

Friends of Capital Springs



Contact us:
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Web Site:
www.friendsofcapitalsprings.org

Spring 2013 Newsletter



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FOCSRA Events & Activities

What's happening at Capital Springs?

◆ The Madison Audubon Society will be offering several spring birding trips to the Capital Springs area in May. Trip dates are Friday, May 3 (Nine Springs), and Thursday, May 9 (Lake Farm). Trip details can be found on their web site, <http://madisonaudubon.org/audubon/fieldtrips/2013FieldTripDetails.htm>.

◆ National Trails Day "Bike Dane" Event, June 1, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., Capital City Trail. Free use of the Capital City Trail All Day! "Bike Detour" stops along the trail--meet area naturalists and visit springs, birding hot spots, and other little-known areas of Capital Springs. Free water, trail maps, and information at the Lussier Family Heritage Center.

◆ Take a Stake in our Waters: (Formerly Take a Stake in the Lakes Days) This event is the flagship of volunteerism and care for Dane County's treasured waterways. Take a Stake grew from two days of shoreline cleanups to a two-week series of events to protect and improve Dane County lakes and streams. In 2013 and beyond, Take a Stake promotes the many events happening during the other 50 weeks of the year as well as during traditional Take a Stake timeframe (June).

JOIN THE FUN! VOLUNTEER! ORGANIZE AN EVENT!

Volunteers organize to adopt shorelines and beaches and collect litter or rake aquatic debris from the shoreline and shallow waters. Some adopt boat launches while others paddle their canoes or kayaks to retrieve trash. Scuba divers join in to give a hand on removing larger items that have found their way into our water resources. On land, other groups mark storm drains with the educational message reminding folks to keep waste, leaves and grass clipping out of our storm drains, which drain directly to our lakes and streams. Other groups remove invasive plants to improve the health of our watersheds. There is no limit to the creative projects that individuals and groups undertake for Take a Stake! Go to www.takeastakeinthelakes.com.

◆ Trail System Near Hogg Island Work Days: We need you help! Saturdays this summer 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Contact Dan Kerkman at 271-1044 or KerkmanDC@att.net to get specific dates.

◆ Harvest Moon Festival: October 11 at Capital Springs. Save the date!

MEET JUDY FOSSEN

Friends of Capital Springs Board Member

Judy works in marketing and advertising as a professional copywriter, helping organizations develop strategy-based messaging that promotes services, products and charitable giving. Her rural upbringing instilled a deep appreciation of nature and its critical connection to quality of life, and she looks forward to combining these values with her writing skills to serve FOCSRA as board secretary and all-around volunteer.



Principal/Copywriter at
Lumen Communications LLC
judy@lumencommunications.com
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How did you come to join the FOCSRA Board?

After moving back to Madison in 2011, I began looking to get involved with a local natural resource conservation organization. A friend recommended FOCSRA, touting its passionate and active volunteers. So I started attending their meetings and was especially impressed by FOCSRA's board leadership and their efficiency, and then became completely hooked after attending my first Harvest Moon Festival at Lake Farm Park. It's such a fun, community event!

Have you had experience with other outdoor non-profit groups?

Yes, I have extensive experience with the Ice Age Trail Alliance (formerly Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation), a member-based nonprofit. For several years, I volunteered on the local level in Waukesha County as a chapter officer and also helped with trail maintenance. Eventually, I began providing pro bono marketing services to the organization on a statewide level and was elected to the IATA board of directors, serving in various roles.

I also enjoyed volunteering at the UW-Waukesha Field Station, helping with spring plantings, prairie burns and seed picking.

What personal talents and skills do you wish to bring to your work with the Board and the Friends?

Working in marketing and advertising, I help companies and organizations "tell their story" to help them reach their goals in sales, awareness or solicitation. FOCSRA has an important story to tell and mission to accomplish, and I plan to help garner the attention and support needed to do that.

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

The entire Capital Springs area serves multiple roles. Its wetlands create an important natural filtration system that improves the quality of our area's water supply, and its contiguous parcels of land help form a natural corridor large enough to sustain healthy, diverse wildlife and native plant populations.

The Capital Springs area also provides excellent outdoor recreational resources just a few minutes from downtown Madison. Bike paths, hiking, cross-country skiing, camping, disc golf, a dog park, lake access, a beautiful event facility and more. We're working to let more of the public know that this gem of a natural resource is in their own backyard, just waiting to be enjoyed.

Pinnacle Hosts FOCSRA Fundraiser

On April 6th, Pinnacle Fitness held a fundraiser at its Fitchburg location in support of Capital Springs. For the third year in a row, Pinnacle sold trail passes and accepted donations to the Friends. They raised \$90.00 and sold nine trail passes!

We would like to thank Jamie Van Ooyen (jav@dewittross.com) and all the Pinnacle staff who helped make this happen. We would also like to thank Bruce Lindsay and Janeen Oswald for helping coordinate and sell the trail passes.



New Face for the Friends

As you may have noticed, FOCSRA has a new logo. Using the image of the Sandhill Crane and sun in our logo reminds us of the wide-open spaces at Capital Springs and the important bird habitat found in the Park's marshes, prairies, creeks and woodlands. We send out our thanks to FOCSRA Newsletter Editor and Webmaster Clare Carlson and new Board Member Judy Fossen for their work on the new design.



We are also developing a new FOCSRA web site that will put all Park and Friends information at your fingertips. We'll have events and volunteer news, detailed maps, recreational and park details, conservation work, bike trail news, a photo gallery and many other items displayed for easy access. It is a work in progress done by volunteers, so we are grateful for your patience. Feel free to view the site's development at www.friendsofcapitalsprings.org.

Mark Your Calendars! Harvest Moon Scheduled for Friday October 11, 2013

FOCSRA, Dane County Parks and Wisconsin DNR are hosting their annual Harvest Moon Event Friday October 11, 2013 from 6:00 – 9:00 pm. Families are invited to take a stroll on a torch lit trail under the harvest moon and discover the natural world through interpretive presentations on Wisconsin's owls, amphibians, reptiles, trees, bears, bats and more.

Folks can also bid on silent auction items, stargaze through telescopes with the University of Wisconsin-Madison's "Universe in the Park" and "Space Place" astronomers or try their hand at tree climbing presented by the Dane County Tree Board. There will also be Blue Grass Music and families can enjoy s'mores around a camp fire.

Proceeds go toward the recreational facilities and educational programs at the Lussier Family Heritage Center and the Capital City State Trail & Capital Springs Recreation Area. Please call 608-224-3604 or check out our website (www.friendsofcapitalsprings.org) for more information.

MMSD Kiosk Project

FOCSRA, in partnership with the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD), is developing an informational kiosk along the Capital City Trail to educate users about the exceptional birding area located right on the trail. The kiosk will be located at the entrance to the E-Way parking lot on Moorland Road, and will be installed later this spring. Brian Buckner, from the firm Glowac Harris, will be the lead designer.

The kiosk will serve as a gateway to the MMSD birding area, and will also inform visitors of how the birding area came to be, the significance of the sewage treatment plant and birding habitat, and an overview of the water treatment process. Additional information will be located on 45-degree interpretive panels along the boardwalk entrance across Moorland Road.

An additional kiosk will be built in the E-Way parking lot area with information and maps about the Capital City Trail, as well as an educational kiosk focusing on the life and work of Phil and Libby Lewis.

NATURE NOTES: LAKE FARM PARK, BEST BIRDING SPOTS

by Terri Felton, Friends of Capital Springs Naturalist Program Coordinator



Spring is for the Birds!

As I write this, we are in the middle of another 1-3 inches of snow accumulation in mid-March. It may not seem like it, but spring really is just around the corner, and with it, some wonderful opportunities for experiencing the spring bird migration.

The Madison Audubon Society will be offering several spring birding trips to the Capital Springs area in May. Trip dates are Friday, May 3 (Nine Springs), and Thursday, May 9 (Lake Farm). Trip details can be found on their web site, <http://madisonaudubon.org/audubon/fieldtrips/2013FieldTripDetails.htm>.

Peter Fissel, trip leader for the Madison Audubon Society, calls Lake Farm Park “one of the best birding spots in the Madison area”, and offered the following assessment of Lake Farm birding in the spring:

The combination of lake, woods and marsh, plus large open areas, attracts a wide variety of birds all through migration. It begins in late March or early April, when blackbirds of several species gather by the thousands in the evening, after feeding out in area fields during the day.



Sandhill Crane

This is one of the best spots in the state to see hundreds of Rusty Blackbirds as they gather for the evening roost. The tall trees next to the marshy areas will be alive with their squeaky, rusty-hinge songs, as well those of Red-winged and Brewer's Blackbirds, plus Common Grackles and Brown-headed Cowbirds.

The bugling of Sandhill Cranes from the nearby marsh will add to the cacophony, and staying until after sunset may yield the sounds (and if there is enough light remaining, the sight) of the aerial courtship displays of Wilson's Snipe and American Woodcock in the open areas.

As spring progresses, large flocks of swallows of several species begin to appear over the lake, and the lucky observer may catch a glimpse of an Osprey cruising overhead. Eastern Phoebes, Hermit Thrushes, Yellow-rumped Warblers, kinglets and several species of sparrows may be seen on the trails by mid-April, and the lake will have many species of ducks, grebes, and Common Loons.

By late April and early May, the woods are alive with warblers of every kind, flycatchers, thrushes, tanagers, Gray Catbirds and Brown Thrashers. If there is a May morning with a westerly breeze, the path along the lake from the boat landing all the way out to the railroad tracks can be amazing, as the birds are pushed up against the shoreline. The flocks of sparrows should be checked carefully for the uncommon Harris's Sparrow. Uncommon warblers such as Prothonotary and Connecticut are sometimes found along the lakeshore path. A walk in the early evening along the marsh edge path to the west will yield the sounds of Soras, Marsh Wrens, Song and Swamp Sparrows.

There is always something for the birder to hear and see at Lake Farm Park! We hope you will come and join us for one or more of this year's birding outings.

But what about all that snow? Despite the late spring this year, Wisconsin's bird populations are mirroring a worldwide trend toward earlier and earlier migration. Below is an excerpt from the issue paper, Climate Change and Birds, posted by the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (<http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/climatechange.htm>):

- The recent report “Birds and Climate Change: Ecological Disruption in Motion” from the National Audubon Society (NAS 2009) demon-

strates significant northward displacement of the center of distribution for 177 of 305 (58%) species tracked by the Christmas Bird Count over the past 40 years. As detailed in this report, average temperatures for the month of January rose in excess of 5 degrees Fahrenheit within the boundaries of the continental United States within that same 40-year time period. The distribution of birds within years along latitudes correlate with temperatures within years, and rates of population change are correlated with rates of change of temperatures.

- Early spring arrivals, early nesting, and late fall departures are being noted for some bird species across many areas around the world. For instance, early spring arrival dates and fall departure dates of migratory birds are now extended by as much as 2 weeks each season (Root and Hughes 2005). Over the past 40 years a long-term study site in Wisconsin, has shown that migrants have been arriving a minimum of 4 days (median dates) earlier (Lange 2008).

So what can we do? The Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative cites several recommendations to encourage individuals to advocate for climate change education and action. Most refer to personal actions individuals can take to help reduce fossil fuel consumption, the leading cause of human-induced climate change. The final recommendation refers to the adaptation of wildlife populations to future climate change, and encourages management activities that will “reduce factors that contribute to ecosystem stress (urbanization, pollution, habitat fragmentation and conversion, ozone depletion, etc.)”.

Capital Springs is unique in that, while very close to a relatively large urban area, it maintains a healthy habitat corridor for a large number of species. So while we work toward reducing our fossil fuel consumption and educate others about climate change, we can be proud that our state and county managers are working to keep green

spaces intact in the Nine Springs area. So let's get out, enjoy our healthy bird habitat, and take the next step to act, educate, and advocate for change. For actions you can take, visit the WI Bird Conservation Initiative web site. Thank you!

Trail Work at Capital Springs

By Dan Kerkman, Friends of Capital Springs Board Member

I was able to have weekly work days all winter long. Couple of times, the snow was almost too deep but we worked anyway. I



had a couple of volunteers that stuck it out even on the days that the comfort of my recliner was a better choice. Last year, we installed a new bike path from Baxter park to Capital city trail on Clayton. The bike path passes through a wooded area South of Lorena Parkway. This area was loaded with invasive plants, and we almost got all of them removed so the sightlines from the bike path all through the woods are wonderful. We will now be able to see all the way to the canoe trail going down the center. We uncovered beautiful red oaks, walnut and cherry trees that were being pushed out due to the honeysuckle and buckthorn. Next summer I plan on planting more trees to compliment on what we found.

This summer I want to start developing the new trail system near Hogg Island. This area is on the end of Libby road on the right. Kevin Swenson took me on a tour last fall and got me all excited on what there is in that area. The parking lot is scheduled for this spring and once that is done we will have access to the trail head and we can begin. I can really use help when this starts. I send out my work dates through the Friends of Capital springs and my neighborhood email list. If you would like to help, give me call or email: Hm:271-1044, KerkmanDC@att.net. We usually meet on Saturdays from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

UNIT FOCUS: LAKE FARM PARK

By Clare Carlson



History and nature come together along the banks of Lake Waubesa.

Lake Farm Park is Wisconsin outdoor recreation, natural habitat, and history at its finest! Recreational options abound at this 328-acre Dane County park bordering beautiful Lake Waubesa: Lake Farm offers three open-air picnic shelter facilities for rent, two of which provide views of the Lake, along with playground equipment and lookout tower. The Park also maintains hiking trails throughout the property, notably the Lake Farm Heritage Trail and Whitetail Trail (see map below) offering views of the Lake, woods, and prairies. If you'd like to spend time on the water, Lake Farm has a barrier-free boat launch and a fish-cleaning facility. Camping is available at Lake Farm as well! Choose from 54 camping sites with shower/bathroom facilities or a group campsite for large gatherings. For reservations and campsite maps, go to http://www.countyofdane.com/lwrp/parks/lake_farm.aspx.

There's no end to the natural beauty and wildlife to be found at Lake Farm. If you enjoy bird watching, be sure to check out Lake Farm Park during spring migration. Visitors can enjoy restored prairies, a wildlife pond, and two trails that meander through woods and along the shores of Lake Waubesa. Take it all in from atop the Park's lookout tower, too.

Additionally, Lake Farm is of significant historical importance: it's on the National Register of Historic Places as the Lake Farm Archeological District. Archeological evidence has been found of ancient human inhabitants living on what is now Lake Farm Park land during the Late Paleo-Indian period, dating to 8,500-5,000 B.C. Studies of the area suggest nomadic people made use of the rich food supply provided by the Lake, marshes, and woods. Hike the Lake Farm Heritage Trail (an easy 2.1 mile-long trail) with interpretive signage to learn more about these early inhabitants.



TAKE A STAKE IN OUR WATERS - YEAR ROUND!

By Susan A Jones, AICP



Get involved in protecting and improving our waterways.

Susan A. Jones, AICP
Watershed Management Coordinator
Office of Lakes & Watersheds



How do you top a 25th anniversary celebration in 2012 that was bigger and better than ever? Grow the event some more! The Dane County Lakes & Watershed Commission

recognizes that care for Dane County's lakes, streams and wetlands doesn't happen only a couple weeks out of the year. Rather it is a year round effort, and there is a variety of volunteer activities that exemplify the love area residents show 365 days a year.

Take a Stake in Our Waters (TAS, formerly Take a Stake in the Lakes Days) is the flagship of volunteerism and care for Dane County's treasured waterways. Created by the Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission 26 years ago, the annual Take a Stake grew from two days of shoreline cleanups to a two-week series of events to protect and improve Dane County lakes and streams. In 2013 and beyond, TAS promotes the many events happening during the other 50 weeks of the year as well as during traditional TAS Days timeframe (June).

During Take a Stake events, volunteers organize to adopt shorelines and beaches and collect litter or rake aquatic debris from the shoreline and shallow waters. Some adopt boat launches while others paddle their canoes or kayaks to retrieve trash. SCUBA divers join in to give a hand on removing larger items that have found their way into our water resources.

On land, other groups mark storm drains with the educational message reminding folks to keep waste, leaves and grass clipping out of our storm drains, which drain directly to our lakes and streams. Other groups remove invasive plants to improve the health of our watersheds. There is no

limit to the creative projects that individuals and groups undertake for Take a Stake!

Dane County Lakes Management staff will pickup aquatic trash and debris from Lake Mendota and Lake Kegonsa shoreline residents' piers beginning on Monday, June 10 and on Lake Monona and Waubesa starting beginning Monday, June 17. Barges will make **ONE** pass around the lake starting at 6 a.m. Monday morning. Aquatic debris must be on shoreline residents' piers by 6 a.m. Monday even though the barges may not get to everyone's pier on the first day.

Find more information on other Take a Stake events at www.takeastakeinthelakes.com, which is constantly being updated. To add your water-related event to the list, send the group's name, a description of your project, date(s), location of the event(s), web address and contact information to lakes@countyofdane.com.

A program of the Dane County Lakes & Watershed Commission, Take a Stake celebrates and promotes public awareness of the lakes, streams, rivers and wetlands in Dane County. The events are held in cooperation with Dane County Parks, Dane County Public Works, Dane County Cooperative Extension, many area groups, and is sponsored by many local businesses and organizations.



CLEAN LAKES ALLIANCE NEWS

By Gordon Heingartner

CLA produces the 2013 State of the Lakes Report and Yahara Lakes Report Card.

Gordon Heingartner
Outreach Coordinator
Clean Lakes Alliance of Dane County

The Clean Lakes Alliance (CLA) is a not-for-profit organization devoted to improving the water quality of the lakes, streams, and wetlands of the Yahara River Watershed. We are a unique partnership of diverse stakeholders who are building on — and expanding upon — decades of ongoing efforts to preserve and restore our waterways. Our goal is to raise community awareness of the issues facing the watershed, advocate for the welfare of the lakes, and assist with the implementation of initiatives to clean and protect these waterways. Working closely with state, county, and local government agencies, as well as waterway user groups, riparian owners, and community nonprofits, CLA serves as a positive voice for the promotion of our cherished lakes while simultaneously contributing to fundraising efforts for achieving these ends.

The Clean Lakes Alliance, along with its partners, recently rolled out its 2nd annual State of the Lakes Report and Yahara Lakes Report Card at our second annual “Save The Lakes” summit, which was held on Friday, April 19th at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center. [The report](#) (click on the link to view it online) is a collection of lake-related data from scientists, Dane County, Madison & Dane County Public Health Department, park managers, and the University of Wisconsin, all of whom share an interest in the Yahara River Watershed and its lakes. Close to 300 attendants learned about last year’s lake conditions as well as the groundbreaking Yahara WINs partnership and our community’s efforts to implement adaptive management. For additional information on our work, check out the [The Yahara CLEAN Strategic Plan for Reducing Phosphorus](#) — published

last November — which enumerates fourteen specific actions with clear achievable goals to clean up the lakes.

This year’s event was built into Isthmus Publishing’s Green Day, an expo featuring speakers and exhibits on sustainability. Among other program highlights, the Yahara Lakes Stewardship Award was presented to retired limnologist Dick Lathrop for outstanding service and commitment to protecting the Yahara River Watershed.

We encourage everyone in the Yahara River Watershed to join, volunteer, or donate to this exciting effort of improving our lakes. “Friends” of Clean Lakes, a non-profit, proactive, citizen-led organization dedicated to protecting and improving the natural resources of the Yahara River Watershed, is a good place to start. To become a member — and to learn more about how you can help with this effort in your everyday life, please visit [our web site](#).

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, a 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!

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; Bill Lunney, Vice-President; Judie Pfeifer, Treasurer; Judy Fossen, Secretary; Dan Kerkman; Michael Mucha, Peter Blawat

Dane County Liaison: Linda Mittnacht

Dane County Park Manager: Brian Meixner

DNR Liaisons: Kevin Swenson and Sarah Bolser

Dane County Volunteer Coordinator: Rhea Stangel-Maier

Newsletter Editor and Webmaster: Clare Carlson

Friends of
**Capital
Springs**



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