



Foundation for Dane County Parks  
5201 Fen Oak Dr. Room 208  
Madison, WI 53718  
[foundationfordanecountyparks.org](http://foundationfordanecountyparks.org)

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Thank you to the Mad City Dream Homes real estate team for underwriting and producing this newsletter. We truly appreciate your generosity and support.



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All-Terrain  
Wheelchairs for  
Accessibility



Progress on  
Accessible  
Piers



Foundation  
Supporter  
Spotlight



FALL  
2021

Jenni and Kyle Preserve





# A Celebration to Remember: Honoring Darren Marsh

The Foundation would like to extend a big thank you to all those who were able to join us at Lunney Lake Farm Park for our celebration of retired Parks Director Darren Marsh on Sept. 9th. It was a wonderful afternoon to reconnect with friends and celebrate Darren's remarkable leadership.

A special thanks to all of the event sponsors and everyone else who donated in honor of Darren. Thanks to their generosity, we were able to raise over \$100,000 to support the work of the Foundation for Dane County Parks. Our event sponsors, listed below, have made significant contributions that will help the Foundation and the Parks system thrive long into the future. The Foundation is tremendously grateful for their ongoing support.

About 150 people attended the event and enjoyed food from the Jolly Frog and Melted food carts, along with drinks from Karben4 Brewing. We couldn't have asked for better weather or better company and hope that the event allowed people to catch up with Darren and each other after such a challenging year. A final thanks to all the volunteers who dedicated time and energy to making this event possible. We are grateful to be supported by such a wonderful community, of which Darren has been an integral part.



## THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS EVENT SPONSORS



### Lead Sponsor - \$10,000

**The Jenni & Kyle Foundation**

### Conservation Leader - \$5,000



Jim O'Brien  
Stephen Morton  
Doug & Sherry Caves

THE CAP TIMES



Dane County  
CONSERVATION  
LEAGUE

### Steward - \$2,500



Bill Lunney & Judie Pfeifer  
Anonymous

### Naturalist - \$1,000

The Capital Group at Lincoln Financial Advisors  
Friends of Capital Springs Recreation Area  
Madison Gas & Electric Foundation  
Madison Community Foundation  
Groundswell Conservancy  
The Burish Group at UBS  
Peter Tropman & Ginny Graves  
James Berbee & Karen Walsh  
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Tom & Kim Thoresen  
Summit Credit Union  
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Jim Welsh  
Don Ferber  
Caryl & Bob Terrell  
Gail & Dan Shea  
Dan & Natalie Erdman  
Matt & Clare Carlson  
Anne & Tim Connor  
Don & Joanne Tierney  
Dan & Kellie Miller

### Trail Blazer - \$500

Land and Water Resource Department Staff  
Dane County Council of Snowmobile Clubs  
Rick Ellerton  
Ron French  
David Stark  
Janet Axelsson  
Tony & Jane Earl  
Laura & Charles Hicklin  
Jim & Shari Hubing  
Mike & Linda Slavney  
Jack & Marian Bolz

Marcia MacKenzie  
Rick Ellerton  
Ron French  
David Stark  
Janet Axelsson  
Tony & Jane Earl  
Laura & Charles Hicklin  
Jim & Shari Hubing  
Mike & Linda Slavney  
Jack & Marian Bolz

### Conservationist - \$250

Fitchburg Access Community Television  
Kris Eulide & Douglas Steege  
Kyle Richmond & Ken Monteleone  
Quercus Land Stewardship Services  
Dane County Pheasants Forever  
Four Lakes Traditional Music Collective  
Southern Wisconsin Trout Unlimited  
Wisconsin Conservation Voters  
First Business Bank  
Randy & Kim Hackbart  
Kathleen Falk & Peter Bock  
Mark Rooney & Gail Morton  
Signs By Tomorrow

Karben4 Brewing  
Jeanie & Jerry Silling  
Tom & Margie Krauskopf  
Dave Ripp  
Jan Zimmerman  
Michael Lunney  
Nan Bogue  
Analeise Eicher  
Lorette Wambach  
Brad Mullins  
Ron French  
Timothy Radelet



# E-Way Exhibit and Historical Marker Installation

The Lewis Nine Springs E-Way Model is now installed and available for viewing in the lower level of the Lussier Family Heritage Center. The model represents the early version of the concept developed by Professor Phil Lewis linking a system of water, wetlands, and steep topography to provide a buffer between urban and natural areas in the Nine Springs area. Funds for the project were raised by Andy Lewis, former Foundation Board member. The Foundation administered the funds for the project and helped with publicity. The model is a valuable example of our natural heritage.

Andy Lewis also spoke on Sept. 28th at the annual meeting of the Dane County Historical Society at Lunney Lake Farm Park, where a new historical marker was dedicated in honor of his parents, Phil and Libby Lewis, and in commemoration of the E-Way. The marker will be installed at the Lewis E-Way trailhead on Lake Farm Road.



## Thank You for Memorial Gifts

During the past few months, the Foundation has been named as the recipient of memorial donations totaling over \$37,550 from ten families. Pursuant to the donors' wishes, most of the funds will go towards the Accessible Piers program, or directly to help the endowment grow as it now exceeds over \$800,000.

The memorials were for:

- Anna Bender
- Donna Hilgendorf
- Elnora Wilson
- Eugenia K Wiencek
- Grant Mullen
- Jim Hughes
- Marilyn Hackbarth
- Nancy Sprecher
- Shirley Ann Schara
- William Wambach

We are deeply sorry for their loss, but we are honored that those families trusted us and our work supporting the parks to allow us to be the vehicle to honor their loved ones.

These donations will help build our endowment and support the Foundation as we provide a self-sustaining permanent source of funds supporting Dane County Parks. Thank you to those families.

Endowment

\$1,000,000

\$900,000

\$800,000

\$700,000

\$600,000

\$500,000

\$400,000

\$300,000

\$200,000

\$100,000

# Foundation Supporter Spotlight:

## Sally Wilmeth and Terry Geurkink

"I was looking for something for everybody," said Sally Wilmeth, reflecting on the decision she and her husband, Terry Geurkink, made over 30 years ago. That "something" is now known as the Jenni & Kyle Preserve, named for their first two children, who had a progressive neurological disorder and each lived to be almost 4.



The inclusive space in Capital Springs Recreation Area along Post Road has accessible fishing piers designed to include children and adults with disabilities who might not otherwise enjoy a fishing trip, wheelchair swings, trails through the wetlands, and picnic areas. The shelter overlooks two ponds and features a stunning four-season mosaic mural created by nearly 70 individuals with disabilities. Beyond that, it is a shining example of how well-intentioned people can collaborate to make a difference for generations to come.

When Sally's parents, Harvey and Patricia Wilmeth, wanted to make a parkland donation in memory of their grandchildren, they consulted with their daughter on selecting a meaningful spot. Although the Wilmeths had connections with land preservation efforts in the Milwaukee and Ozaukee County area, Sally was drawn to the Madison and Dane County area because of the special places she, Terry, Jenni, and Kyle had visited, including Indian Lake, Stewart Lake, and Lunney Lake Farm County Parks.

"Dane County Parks staff were so knowledgeable and thoughtful in their interactions with me," Sally said. "They were aware that they needed different park features geared to different groups of people, and they supported the concept of making things as accessible as possible. That's why we decided to make my parents' donation for this section of the Lewis Nine Springs E-Way."



Sally and Terry are both drawn to water, so the location of the Jenni & Kyle Preserve, with the wetlands and ponds, really resonated with them. "I get great joy out of fishing, and I'm sure those who can't walk the streams love to have the opportunity to get close to the water and catch fish," said Terry. Sally also appreciates that this park is a place where both nature -- including animals like the herons, squirrels, and foxes -- and people of all abilities can thrive. "I always feel like we lucked into being part of this beautiful, integral section of the E-Way," Sally said. "It's fortuitous that this is what my parents wanted to do."

The Wilmeth's legacy of generosity has continued with Sally and Terry, who have become huge supporters of other Dane County Parks projects, including the Stewart Lake accessible fishing pier and a notable donation to advance the ADA accessible fishing pier and kayak launch initiative at Babcock County Park. You may have also seen the Jenni & Kyle Foundation listed as the lead sponsor of the recent retirement celebration of Parks Director Darren Marsh to support the ongoing nonprofit work of the Foundation for Dane County Parks.

"I usually call Chris James, the guiding vision behind new plans for Dane County Parks, and say, 'What new projects are you thinking about, and might need some support for?' and then I see if there's something that makes me smile and feel good," Sally said. "And if it's something that would make the type of impact that we believe in," Terry added.

Given the increasing development throughout Dane County, Terry said the need for accessible parks is paramount. "For a lot of people, parks are a refuge from the city or suburbs. It's a big undertaking to create and maintain and enhance parks, but they are so good for mental and physical health."

Sally said that while she and Terry are fortunate to help make some of these bigger projects happen, it's important for people to realize that donating labor, publicity, and resources are critical, too. "It takes everyone to pull this off," she said. "Dane County Parks does a phenomenal job of thinking about everybody, improving access, and becoming more inclusive of all."



# 'Healthy Parks, Healthy You' Parks Passport

Have you heard about the Parks Passport? The "Healthy Parks, Healthy You" initiative launched the Parks Passport this summer to encourage people to visit more of our Dane County Parks! If you visit 5 Dane County Parks before the end of this year, check them off on the Passport and submit it to the Foundation for a chance to win a \$100 gift card! Whether you go for a fall colors hike or cross country ski in the winter, there are always fun ways to explore the county parks system.

You can download the Passport on our website!

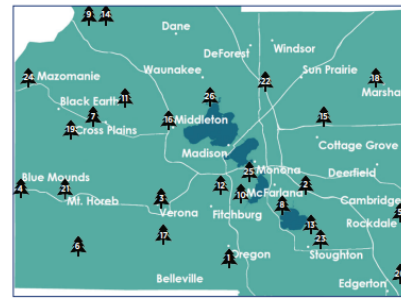
Passports must be submitted by **December 31, 2021** through email to:

[foundationfordanecountyparks@gmail.com](mailto:foundationfordanecountyparks@gmail.com)

or through mail to:

Foundation for Dane County Parks  
5201 Fen Oak Drive #208  
Madison, WI 53703

## Annual Dane County Parks Passport



Visit at least 5 recreation parks and submit your passport by **December 31, 2021**.

### How to submit your passport:

**Paper:** Mail your passport to: Foundation for Dane County Parks  
5201 Fen Oak Drive #208 Madison, WI 53718

**Electronically:** Email your passport to:  
[foundationfordanecountyparks@gmail.com](mailto:foundationfordanecountyparks@gmail.com)

Winners will be selected at random to win a \$100 gift card and will be notified January 2022.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**NEED A LYFT?** Email [foundationfordanecountyparks@gmail.com](mailto:foundationfordanecountyparks@gmail.com) to coordinate a ride.

- ☐ 1) Anderson Farm County Park
- ☐ 2) Babcock County Park
- ☐ 3) Badger Prairie County Park
- ☐ 4) Brigham County Park
- ☐ 5) CamRock County Park
- ☐ 6) Donald County Park
- ☐ 7) Festge County Park
- ☐ 8) Fish Camp County Park
- ☐ 9) Fish Lake County Park
- ☐ 10) Goodland County Park
- ☐ 11) Indian Lake County Park
- ☐ 12) Jenni & Kyle Preserve
- ☐ 13) LaFollette County Park
- ☐ 14) Lussier County Park
- ☐ 15) McCarthy Youth and Conservation County Park
- ☐ 16) Mendota County Park
- ☐ 17) Prairie Moraine County Park
- ☐ 18) Riley-Deppe County Park
- ☐ 19) Salmo Pond County Park
- ☐ 20) Silverwood County Park
- ☐ 21) Stewart Lake County Park
- ☐ 22) Token Creek County Park
- ☐ 23) Viking County Park
- ☐ 24) Walking Iron County Park
- ☐ 25) William G. Lunney Lake Farm County Park
- ☐ 26) Yahara Heights County Park

**Note:** The parks listed are considered recreation parks. Dane County has several other park properties but recreation parks usually have restrooms, ample parking and more developed recreation facilities and activity options. Visit [dane-countyparks.com](http://dane-countyparks.com) to learn more about each park, access trail maps or more information.

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### Share a photo of your visit to a Dane County Park for a chance to win gift cards!

- Post a picture of yourself at a Dane County Park and use **#HPHY**
- Make sure the audience for your post is set to **"public"**
- We'll choose a winner at the end of the month!

### Did you know that the Foundation is now on Instagram?

Follow us at **@foundationfordanecountyparks**. If you post a photo of a Dane County Park with **#HPHY**, you could win a prize as part of our "Healthy Parks, Healthy You" initiative!

### Interested in helping with our social media accounts?

We're always looking for volunteers! If you'd like to help, please reach out to Elisa Guerrero at [guerrero.elisa@countyofdane.com](mailto:guerrero.elisa@countyofdane.com).

# Check us out on Instagram!



STEG  
2021

# Progress on Accessible Piers for County Parks

We are pleased to report on the progress of our efforts to support accessible piers in Dane County Parks. Our fundraising is ongoing, but we want to give a special thank you to all of our donors to this project and the outstanding work of Dane County Parks staff Chris James and Alex DeSmidt.

**Salmo Pond County Park:** The accessible fishing pier replacement is complete. Dane County Parks is planning to reconstruct the parking lot, install a new vault toilet, and pave a portion of gravel trail in 2022.

**Mendota County Park:** Access has been improved for shore fishing and boat camping with the completion of a new accessible path and the restoration of a retaining wall and seawall. A concrete walkway now extends the entire length of the lagoon and provides great shore fishing opportunities.



*Salmo Pond County Park Pier*

*Mendota County Park Pier*



**Fish Camp County Park:** Dane County Parks is developing plans for a new accessible kayak launch and an accessible fishing pier to be installed in 2022. Generous private donors have contributed over \$58,000 towards these improvements, including a bequest in memory of Donna and Dennis Hilgendorf. Dane County Parks is also finalizing plans and permits for phase two of the Lower Yahara River Trail which will connect Fish Camp County Park and Lake Kegonsa State Park. The trail project is anticipated to begin late 2022 and will include an accessible parking lot expansion at Fish Camp County Park.

**Babcock County Park:** A pair of existing accessible piers were refurbished and reinstalled in 2020 at Babcock, one of the most popular lake access points in the county. Dane County Parks plans to hire a consultant this winter to develop construction documents for a new accessible kayak launch and plan for additional accessible park improvements on recently acquired parkland on Lake Waubesa.

There are other lakes in county parks on the list for accessible improvements in coming years. Unfortunately, flooding and high water are preventing progress at Lussier and Silverwood County Parks.



# All-Terrain Wheelchairs for Accessibility to the Outdoors

The Foundation for Dane County Parks has a wonderful partner in Access Ability Wisconsin (AAW). They helped to sponsor our Sept. 9th event in honor of Darren Marsh. This allowed us the opportunity to work together to showcase all-terrain wheelchairs so that people could see how they worked and try them out.

This nonprofit, led by President Monica Spaeni, is dedicated to facilitating and providing the means for individuals with mobility challenges to access and enjoy Wisconsin's natural resources. Their objective is to provide recreational opportunities for physically challenged people, including wheelchair users, who want to enjoy the Wisconsin outdoors.

AAW has received grants to purchase several all-terrain wheelchairs. These outdoor wheelchairs with a trailer are available for all ages and those with temporary or permanent mobility issues to reserve for free with a small refundable deposit. AAW's clients have been those with walking difficulties, breathing issues, daily wheelchair users, ages 8 to 101. Spaeni says, "Our medical mobility equipment is like our shoes; the outdoor wheelchair is like our hiking boots." These hiking boots are over \$13,500 -- significantly more than the average hiking boots.

Offering these free wheelchair rentals is a solution that increases independence and social interaction and decreases depression. So far there are only two organizations hosting these wheelchairs in Dane County. With the help of the City of Middleton, there is a chair located in Pheasant Branch Conservancy. It is our hope to work with Dane County Parks and AAW to find ways to have more of these outdoor wheelchairs available in our county parks.

To learn more about AAW, find the locations of the outdoor wheelchairs, and make reservations, visit [accessabilitywi.org](http://accessabilitywi.org).



Access Ability Wisconsin President Monica Spaeni with colleagues.

