

Capital Springs Newsletter

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Welcome to another exciting late Summer/early Fall at Capital Springs Recreation Area that will be full of opportunities to enjoy a wide variety of fun, educational and volunteer activities! The **Friends of Capital Springs Recreation Area (Friends)** invite you and your families and friends to come to Capital Springs and explore and enjoy the hiking, biking, boating, camping and bird-watching opportunities, as well as the chance to sit and quietly reflect on the park's natural beauty - almost all of which is available within view of the Capitol Dome. The Friends continue to work along with State and County officials to conserve and promote the natural beauty of Capital Springs, as well as to provide a multitude of recreational activities and assist in the continued development of park infrastructure.

As highlighted in this Newsletter, it has been a busy year at the Park and for the Friends. We hosted a number of volunteer workday events in the Spring and early Summer and have been working closely with Dane County and the State DNR to plan for future Park improvements and projects. And with the coming of Fall, we have been spending a lot of time with our committed volunteers in planning the **2011 Harvest Moon Festival scheduled for Friday, October 7 from 6:00 – 9:00 pm at the Lussier Family Heritage Center** (see enclosed flyer)! We expect another fun and informative Harvest Moon, and hope that you, your family and friends will be able to join us this year for what has become our most important event for raising funds to support the Park. Please contact us if you would like to volunteer at the event, contribute to the Silent Auction or attend our planning meetings to learn about the Park and the Friends.

As always, thank you for your support!

—Matt Carlson, President of the Friends of Capital Springs Recreation Area

Please visit us online at www.fwsp.org/capitalsprings/ and on Facebook.

Have ideas? Contact us at CapSprings@gmail.com.

Capital City Bike Trail Update—Madison's #1 Trail

By Bruce Lindsay, Vice-President of the Friends of Capital Springs Recreation Area, Inc.

The Capital City State Trail is one of the key amenities of the Capital Springs Recreation Area. It provides bike access to all of the park's areas and connects us to other bike trails in Dane County. The Capital City Trail was recognized as the #1 bike trail in Madison by the Isthmus in 2010, but sadly, few people are aware that the Trail is part of the Recreation Area. **The Friends are working with State, County, and municipal governments to fund improvements, maintain right-of-ways, and to engage communities in safety awareness.**

- **The Friends participated in a special DNR training program, and we are now qualified to sell State Trail Passes.** A state trail pass is required for bicyclists, roller bladders, and roller skiers age 16 years of age and older. An annual pass costs \$20.00, and can be used at all of Wisconsin state trails. Passes sold by the Friends means that **20% of the fee will be used solely for improvements on the Cap City Trail.** This year, volunteers have braved the bitterly cold spring to sell trail passes on the Cap City Trail, raising important funds for trail projects. We expect that as avid trail users learn about the program, they will direct their support and purchase from the Friends. To make it even more efficient for cyclists, we are working to establish an online Paypal program so users can purchase by credit card from our web site at www.fwsp.org/capitalsprings/. During the holidays, a State Trail Pass is a great stocking stuffer, especially when 20% stays on the Trail!



- **Pinnacle Health and Fitness sponsored a fund raising event in late 2010 for the Cap City Trail.** It was too cold and snowy to ride the Trail, so 20 hardcore riders spent two hours "spinning" at the downtown club. Jamie van Ooyen and John Montzingo of Pinnacle led the peloton. We raised \$350 in donations and trail passes. We are planning another event at the Fitchburg club this fall, which can accommodate a lot more riders.

- **FOCSRA kicked off the biking season on June 4th as part of National Trails Day.** Friends staffed the information booth on the Capital City Trail next to the Lussier Family Heritage Center. Fontana Sports Specialties sponsored the National Trails work day by sending out their staff to clear invasives along the Cap City Bike Trail. Thanks, Fontana, for your continued support! It was great to meet and greet so many riders enjoying the trail.

- **In 2011, the State completed the seven mile extension of the Badger State Trail, connecting it to the Capital City Trail and Southwest Commuter Trail.**

Dane County started the paving of the Cannonball Trail, with a connector to the Cap City Trail. The Cannonball will be constructing a bike bridge over the Beltline, which will enable it to connect to the Wingra bike trail. Dane County received additional federal funds to build the Lower Yahara River Trail. This trail will run from Lake Farm Park, over the Yahara River, and along Lake Waubesa into McAllen Park in McFarland, and ultimately to Stoughton. Construction will begin in 2013, after an environmental study is approved. Capital Springs Recreation Area is quickly becoming the nexus for biking in southern Wisconsin!



- **The Friends were asked to provide input on Dane County's 5-Year Plan for Open Space and Parks.** One of the recommendations was to partner with the Dane County's mountain biking club, Capital Off-Road Pathfinders (CORP), to build a single-track mountain bike trail in Dawley Park, just off Seminole Highway. Dawley Park is the point where the Cap City Trail, Cannonball Trail, Badger Trail, and Southwest Commuter Trail meet, which means the mountain bike trail will have incredible access to Madison and UW. Dawley Park once had cross-county ski trails--now abandoned--and the park is overgrown with invasive species. CORP has done an outstanding job of building sustainable trails at State and county parks, so we hope that Dane County Parks will move ahead with this recommendation.

- **Speaking of invasive species, the Friends were horrified to learn about the dangers of wild parsnip, which has bloomed everywhere along the Capital City Trail.** The yellow-green flower resembles Queen Anne's Lace, and can cause second-degree burns on skin. The Friends launched a public awareness program by creating a poster using UW Extension publications and posting them at every trailhead along the Trail. We also contacted local schools along the Trail and provided posters to other parks. With a less urgent invasive but equally threatening to native species, our newest Board member, Dan Kerkman, led a work party to remove buckthorn and box elder along the Cap City Trail near Clayton Road. In the future, we plan to target additional areas for better sight lines and safety.



- **Madison is the center of the biking universe. The Cap City Trail is the #1 bike trail in the Madison area! As such, we felt that it was time for the Friends to engage the biking community**

Capital City Bike Trail Update—Madison's #1 Trail

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and coordinate initiatives. To begin, we found it useful that our President, Matt Carlson, serves on the down town Madison Inc. biking committee, and that I'm an active member of CORP. The Friends also met with the Bicycle Federation of WI, swapping information about new bike trails and the Bike Fed's safety initiatives. In addition, we thought that the Cap City Trail might be a great way to engage more of Dane County's inner city youth with Capital Springs Park, so we met with Dream Bikes, a 501(c) 3 charitable organization that refurbishes old bikes and provides them to inner city youth. Dream Bike's store is less than one mile from Dawley Park, so there is a lot of excitement about clinics, races, and other kid's events. The Friends also met with Saris Cycling Group, a manufacturer of bike racks, based in Madison (1.5 miles to Dawley Park). We've asked Saris to update its circle of friends, including Trek and Pacific Cycle.



- **In August, the Friends, Dream Bikes, and Bike Fed organized a bike rodeo at the Lussier Center.** This safety training event was targeted to new bike riders, ages 5-8. Dream Bikes provided bikes, the Bike Fed fitted helmets, and the Friends led a group ride on the Cap City Trail.

Both the Bike Fed and Dream Bikes have also tentatively agreed to participate in the Harvest Moon Festival, Friday October 7, 6-9 pm, at the Lussier Center. Dream Bike will be teaching parents how to change a flat tire.

Get Involved! OK, the Friends has a lot on its plate. We need a lot of help to make these initiatives happen. We also have other projects: bike bridges on PD, Seminole Highway, and South Towne Drive; bike trails along Lake Farm Road; work at the Lower Yahara River Trail; and bike trails to the new dog park. Let's make sure that Cap City Trail continues to be Madison's #1 bike trail, as well as support the Park to make it Wisconsin's largest urban park (2,500+ acres) and the best place for kids to learn about wildlife, pristine natural habitat, and a deep commitment to local heritage. **Please, volunteer, get involved, and make Capital Springs Recreation Area the jewel of southern Wisconsin.** Call Rhea at 608-224-3601 or stangel-maier@co.dane.wi.us.

All trail photos for this article are views from the Capital City Trail.

Jenni & Kyle Preserve Mural Dedication

On July 21st, Dane County Executive Joe Parisi, Parks Commission Chair Bill Lunney, VSA Wisconsin President Kathie Wagner, and the Friends dedicated a new art piece at the Park: a beautiful mosaic located at the Jenni & Kyle Preserve, 925 Post Road. The mural is the work of talented individuals with disabilities from the Madison area. Please visit the mural at any time during normal park hours.



The mosaic tile mural came to life through a collaboration of VSA Wisconsin, the Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission and Dane County Parks. Funding for the project was provided by many partners, including a primary donation from Sally Wilmeth and Terry Guerink and funds from Endres Manufacturing Co. Foundation, Brittingham Madison Trust, M3-Insurance Solutions for Business, Madison Rotary Foundation, the Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation, and VSA under an award from the U.S. Department of Education.

The mural celebrates the seasonal beauty of the Jenni & Kyle Preserve and showcases the creative talents of 70 individuals with disabilities. Fifty clients from MARC, the largest provider of community and center-based employment, day services, and personal care for adults with developmental disabilities in Dane County, and twenty students from Walbridge School, the only private day school in Wisconsin dedicated to teaching children with learning disabilities, created the mural under the direction of VSA Wisconsin teaching artists Marcia Yapp and Megan Cain.

The Jenni and Kyle Preserve was established in 1989, thanks to a generous donation from Patricia and Harvey Wilmeth as a memorial to their two grandchildren, Jenni and Kyle, who both died at the age of 4 of a degenerative neurological disease. The Jenni and Kyle Preserve is unique in that the park is intended to serve children and persons with disabilities, and provides accessible fishing and picnic areas, trails, wheelchair swings, and a shelter building around two spring-fed ponds containing trout and panfish.

Capital Springs Park Management and Planning Update

By Matt Carlson, President of the Friends of Capital Springs Recreation Area, Inc.

The Park has the benefit of being supported by three critical elements: Dane County, the State DNR, and the volunteer sector (The Friends of Capital Springs). Continued communication among these entities is essential for well-coordinated Park management and development. The Board of the Friends has been engaged in a series of meetings with Dane County and State DNR officials to discuss the future management and development of Park resources.

Meeting with Dane County to Provide Input For County Parks and Open Space Plan

In June, the Friends Board met with Dane County officials Darren Marsh, County Parks Director, and Chris James, County Parks Planner, to provide input to the Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan for 2011 – 2016. At the meeting, Board members emphasized the importance of the Park to the surrounding citizenry and the unique opportunity that the Park provides to maintain vital green space in an area next to, and surrounded by, urban/suburban development. The Board noted that as development pressures increase, so do the pressures of finding and maintaining green space. Accordingly, the Board urged the County in its planning to “think big and think toward the future” and to start providing the necessary amenities, programs, and facilities to meet that challenge. The Board provided a number of comments and suggestions along these lines, including:

Heritage Center. Enhance the Lussier Family Heritage Center to facilitate one of its original missions as a Heritage and Cultural Education Center for the County, with the recognition that a major capital campaign will be required and that the Friends will be an integral partner in the process.

Bicycle Commuter lots. Consider the development of a series of small bicycle commuter lots on Dane County lands to support bicycle commuting in and around the greater Madison area. Recent surveys in the community have indicated a strong desire by employees working in down town Madison to commute to work by bike.

Water Trails. Support and assist with the development of a comprehensive water trail through the Park to allow visitors to experience a unique perspective of the natural communities found in the Park. Friends Board member Dan Kerkman has already spent many hours of his time (along with a small group of willing volunteers) to establish an initial section of the water trail through the Park (see related story in this edition), but additional improvements including more access points, bridges, and expanded roadway underpasses would be valuable to enhance this unique recreational opportunity.

Education. Develop interpretive nodes and “rest areas” along the Capital City Trail, showcasing the important culture, flora, and fauna of the area through educational signage. Additionally, use the Park, with its significant archeological resources, to educate and promote the important archeological and cultural history of the Park and surrounding areas.

Conservation and Preservation. Maintain and preserve the quiet/reflective areas of the Park to enhance the opportunity for visitors to observe the abundant natural communities of flora and fauna found within the Park.

Lower Yahara Bike Trail and Connectors. Develop this new trail and related connectors (see related story in this edition) in order to enhance the Park as a central “cross-roads” in the network of south-central bicycle trails.

Lake Farm Road Bike Trail. Address the potentially dangerous conditions for bicyclists along Lake Farm Road by working with the Town of Dunn to develop a bicycle-only lane along the road. The road is a popular connection for area bicyclists connecting to the Capital City Trail and a bike-only lane is critical to ensure that the road can be safely used by bicyclists and vehicles.

Coordination Meeting with Dane County and State DNR to Discuss Park Master Plan Implementation

In July, Dane County, State DNR, and Friends Board members met to share ideas and to coordinate the implementation of the goals and visions for the Park set forth in the recently adopted Master Plan and Management Plan. At the July meeting, Darren Marsh, County Parks Director, emphasized that the Management Agreement recently entered into by the State and County is designed to bring about efficiencies of operation, define roles of the entities, and present a framework for development of the Park in the future. In addition, the group discussed a number of other ongoing and future projects planned for the Park that are highlighted in other sections of this edition.

The Friend’s Board will take the lead in organizing annual/semi-annual meetings with the DNR and County representatives to ensure that the specific improvements, as well as the general goals and vision, set forth in the Master Plan are implemented over time. The Friend’s Board will continue to work closely with County staff, as well as the DNR, to ensure that the Park continues to evolve into a parkland asset that will enrich the quality of life of the Dane County community. **The next Coordination Team meeting is scheduled for November 4, 2011, so please contact the Friend’s Board if you have any ideas or input that you would like to provide to this important planning process.**

The Friends Board commends Dane County and State DNR officials for their dedicated efforts in managing and planning for the Park’s present and future success, as well as their willingness to involve the Friends in these important discussions.

Capital Springs Park Improvements

There are a number of exciting projects underway and planned for the near future at the Park. The following is a short overview of what you can expect to see and enjoy during your upcoming visits to the Park (as always, please feel free to contact the Friends for additional information):

Current and Recently Completed Park Projects

- Construction of Dog Exercise Area - Planned for fall of 2011.
- Construction of Disc Golf Course - Late summer/early fall of 2011.
- Baxter Park Trail - Completed! The trail is completed thanks to the partnership between the Friends Board member Dan Kerkman and Dane County staff. This trail connector is significant as it connects the Park to several population areas in South Madison and expedites physical access between the Park and populations that generally minimally use the Park.
- Replacement of Two Nine Springs Eway Bridges. – Completed!
- Water trail – Completed! Due to the work of Friends' Board member, Dan Kerkman, there is now a canoe/kayak trail cleared along the Nine Springs Creek so that paddlers can travel much of the Park by canoe/kayak. The trail provides access from the Yahara Channel near beautiful Lake Waubesa all the way to County Hwy MM. Please see the article in this edition about Dan Kerkman and his work with the Park's water trail and other projects.
- Capital City Trail – Dane County recently completed a number of crack sealing and pavement repair projects.
- Campground – The County is upgrading the facility. In July, the Park hosted the Family Motor Coaches Association (FMCA) convention, attended by 1,700 RV campers! Lake Farm Park accommodated 400 alone! See the photo on this page.
- Lussier Family Heritage Center – Siding is being replaced.
- Observation Tower – Restoration and replacement of the stairs and overlook deck at the Lake Farm Park Unit is underway.



This photo depicts the almost 400 motor coaches that stayed at Lake Farm Park for the Family Motor Coaches Association (FMCA) convention in July at Capital Springs.

Future Development of the Park and Trails Being Planned and Considered

- Proposed expansion of the Lower Yahara River Bike Trail – Next phase south to Stoughton.
- Potential Planning and Construction of a bicycle trail bordering Lake Waubesa, running south and connecting to Waucheeta Trail, and Waubesa Avenue, as well as other Town of Dunn Streets.
- Potential bicycle lanes on Lake Farm Road for safety and improved recreational use. The road could then function as a connector route to the Park.
- Development of the Amphitheatre site for public enjoyment as set forth in the Master Plan.
- Limited development of Hogg Island in an environmentally sensitive manner in order to provide public access and enjoyment of Lake Waubesa, including possibly an observation deck, fishing area and trail access.

Coming Soon!

- Prairie restoration Project on State DNR land near Hogg Island and southward – 2013. Phase one of a two phased project that eventually will prepare for the development of the proposed bike trail, amphitheatre, primitive campground (i.e., tent only), and observation area on Hogg Island.

New Board Member: Dan Kerkman has been a dedicated friend to the Park's waterways

We are delighted to welcome our newest member, Dan Kerkman, to the Board of the Friends of Capital Springs. Dan is a long-time Park volunteer, working on numerous trail projects, plantings, and most recently, clearing a canoe/kayak water trail along Nine Springs Creek. We sat down with Dan and asked him to share his experiences with Capital Springs.



How did you first get involved and interested in Capital Springs?

I have been doing volunteer work for Dane County parks in the E-way for about 18 years. I have installed a nature trail, removed invasives, planted trees, etc... Dane County Park Naturalist Wayne Pauly and the Dane county volunteer coordinator were the first people I met long time ago and got me started on the right path.

How did you come to join the FOCSRA Board?

There were multiple people involved the last couple of years and attending Harvest Moon couple of years ago convinced me into joining the Board.

What are your favorite ways to enjoy Capital Springs?

I enjoy working on projects within the E-way. My main focus is the area from MM on the West and the Heritage center on the East. It is the middle section of Capital Springs. I also just enjoy walking through the area observing wildlife and the different plants that are coming up in the area.

Are there any new features of Capital Springs of which people should be aware?

I just completed the water trail through the park. There are two canoe landings: one is on the end of Anderberg and MM, and the second landing is off Mooreland Road at Capital Springs Park. It is a wonderful canoe trip that has a lot to offer. A person can go from Yahara River (Lake Waubesa) to MM and Rimrock Road.

How do you see Capital Springs benefiting Madison and surrounding communities?

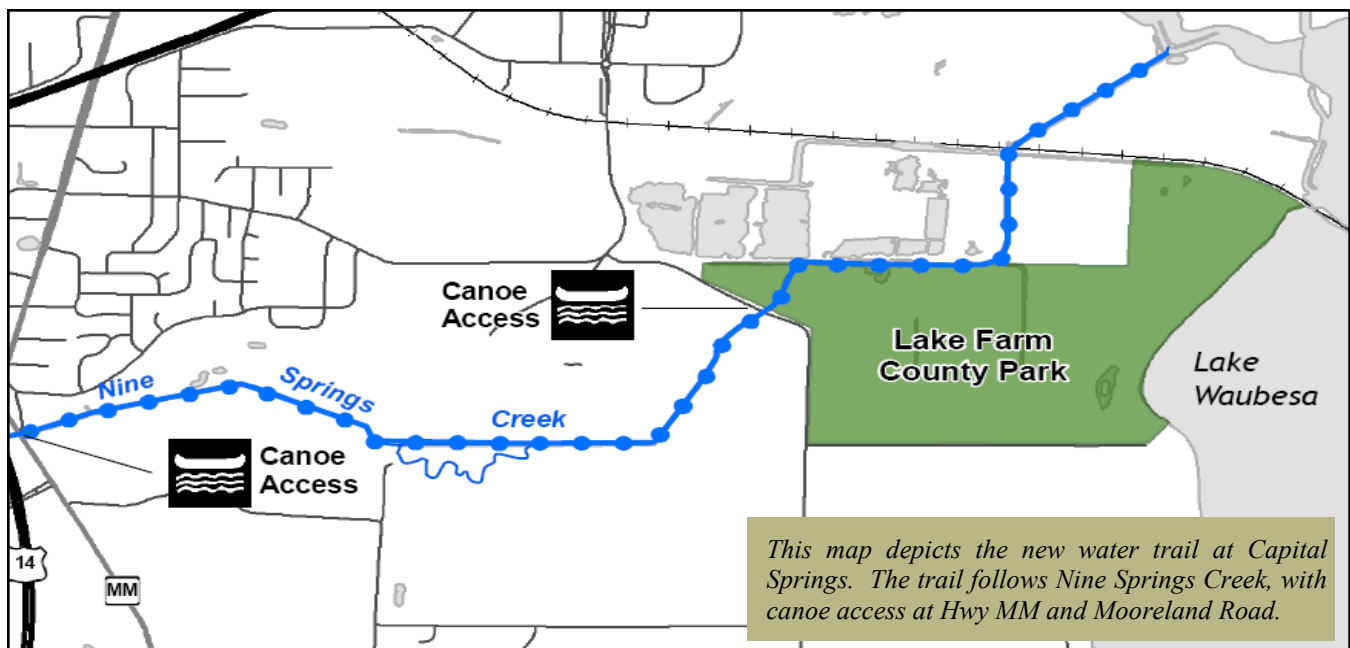
We have a very unique environmental corridor. We have diverse wild life and plants, and the park is only ten minutes from down town. This could be a great long term laboratory since a lot of rain water from South side of Madison and Fitchburg dumps into Nine Springs creek. Also, there is great potential in educating people who've never experienced the wildlife, plant life, and the great outdoors.

In your view, what role does the Friends play in supporting the park?

Due to budget cuts I think the Friends will have a more important role in developing the park. Dane County Parks already knows that volunteers are very important in assisting in managing the Park. The Friends can help support by supplying volunteer hours and solicit money to help move forward with the development of the Park.

What are some ways that folks can get involved with the Friends to show their support for Capital Springs?

Probably the best way is to share in the vision of the Park. Many people have hidden talents that can be beneficial--everything from manual labor such as helping with prairie planting, seed collection, tree planting, invasive removal, trail maintenance, fund raising, sharing ideas on Park development, etc... I see many things that can be done through the Friends.





Harvest Moon Festival

6pm – 9pm (Come Rain or Shine)

- ☆ Take a stroll on our torch lit trail under the harvest moon and discover the natural world through interpretive presentations on topics such as Wisconsin's owls, amphibians, trees, bears, bats and more!
- ☆ Bid on silent auction items (until 8 pm)
- ☆ Stargaze through telescopes with the UW's "Universe in the Park" and "Space Place" astronomers
- ☆ Listen to Blue Grass Music and enjoy s'mores around the "Howlin' Bonfire"

Admission \$4.00/person (age 5 and under free)

\$5.00/person annual Friends of Capital Springs Recreation Area membership includes free admission to this event

Food and beverages will be available for purchase.

Proceeds go toward the recreational facilities and educational programs at the Lussier Family Heritage Center, Capital City State Trail & Capital Springs Recreation Area. Please call 224-3604 or check out our website at www.fwsp.org/capitalsprings/ for more information.

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 down town 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 onto Lake Waubesa, rental bikes, water trail, 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 224-3730, or reserve campsites online at www.reservedane.com. For more information, contact Dane County Parks at Dane-Parks@CountyofDane.

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; Bruce Lindsay, Vice-President; Anna Thomas Bates, Vice-President; Judie Pfeifer, Treasurer; Bill Lunney, Secretary; Dan Kerkman.

Dane County Liaison: Linda Mittnacht

Park Manager and DNR Liaison: Kevin Swenson

Dane County Volunteer Coordinator: Rhea Stangel-Maier

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