need to thank for their efforts.



Joe Parisi, Darren Marsh, Analiese Eicher, and Dave Ripp stand next to the sign for the new Dane County Parks operations facility to be named in Darren's honor. Photo by John Kalson



Darren Marsh at Prairie Moraine County Park on Earth Day 2021

What are some highlights of your career that you're particularly proud of?

First, it was seeing our parks system shine and help the community during the pandemic. I heard from so many park patrons about how our parks and trails helped their family or "inner circle" get through the pandemic. Many shared that they visited a different park each week, while others became die hard users of a dog park. The public's increased outdoor recreational use has also generated a greater interest by the private sector to support expanded outdoor activities and promote the health benefits that come from time in the outdoors. I've also seen so many park projects and amenities added through my years; many great achievements. One recreational amenity that I believe has a huge benefit for the community is our regional trail system. Another special experience for me has been working with volunteers and partner groups -- the heart and soul of our parks -- to give them the opportunity to add character to their parks. It's also been very heartwarming to develop relationships with donors, including those who want to donate land. Working with an individual or a family to preserve special places for future generations is a very rewarding experience.



How has the Foundation for Dane County Parks impacted the park system?

The development of the Foundation for Dane County Parks, Inc. is an amazing achievement and so important for the future sustainability of our County Park System. The Foundation will not only support the volunteers and partners working on our park lands, but it will create a gateway for public/private partnerships. The Foundation has been supporting the Friends of Dane County Parks Endowment through the Madison Community Foundation to create a direct funding source to support volunteer efforts, education and interpretation in the county parks; working on initiatives to improve access to our waterways with the Accessible Piers Program; and developing partnerships to promote the health benefits of parks and connecting underserved communities to our parks.

What are your plans for the future?

Eventually my wife and I plan to move up to the family farm in Sturgeon Bay, where I hope to carry on my passion of restoring our family lands. I also hope to spend more time hiking, biking, hunting, and fishing. My wife Dawn and I have a deep passion for parks and public lands. We met while we worked at Whitefish Dunes State Park, we had an outdoor wedding in a Door County Park, and we regularly hike Door County Land Trust lands. I see both of us volunteering to support these public lands. It will be amazing to visit Dane County in the future to see and use all the amazing parks, natural resources, and trails. It will be very humbling to visit the park properties knowing that I may have had some role in their planning and development.

Mark Your Calendars!

The Foundation for Dane County Parks is honored to host a celebration in recognition of retiring Parks Director Darren Marsh's 28 years of dedicated service. In addition to celebrating Darren, we want to honor the people, partners, and places that will sustain his legacy for generations to come. Please join us to celebrate Darren and our amazing parks!

Thursday, September 9th from 4-7pm
William G. Lunney Lake Farm Park - Shelter #2

There is no cost to attend this event, but registration is encouraged. When registering, you will have the option to make a donation to the Foundation. For additional event information and registration, visit foundationfordanecountyparks.org/projects/2021-celebration

AmFam Grant Supports Junior Naturalist Program



Post a photo of your Dane County Park visit on social media with #HealthyParksHealthyYou for a chance to win a gift card!








The Foundation for Dane County Parks has received a grant to support the exciting 2021 Junior Naturalist program at the Lussier Family Heritage Center. The grant is made possible through generous support from the American Family Insurance Dreams Foundation.

The program will introduce 25 youth ages 12-14 to many of the skills it takes to become a naturalist! The program is geared toward diverse youth interested in the outdoors, natural history, hands-on science, and wildlife data collection.

Hosted by the Heritage Center at William G. Lunney Lake Farm County Park, the Junior Naturalist program is a 4-week-long summer program of fun-filled scientific discovery. The participants are exploring prairies, woodlands, and wetlands during each day's activities and learning about the wildlife that calls these wild spaces home.

The Benefits Of The Program To The Youth Participants Include:

-  Taking on the role of a field scientist
-  Building plant and wildlife ID skills
-  Participating with friends and making new ones
-  Learning about the environment through active experience
-  Meeting and learning from Dane County field staff who monitor land and water resources

The program is coordinated by Parks Conservation Specialist Micah Kloppenberg with the assistance of summer LTE Khadijah Murphy. Micah has always worked at the intersection of people and plants: as a restoration ecology technician, youth educator, volunteer coordinator, and researcher. Khadijah is an architect major at Madison College and will enter the UW Landscape Architecture program this fall. As the coordinator of the program and with Khadijah's help, Micah enthusiastically shared, "we have so enjoyed challenging the Junior Naturalist crew with fun, hands-on ecology activities."

The Foundation is proud to help build future environmental leaders.

Vaccines In The Park

The Foundation for Dane County Parks joined forces with News 3 Now, SSM Health, Dean Health Plan, and Dane County Parks earlier this summer to host two walk-in vaccine clinics at William G. Lunney Lake Farm County Park. The events, held May 13 and June 3, were extremely well received and resulted in more than 550 doses of the Covid-19 vaccine being given both days.



Both events included vaccination options at the park and at News 3 Now. The first event provided 565 vaccine doses. The second event provided 554 vaccine doses. The events offered both Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson vaccines.

May 13th was the first day that teens could receive the vaccine and many turned out. Some of their parents mentioned that it was less intimidating to be vaccinated in a park. Also at the park, Dean Health provided other health services and information such as blood pressure screenings and CPR training. Our sincere thanks to the community and all the volunteers for making both vaccine day events a huge success!



Thank You, Jess Hankey

The Foundation wants to thank Jess Hankey for her work in supporting the Foundation as fundraising coordinator and wishes her well as she takes a full time position with the State Historical Society. Jess was instrumental in helping the Foundation develop a financial sustainability plan, which will be a road map for our future financial growth and success. She left her mark on many other successful fundraising efforts as well. Our team wishes Jess and her family the very best!

Welcome, Emilie Shada

The Foundation welcomes Emilie Shada, who begins her position as fundraising coordinator September 1st. The Dane County Parks became a lifeline for Emilie during the pandemic, and she is thrilled to help community members discover the same joys and ways in which charitable gifts will ensure access to the endearing benefits of the parks for generations to come. Emilie holds a bachelor's degree in sociology and environmental studies and a master's in public administration, has a background in community development, and also works as an arts administrator for UW-Madison. She resides in Belleville with her husband, sons, and dog and enjoys hiking, biking, fishing, and singing with the Wisconsin Chamber Choir.

