

CAPITAL SPRINGS NEWSLETTER



VOLUME II, ISSUE 2
FALL 2009

A Note from the Friends of Capital Springs...



Dusk at the Harvest Moon Festival.

We hope you all had an enjoyable summer, and we look forward to seeing you at the Park this fall! There are many different ways to enjoy the outdoors as the temperatures dip in southern Wisconsin. For you bird watchers out there, it's hard to beat this time of year, as fall migrants descent upon the Madison area. We've got some great bird viewing areas at the Park: the MMSD Wildlife Observation decks, the Lake Waubesa shoreline, and the park's prairies to name just a few. Of course, it's also a great time of year to hike or take a bike ride, as the cool temperatures make it very comfortable and the trees and grasses put on an autumn color show all their own. Whatever you choose to do, we hope you'll pay us a visit at Capital Springs.

We also look forward to seeing you at our **5th annual Harvest Moon Festival on Friday, October 2nd, come rain or shine! Festivities begin at 6 p.m. and end at 9**

p.m. Our popular torch-lit trail will meander through the park grounds again this year, along with interpretive presentations along the way. Expect to see live owls and bats, stargaze with UW's "Universe in the Park" and "Space Place" astronomers, learn about bears, and more! There will also be tasty treats for sale, or if you'd rather kick up your heels, come listen to blue grass musicians play next to the "Howlin' Bonfire". See the flyer inside this newsletter for more details.

The Harvest Moon Festival is **our major fundraiser for the year**, so it is essential that we have a successful event. Local artisans and businesses generously donate items to our **silent auction**, located within the Lussier Family Heritage Center on the night of the Festival. If you would rather donate your time as a Harvest Moon volunteer, we would be more than happy to have your help. Please contact Park Manager Kevin Swenson at (608) 224-3606 or by e-mail at Kevin.Swenson@Wisconsin.gov. If you prefer to donate directly to the Friends, you may do so at any time by contacting Linda Mittnacht at 608-224-3604, or by Mittnacht@co.dane.wi.us. Volunteers will be on hand to take direct donations on the night of the Harvest Moon event as well. All donations are tax-deductible, and all proceeds and donations go toward the recreational facilities and educational programs at the Park.

We've got other exciting park news to announce as well! **Most importantly, we're making progress with the Capital Springs Recreation Area Master Plan.** The plan provides a focused vision for the future of the park, and we are very excited to begin implementing the natural, recreational, and historical opportunities that the park may provide. See page two of this newsletter for more details.

We are also happy to announce our **#1 rating as Madison's best bike path!** **The Capital City Trail got the top rating in the Isthmus' Madison Favorites Manual.** The Capital City trail received twice as many votes as the second place finisher. Our last major park announcement also involves this bike trail. **The Capital City State Trail Overpass**, located near Fish Hatchery Road and McKee Road (see page two of this newsletter), opened in August. It will accommodate approximately 160,000 users of the bike trail annually. Wow! Thanks again for your support and we look forward to seeing you this fall.



— Matt Carlson, President of the **Friends of Capital Springs Recreation Area, Inc.** Please feel free to contact Matt at mccarlson@michaelbest.com with any questions regarding the Friends.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- ◆ **HARVEST MOON FESTIVAL 2009**
See the enclosed flyer
- ◆ **THE PARK MASTER PLAN**
Summary & update
- ◆ **NEW! CAPITAL CITY STATE TRAIL OVERPASS**
Come ride the new overpass
- ◆ **NATURE NOTES**
Tuning into autumn's glory at the Capital Springs
- ◆ **PARK INFORMATION**
Contact information, park highlights, & how to join the Friends

Prefer an e-mail newsletter or interested in becoming a member? Visit our website at <http://www.fwsp.org/capitalsprings/>, contact Linda Mittnacht at 608-224-3604, or email Mittnacht@co.dane.wi.us for more information. Thanks!

The Capital Springs Recreation Area Master Plan

Summary & Update



By Kevin Swenson, Park Manager

After a brief hiatus, the master planning for the Capital Springs State Recreation Area has begun moving forward again. From July 22 to August 22, the public review and comment period was held to solicit feedback on the proposed master plan. On July 29th, a public listening and comment session was held at the Lussier Family Heritage Center. After all the comments were received, state and county authorities sat down and reviewed the feedback. These groups are now making changes to the plan, and another presentation with modifications is slated for October, open to the public.

What is the Master Plan?

The master plan is intended to provide a uniform vision for future operation, management, and development of all the 2,500 acres encompassed within the park boundaries. The document outlines the historical, natural, and recreational opportunities that the Capital Springs State Recreation Area could provide in each of the seven different recreation units. The units include: Nevin Springs, Monona Wetland Conservancy, MMSD Wildlife Observation, Jenni and Kyle Preserve, E-Way, Upper Mud Lake, Capital Springs State Park, and Lake Farm County Park. Preliminary opportunities and land management needs vary from unit to unit. Here's a sampling included in the master plan:

- ◇ prairie restoration
- ◇ hunting (including Americans with Disabilities accessibility)
- ◇ community gardening
- ◇ scenic drive areas
- ◇ marshland restoration
- ◇ extension of the archeological trail
- ◇ dog exercise area
- ◇ more hiking and cross-country ski trails
- ◇ new signage and kiosks on trails
- ◇ equestrian trails
- ◇ biking trails
- ◇ expanded camping opportunities
- ◇ disc golf
- ◇ amphitheater

So What's Next?

After the October presentation, the master plan will begin making its way to the Natural Resource Board and the Dane County Board. Once approved by both entities, the Capital Springs State Recreation Area will have a completed plan. While Dane County will continue to implement plans on county land, funding for staffing and development on the new state park will be added to the next Wisconsin state budget. We are hopeful to have the Capital Springs Centennial State Park fully completed within 2-4 years. This has been a long and at times challenging process. I want to say thank you to the Friends of Capital Springs State Recreation Area, Inc. and everyone else that has been a part of this historical process. For more information, feel free to contact me, Park Manager Kevin Swenson at (608) 224-3606 or by e-mail at Kevin.Swenson@Wisconsin.gov.

Capital City State Trail Fish Hatchery Overpass

The grand opening of the Capital City State Trail Fish Hatchery Overpass was August 29th. The overpass is located near the intersection of Fish Hatchery Road and McKee Road. It will serve some 160,000 users of the bike trail annually!



The bridge was a combined effort between Dane County, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Transportation, and the City of Fitchburg.

A new trail head for the Capital City State Trail is slated to be built just to the east of the bridge in the coming years, next to the DNR Hatchery that will realign the trail off of Glacial Valley Road. So not only will the annual 160,000 users have a safe means over Fish Hatchery Road, but they will also have a nice place to stop and relax as well. Stay tuned for more information!

Nature Notes

Tuning into Autumn's Glory at Capital Springs

By Anna Thomas Bates, Friends Group Member

Living in Wisconsin, one of the most common and cherished indicators of autumn is leaves changing color. The entire spectrum of autumn's glory--golden yellows, blazing reds, and awesome oranges--can be seen throughout the grounds at Capital Springs as well, beginning as early as July and continuing until the last leaves fall to the ground in late autumn. How does this gorgeous display in nature happen every year?

How Does It All Work? Pigments!

In the summertime, all trees are green because of a substance called **chlorophyll**. This is a pigment that helps trees convert sunlight into food. Other pigments are responsible for the autumn fireworks we see every fall in the forest canopy.

Carotenoids

One such pigment is **Carotenoids**, which results in orange, yellow, and brown leaves (and also color bananas, corn, squash, carrots, and more). Carotenoids are always present in leaves, but are masked by the green chlorophyll during the growing months. This pigment is not effected by changes in the weather. As such, when summer comes to a close and the days get shorter, trees produce less and less chlorophyll, finally allowing the yellow and orange carotenoids to show through.



Anthocyanins

Another pigment found in trees is called **Anthocyanins**. It creates the ravishing reds and deep purples of autumn (and are responsible for the color of berries, apples, and grapes). The reaction that produces red anthocyanins is more complex, involving tree sap and such factors as the acidity level in a tree, sugar concentration, and light exposure.



The reason that some autumns seem more spectacular and colorful than past seasons is because they are! A unique blend of moisture, light, and temperature can effect the anthocyanins reaction in a tree, stimulating different fall colors from year to year. For the most stunning display, optimal conditions include a warm and wet spring, a summer that's not too hot or dry, and a fall with warm sunny days and cool nights. Warm sunny days in autumn allow the tree to produce lots of sugar, but the cool nights prevent

the sugary sap (an essential ingredient in brilliant color-production) from flowing away from the leaf and into the branches and trunk. Because of this sap-retention phenomenon, the anthocyanins in the tree are also a tree's protection policy – they help the tree recover the most recently-made nutrients before its leaves fall.

Tree Identification in Autumn

Fall leaf color can make it easier to identify types of trees. Sumacs, found in transitional areas between prairies and woods, turn red beginning as early as July. Oaks are traditionally brown or gold, birches are bright yellow, dogwoods are a dark purple-red, and maples vary from the scarlet red maple, to the famous orange-red sugar maple. Evergreen trees, like pines and cedars, stay green throughout the year.

The Capital Springs Color Show



Find all of the gorgeous fall colors at the Capital Spring Recreation Area. With the backdrop of prairie grasses, Lake Waubesa, and big open sky at the park, the autumn color show is sure to be a hit with you and your family. It's a perfect time of year to take a hike or bike ride through the park.

For more detailed information about where to go in the park, check out park trail maps available online at our new web site <http://www.fwsp.org/capitalsprings/>. You can always just stop by the Lussier Family Heritage Center for information as well. Or, contact our park manager, Kevin Swensen, at (608) 224-3606 or by email at Kevin.Swenson@Wisconsin.gov for places to see fall color at the park. He'll know the best spots!

CAPITAL SPRINGS STATE RECREATION AREA INFORMATION

3101 Lake Farm Road
Madison, WI 53711

The Capital Springs Recreation Area just south of Madison encompasses about **2,500 acres** stretching from Fish Hatchery Road east to Lake Waubesa, including most of the Nine Springs E-way. There are many different areas of the park to explore, including the Lake Farm Park, the Jenni & Kyle Preserve, and Capital City State Trail which meanders through the park, connecting to other area bike trails and downtown Madison. Stop by the Lussier Family Heritage Center for additional information and a map.



Capital Springs protects more than three-quarters of a mile of undeveloped Lake Waubesa shoreline.

Hiking and skiing trails, picnic shelters, a boat launch, free bikes, and the Lake Farm Campground are just some of the activities and amenities available. For camping or picnic shelter reservations, contact Dane County Parks at (608) 246-3896, or reserve campsites online at www.reservedane.com. For more information, contact our park manager, Kevin Swenson, at (608) 224-3606 or by e-mail at Kevin.Swenson@Wisconsin.gov.

Your support is vital to the continued growth and success of Capital Springs Recreation Area. Please consider volunteering your time, joining the **Friends of Capital Springs Recreation Area**, or sending a tax-deductible donation to the **Friends of Capital Springs Recreation Area, Inc.** All funds received go directly to park improvements and **Friends** initiatives. Thank you for your support and we hope to see you soon at the park!

Park Directions: From Madison or Interstate I-90, take the West Beltline (US Highway 12/18) to the South Towne Drive Exit (exit 264) and go south. Continue for almost one mile and then turn left on Moorland Road, which turns into Lake Farm Road after the road curves. The park is located about 1/4 mile past the curve at 3101 Lake Farm Road. You'll see the Lussier Family Heritage Center and campground on your left.

*The Capital Springs Newsletter is published by volunteers of the **Friends of Capital Springs Recreation Area, Inc.** as a benefit to its members.*

Friends Board of Directors: Matt Carlson, President; Anna Thomas Bates, Vice-President; Judie Pfeifer, Treasurer; Bill Lunney, Secretary; Bruce Lindsay.

Dane County Liaison: Linda Mittnacht

Park Manager and DNR Liaison: Kevin Swenson

Dane County Volunteer Coordinator: Rhea Stangel-Maier

Newsletter Editor/Designer: Clare L. Carlson



Friends of Capital Springs Recreation Area, Inc.
3101 Lake Farm Road
Madison, WI 53711