

Capital Springs Newsletter

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



Harvest Moon Festival 2012

Our event is September 28, 2012 at the Lussier Family Heritage Center. See our flyer inside on page two!

A View Through Time--12,000 Years in the Nine Springs Area

FOCSRA's Judie Pfeifer recollects an educational evening at the Lussier Family Heritage Center with archeological expert Phil Salkin. Watch it online.

Water Trail on Nine Springs Creek

Thanks to all who made this project possible.

Meet Terri Felton, Naturalist Program Coordinator for Capital Springs

Terri is currently working on interpretative kiosks for MMSD Unit and planning naturalist-led programs.

Drought on the Prairie

The power of native plants! Terri Felton explains how prairie plants handle drought conditions.

Joint Effort To Improve Our Water

The Friends and Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) work together to improve water quality in the Yahara River Basin.

New Board Member: Michael Mucha

As Chief Engineer and Director of MMSD, Michael provides important knowledge concerning water quality for Capital Springs.

Unit Focus: MMSD Wildlife Observation Area

With three miles of trails and boardwalks, the MMSD unit is a birdwatchers paradise.



At Capital Springs ...

What a great time at Capital Springs! We've got exciting news and projects to announce. Please read on.



We are now hard at work planning **Harvest Moon Festival 2012**, scheduled for **September 28** at the Lussier Family Heritage Center. If you are interested in volunteering at Harvest Moon, please contact Linda Mitnacht at (608) 224-3604 and at CapSprings@gmail.com.

We are pleased to introduce **Terri Felton, our new Naturalist Program Coordinator**, who will be responsible for creating educational programming and materials to enhance your experience at Capital Springs. We also have a **new Board Member** to introduce to our Members! **Michael Mucha** brings important knowledge and expertise concerning the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) Unit and water quality issues at Capital Springs. We are very excited to work with Michael and MMSD on a number of projects, including a current effort involving water quality in **the Yahara River Basin**.

Friends members enjoyed an educational evening with archeological expert **Phil Salkin discussing A View Through Time—12,000 Years in the Nine Springs Area**. You can catch his lecture for yourself online! After a lot of hard work and cooperation, Friends members completed the **water trail on Nine Springs Creek**. Many volunteers from around the county dedicated their time, and now the trail is ready to enjoy! Please read inside for more information on all of these exciting topics.



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 a variety of outdoor educational conservation topics!
- ★ 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 by "Off the Porch" and "Milkhouse Radio" 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 beverage 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 608- 224-3604 or email capsprings@gmail.com for more information.

A VIEW THROUGH TIME--12,000 YEARS IN THE NINE SPRINGS AREA

By Judie Pfeifer

FOCSRA's Judie Pfeifer recollects an educational evening at the Lussier Family Heritage Center with Archeological expert Phil Salkin. Watch a video of the lecture online!

On June 25, the Friends sponsored a presentation by Professional Archeologist Phil Salkin at the Lussier Family Heritage Center. Salkin has done most of the recent archeological research on the Capital Springs Recreation Area (CSRA). His discussion, highlighted by slides, gave the over 80 people in attendance some wonderful insights into our past. He described each era from 12,000 BC until the present, supplemented by his research at CSRA. The reception was excellent by those in attendance and we hope to continue providing our members with future educational opportunities.



Phil Salkin answered questions after the presentation.

Phil Salkin's presentation can be viewed at the Fitchburg Access Community Television (FACTv) website. The video "A View Through Time - Nine Springs Area" can be accessed by searching "Nine Springs" from FACTv's Education channel at <http://factv.city.fitchburg.wi.us/Cablecast/Public/Main.aspx?ChannelID=2>.

Special thanks go out to Bonny Lundy and the rest of her support staff at FACTv for their expert help in putting this video together.

NINE SPRINGS WATER TRAIL NOW COMPLETE

By Dan Kerkman

I would like to THANK all the people who have helped on this project. It took about one and a half years and a lot of hours to complete. Capital Water Trails founder Steve Falter was very instrumental in getting us on the right track. His knowledge and expertise really helped in overcoming the many hurdles that came before us, such as reconstructing both launches so that they were ready to be put together at each site.

The many volunteers from his organization as well as the Indian Springs Neighborhood Association, who helped install the launch at the Anderberg Drive location, contributed significantly to this project. Dane County Parks staff assisted by hauling pre-cut supplies, and Friends of Capital Springs were also very important on getting this trail completed.

This water trail gave me a great deal of satisfaction on seeing so many people from different organizations and expertise come together to reach a goal. This spring we had two canoe launches installed and a more direct trail made for the launch off Moorland Road. If you get a chance, stop by and have a refreshing ride down the Nine Springs canoe trail.



MEET TERRI FELTON

Naturalist Program Coordinator for Friends of Capital Springs



We are very excited to introduce Terri Felton! She has exciting ideas and projects in support of the educational and outreach goals that are elemental of the Friends' mission and objectives.

As the Naturalist Program Coordinator, what are your duties?

My main duties are to organize and develop educational programs and materials for the park. I am currently developing content for an interpretive kiosk between Lake Farm Park and the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD). The kiosk will showcase the area as an important shorebird habitat, and will also describe the role MMSD plays in water quality. I'm learning a lot about sewage! I'm also enjoying spending time walking and biking the trails, and experiencing and learning about all that the recreation area has to offer.

What past experiences made you interested in this position?

I am a public school teacher in my other life, and I volunteer regularly with the Sierra Club Inner City Outings program, which provides outdoor experiences to children from area community centers, many of whom have little or no opportunity for outdoor education or recreation. I am excited to bridge my volunteer work with this position by organizing programs here for the Inner City Outings groups and exposing them to the many different areas of the park. I enjoy sharing outdoor experiences with others, and I look forward to providing educational opportunities for park visitors, both active and passive.

In your view, what role do public lands and natural spaces play in our community?

Natural spaces are inherently important, regardless of their value to humans, and it is vitally important to preserve natural spaces to maintain balance in our ecosystem and protect biodiversity. That said, I feel that natural spaces are also fundamental to human development and growth. We need experiences in nature to recharge, recreate, and connect with the earth. Public lands, especially in an urban environment, are essential for providing equitable access to those experiences that are so central to our development. They are also excellent opportunities for outdoor education and often serve as natural laboratories and classrooms.

What projects are prioritized for the Park?

Interpretive projects such as creating kiosks and information boards are high priority, as well as bringing in more naturalist-led programs and talks. I am excited to be a part of that process. I am also excited about the bike trail expansion that will begin next year, in addition to continuing

work on the water trail. All of these projects will improve access and awareness, which is becoming increasingly more important as county budgets are cut.

How will you be involved with the Harvest Moon Festival?

I mostly support what the Friends group is already doing. This festival has been running so well and is very organized – there is little for me to do! My main assistance will be helping to organize the outdoor events and to bring in new programs and sponsors.

Based on a long-term view of Capital Springs, what improvements do you envision as important to the future of the Park?

I think improving awareness of the park is central to its future. As budgets continue to diminish, the park's future will depend on the public's perception of its importance. Providing more interpretive programs and materials to educate the public on the park's history, ecological importance, and recreational amenities will move toward that goal. I also feel that expanding the variety of activities and access points will bring more and different populations of people to the park, which will in turn increase awareness and public value.

I feel that the Capital Springs Recreation Area is uniquely situated to offer easily accessible outdoor recreation and education to a wide and varied group of people, utilizing a wide variety of experiences. We have easy access to top-notch biking, hiking, paddling, fishing, birding, skiing, and soon to be realized disc golf. We are an urban park with exceptional biodiversity and open landscape, which I think is very rare.

Please contact the Friends at Capsprings@gmail.com if you have any thoughts or ideas for educational programming at Capital Springs. Thanks for your support.

DROUGHT ON THE PRAIRIE

by Terri Felton



The power of native plants! Terri Felton explains how prairie plants handle drought conditions.

This year's drought and high temperatures have created an amazing opportunity to witness the power of native plants. While many of our yards and gardens are withering without (or even with) additional watering, most of the native prairie plants in the Capital Springs Recreation Area continue to dazzle us with their colorful show. Prairie plants have many qualities that allow them to adapt easily to drought conditions. Some simply cut back on their growth and/or go dormant until moisture returns or the next season begins. Others take advantage of their deep roots and the lack of competition from the dormant plants to fill out open areas and bloom even more fully.



Compass plant blooms in the Park's prairie.

Plants that seem to be doing well this year are the deep tap-rooted plants such as butterfly weed, prairie clover, coneflower, prairie dock, and compass plant. I've noticed plenty of coneflower and prairie dock in the prairies along the E-Way, as well as prairie clover and Indian plantain. I've also seen a fair bit of bergamot, which has a relatively shallower root system, but it seems to be doing best in areas with some moderate moisture.

According to Wayne Pauly, Dane County Naturalist, the compass plant and prairie dock are "taking advantage of the reduced competition and their deep roots and have a great flower show." Some other plants, such as golden Alexander and white indigo, produced healthy seeds very early due to the warm spring, so they will continue to do well. We'll have to wait and see what effects this summer will bring to some of the later-producing plants.

What makes prairie plants so adaptive to drought conditions is indeed their deep root network. Grasses such as big bluestem and Indian grass can reach depths of around 6 feet, while the tap roots of plants such as prairie dock and compass plant usually reach 12-14 feet. Compared to the average 10-12 inches of most lawn grass, it is easy to understand why many lawns are brown this year while the prairie plants are thriving. Other moisture-conserving adaptations of prairie plants include having narrow or waxy

leaves, such as Rattlesnake Master, or the interesting way Compass Plant re-oriens itself regularly to avoid direct sun exposure. Prairie plants really are quite amazing!

It is difficult to predict what effects prolonged drought conditions may have on our rural and urban landscape. If summers like this become more frequent, perhaps we will see more native plantings in urban areas, replacing grass lawns with rain gardens, etc. If nothing else, we can be confident that our prairies will withstand whatever Mother Nature has in store, and we will always have a beautiful flower show to look forward to.



Prairie dock and rattlesnake master thrive at Capital Springs.

2012 PRAIRIE SEED COLLECTING

We will meet at 9:00 a.m. on August 27 to collect prairie seeds in the E-Way portion of Capital Springs. We may also drive to nearby prairies for collecting in other locations. Call Wayne Pauly (245-6898 office/575-0396 cell phone) or Rhea (224-3601) for further directions.

Note: Please wear long pants and long sleeve shirt, bring drinking water, gloves, and pruning shears. Be prepared for mosquitoes.

DIRECTIONS:

E-Way - Moorland Rd - Capital Springs Recreation Area (1947 Moorland Road 53711). From the Beltline (12&18) take the South Town Exit; Turn Left (east) on Moorland Road. A Parking area is located on the right just before Nine Springs Creek Bridge.

JOINT EFFORT TO IMPROVE OUR WATER

By Judie Pfeifer

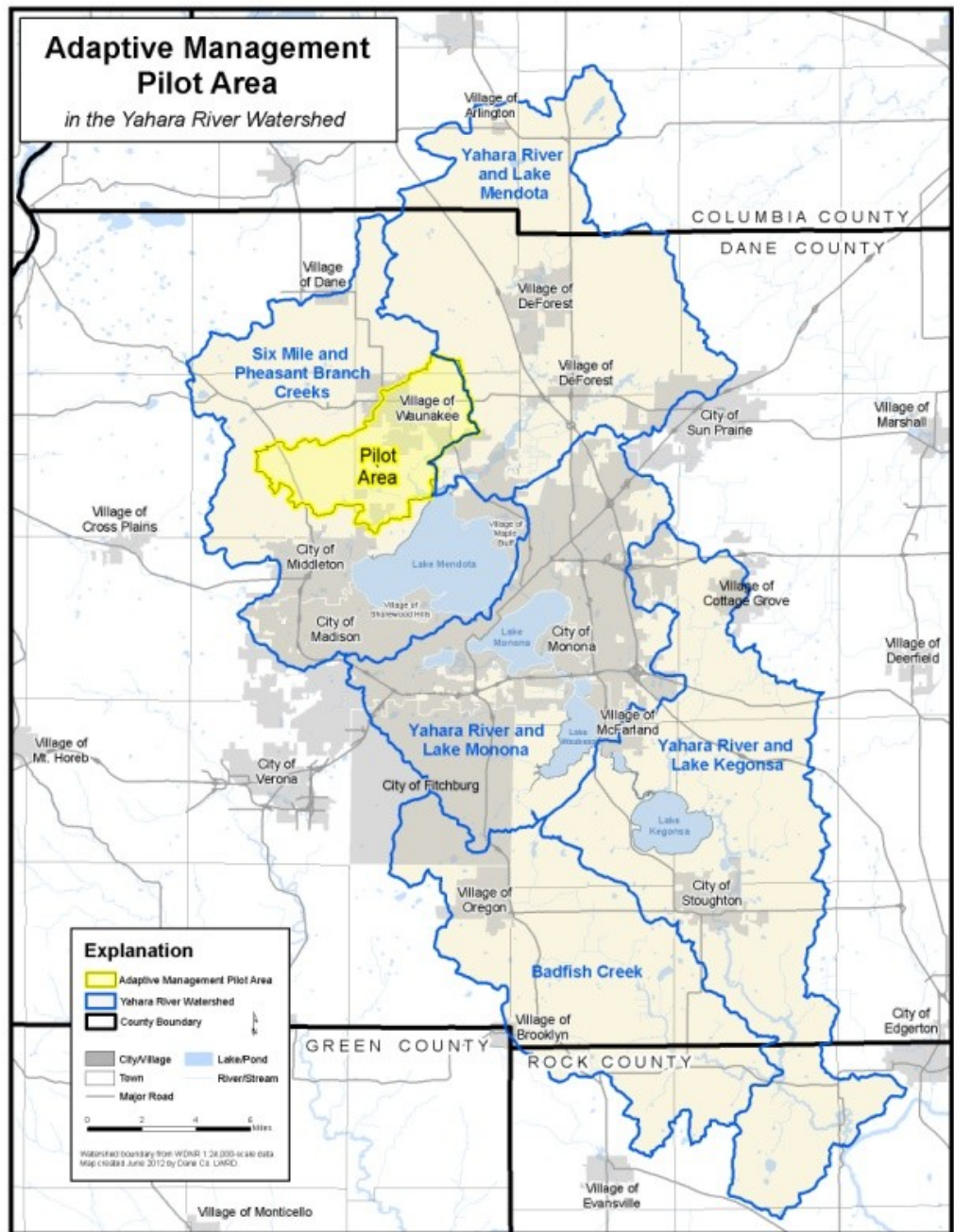


A WINning (watershed improvement network) approach to Improving Water Quality for the Yahara River Basin.

The Friends of Capital Springs Recreation Area is working as a partner with Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) through a 2012 grant from MMSD. One of our first efforts is to educate about water quality through appropriate signage and interpretive panels. The Capital Springs Recreation Area borders on Lake Waubesa and includes much of Nine Springs Creek, Mud Lake and the Monona Wetlands, all part of the Yahara River basin. Water quality is important to both the Capital Springs Recreation Area (CSRA) and MMSD. The Friends are helping to get the message out.

As part of educating about water quality improvement, it is important to note that MMSD and Dane County have been involved in establishing a new pilot project called Yahara WINs (watershed improvement network), which involves over 30-entities working together to improve water quality in the rivers, streams and lakes that make up the Yahara River watershed. This collaboration is implementing a new regulatory approach called “watershed adaptive management” to reduce phosphorus loadings to our waters. The Dane County Land and Water Resources Department is coordinating and working to identify practices and, where appropriate, develop cost-sharing agreements for practices that will improve water quality. Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) is leading the project.

The Yahara WINs pilot project, starting in 2012, is expected to last four years and is intended to test assumptions and develop the tools needed for full-scale implementation. During the pilot project, approximately 9300-acres of water quality benefiting activities will be installed and evaluated. Please call Kathy Lake or Dave Taylor at Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District, 222-1201, if you have questions or desire additional information.



NEW BOARD MEMBER: MICHAEL MUCHA

We are pleased to extend a warm welcome to the Friends' new board member, Michael Mucha



As Chief Engineer and Director of the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD), Michael provides important and meaningful knowledge of the MMSD process and water quality issues for Capital springs.

Could you please introduce yourself and your role on the Board of the Friends of Capital Springs, including a brief description of MMSD and its mission? My name is Michael Mucha. I was born and raised in Greendale Wisconsin and have worked in local government my entire career. The District's mission is to protect public health and the environment by treating wastewater from 42 communities in Dane County. From that wastewater, the District produces three products beneficial to our region, that being clean water, fertilizer and renewable energy.

How did MMSD get involved with Capital Springs? The District is a long term partner with Capital Springs as District property is adjacent and integral to the Capital Springs area.

How can visitors best access and use the MMSD parcels that are part of Capital Springs? By walking from the bike path or viewing from binoculars from the many vistas in the area.

What collaborative projects are planned for MMSD and Capital Springs? Continued communication around the connection of how treated wastewater enriches the environment and promotes biodiversity.

How do you see the Park and MMSD property being used in the future? As a showcase for proactive environmental stewardship.

UNIT FOCUS: MMSD WILDLIFE OBSERVATION AREA

MMSD Unit Established at Capital Springs

A 600-acre wetland at the mouth of Nine Springs Creek includes the 140-acre Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) Wildlife Observation Area. The observation area, located off Moorland Road in Madison, was formerly a storage lagoon for biosolids produced at the Nine Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant. The lagoons were decommissioned in 1994 and were reconstructed between 1999 and 2001 to provide for wildlife habitat and recreation. MMSD currently manages water levels to attract different species of shoreline, marsh, and water birds. The Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District is committed to public health and environmental protection, and these lagoons demonstrate the depth of that commitment.



But What About the Sewage?

Forty-two million gallons of wastewater are processed at every day. The complex assemblage of tanks, pipes, and equipment at the plant merely copies the way nature would decompose and biodegrade wastewater. Wastewater coming into the plant is first filtered and settled, then aerated as microorganisms consume the organic matter. Finally, it is treated with ultraviolet light to kill any remaining bacteria. Three main resources are produced through wastewater treatment: energy, fertilizer, and clean water. Methane gas is released through the treatment process, which is then used to power equipment at the plant. Treated biosolids are made into Metrogro, a rich organic fertilizer and soil conditioner, which is recycled to area farmland. Finally, the treated water is recycled to Badfish Creek, where it supports a diverse aquatic community.

Bird Habitat at MMSD Unit

In the western part of the observation part of the area, water levels are managed to provide excellent conditions for migratory shorebirds. During the spring and fall migratory seasons, water is pumped out of the ponds. This exposes the mudflats and their abundant food supply. The eastern zone contains a combination of open water and wetlands that attracts marsh birds and water fowl. Over 200 different species of birds have been documented at the site including a wide variety of shorebirds, hawks, and songbirds, some of which are rare in this part of the country. Over three miles of trails explore the area and provide excellent bird and wildlife viewing.

CAPITAL SPRINGS 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.com.

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; Judie Pfeifer, Treasurer; Bill Lunney, Secretary; Dan Kerkman; Michael Mucha.

Dane County Liaison: Linda Mittnacht

Park Manager and DNR Liaison: Kevin Swenson

Dane County Volunteer Coordinator: Rhea Stangel-Maier

Newsletter Editor/Designer: Clare Carlson



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