



Foundation for Dane County Parks

Providing for Today - Creating a Legacy for Tomorrow

2021 End of Year Report

Mission

The Foundation is a non-profit organization with a mission to support our diverse, expansive and beautiful Dane County Parks and Trails system spanning over 17,000 acres of parks, wildlife, and natural areas and over 100 miles of trails to promote peoples' use, connection and access to nature. Through initiatives promoting volunteerism, education, interpretation, and community involvement, the Foundation cultivates a culture of philanthropy with those passionate about sharing Dane County Park's tradition of excellence today and with future generations.

Our goals are to:

- Raise funds for the Friends of Dane County Parks Endowment held by Madison Community Foundation.
- Help determine with Dane County Parks the awarding of grants from the Endowment, and other qualified expenditures of funds from the Endowment, honor donor designations and act as a fiscal agent for friends groups, volunteers, and approved projects.
- Raise and distribute funds for other mutually agreed upon projects benefitting the county parks, improving access to the parks, supporting the operation of the Foundation and supporting other organizations that help our parks.

Building Our Organization

In 2021, the Foundation continued to build out organizational capacity, so that we are best situated to support our community and the Dane County Parks system. Our capacity building efforts are supported by grants from Madison Community Foundation and the Schlecht Family Foundation that are supporting the Foundation from 2020-2022.

- Welcomed Emilie Schada as the **new part time Fundraising Coordinator**, who joins the Foundation Coordinator, Elisa Guerrero as one of two staff liaisons to the Foundation's boards and committees.
- Continued to pursue board and committee **trainings in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion** initiatives and additional opportunities to integrate equity, diversity, and inclusion goals into current and future programming.
- Grew administrative capacity to manage a **Legacy Gift Program** from those who wish to support County Parks in perpetuity by naming us in their will or estate plans.
- The Foundation was named as the recipient of several **Memorial donations** in 2021, an honor bestowed upon the Foundation to be entrusted as a vehicle to commemorate a cherished loved one.



2021 Programming

In 2021, the Foundation enjoyed the following accomplishments made possible by hundreds of generous supporters:

- Continued to build the Friends of Dane County Parks **Endowment Fund**, housed in the Madison Community Foundation, which grew by 21% in 2021 to \$814,301, to support education, volunteerism and education in the parks.
- Awarded \$7,981 in grants** from the Friends of Dane County Endowment Fund to all five Friends and Partner groups who applied. **Since 2019, the Foundation has granted over \$35,000 in support** of volunteer, interpretation, and education. Fewer grant applications were received in 2020, due to the pandemic.
- With a \$5,000 grant from the American Family Insurance Dreams Foundation, the team at Lussier Family Heritage Center was able to develop outdoor environmental leadership skills in 25 youth ages 12-14 through the **"Junior Naturalist Program."**
- Launched the **Healthy Parks Healthy You partnership** with Dean/SSM Health and Dane County Parks to promote the parks and their connection to personal and community health. Program highlights included a **"Vaccines in the Park" event** that distributed over 550 COVID-19 vaccines, and a Parks Passport challenge.
- On September 9, 2021, the Foundation hosted a **community celebration and fundraiser** to recognize the accomplishments of retired Dane County Parks Director, Darren Marsh. All proceeds from the event went to the Foundation, which Darren helped develop over his 18 year career as Parks Director.
- Coordinated planting of 281 trees through the **Legacy Forest** project with the Madison Community Foundation and Dane County Parks. One tree was planted for each MCF Legacy Society member, in lieu of an in person celebration.
- Acted as fiscal agent for the **Lewis E-Way Model Restoration** fundraising efforts led by former Board member, Andy Lewis. The new E-Way exhibit has been installed at the Lussier Family Heritage Center.

Unrestricted Donations:
\$154,947

Grants awarded to the
Foundation:
\$35,000

Special Project Donations

Junior Naturalists: \$5,000
Accessible Piers: \$34,100
Healthy Parks Healthy You: \$35,000

Foundation Volunteer Hours:
5,200

Foundation Grants awarded to
Friends and Partners:
\$7,981

Endowment:
\$814,000

Donors: 380

Welcoming Joleen Stinson

Joleen Stinson was named Interim Director for Dane County Parks in July, when Darren Marsh retired. She was hired in December of 2020 as the Deputy Parks Director. Joleen is a life-long Dane County resident who has always loved the Dane County Park system. She has spent most of her career working for municipal parks departments, most recently as the Parks and Forestry Division Manager for the City of Sun Prairie. When she isn't working, she can usually be found playing at a park with her three young boys. The Foundation is excited to have her on the team!



Thank You to all of our Supporters in 2021

Sponsors from our September Fundraiser are listed in bold

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