

Friends of Capital Springs



Winter 2013-14

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Thanks to the volunteers and sponsors who make this special night possible.

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*A beautiful autumn evening
at Harvest Moon Festival 2013*



Friends:

December 2013

Now that winter cold has arrived in Wisconsin, we look back at the warm autumn evening we had for the 9th annual Harvest Moon Festival with a touch of melancholy--no heavy coats, hats, mittens or snow pants in sight! It was such a successful event this year with over 800 attendees enjoying a variety of instructional activities and recreation. For details, photos, and a word of gratitude to our exceptional volunteers and sponsors, see the enclosed article on page two.

Take a look at the other interesting articles in this newsletter graciously written by FOCSRA members. We've outlined our 2013 accomplishments and plans for 2014, revived an epic battle between Batman and Buckthorn, remembered a successful neighborhood paddling event, and Board Vice-president Bill Lunney has written an excellent article describing the newly-designated Lewis E-way and the significant legacy from Libby and Phil Lewis to our green spaces in Dane County. Thanks for your support this year, and we look forward to seeing you in 2014.

--Matt Carlson, President, Friends of Capital Springs



HARVEST MOON FESTIVAL 2013

By Clare Carlson

What a superb Harvest Moon this year. With over 800 attendees, mild weather, great food and outstanding activities, our 9th annual will be hard to beat!

There was such a wonderful variety of fascinating activities at the Friends of Capital Springs' Harvest Moon this year; it's a shame that I can't describe them all here. For my kids, the highlights were the snake they got to pet (Awesome Amphibians & Radical Reptiles), the cool interactive salt demonstration illustrating deposits entering our water system (Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District), and the ever-popular tree Kid's Climb (Wisconsin Arborist Association & DC Tree Board). New this year, we even had an opportunity to test our skills with bow and arrow (Wisconsin National Archery in the Schools).

After all the great indoor and outdoor instructional displays--and a chance to bid on multiple silent auction items--we were happy to take a rest on a bale of hay and listen to great live folk music from *Off the Porch and Friends*. I hope you also had a chance to try a bowl of *Liliana's* spicy chili, followed, of course, by homemade pie and s'mores roasted over the Howlin' Bonfire. Thanks for coming.

Thank You!

The Friends of Capital Springs Board would like to send our sincere thanks to the groups, individuals, and businesses who make this important fundraiser possible by donating their time and financial support. *We thank you.*



Thank You, Volunteers

It takes over 70 volunteers to coordinate Harvest Moon! We are so fortunate for the folks who come to help out every year and for those joining the team for the first time. Friends invest their time in preparation, planning, and volunteer on the night of the event.

Thank You, Instructors

What would Harvest Moon be without the educational instructors giving visitors an opportunity to touch a beaver pelt, try a little archery, spin wool, pick up the latest Ice Age trail maps, peer into a bee colony, gaze at the stars with a high-powered telescope, pour salt down a funnel, or hold an animal from the Madison Zoo? We thank our many instructors representing a wide variety of organizations throughout our community for their leadership to educate and engage Harvest Moon guests.



Thank You, Event Sponsors

Without the financial support from our event sponsors, Harvest Moon would not be possible. We sincerely thank you for your support. Our 2013 Event Sponsors include:

- Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District,
- Michael Best & Friedrich, LLC,
- Dane County Parks,
- Liliana's, and
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Thank You, Members!

Thanks to all of you who attended Harvest Moon. As our only major fundraiser for the year, a successful Harvest Moon means a successful future for Capital Springs Recreation Area and our organization which creates educational programming and other support for the Park. We truly appreciate your assistance in this effort.



2013 ACHIEVEMENTS & 2014 PROJECTS

By Judie Pfeifer, Rhea Stangel-Maier, and Clare Carlson



We hope you were able to participate in Friends of Capital Springs events this year and enjoy improvements at the Park. Here's a few highlights from 2013 and what we're working on for the upcoming year. We look forward to seeing you again!

Events & Activities

- Audubon bird outings, including an outing at MMSD unit, in spring and fall.
- Paddling outing with Bridge/Lake Point/Waunona Neighborhood Center in fall.
- Family Fun in the Snow scheduled with MadNorski last winter; considering another this winter.
- Bike Dane Event in conjunction with National Trails Day in June.
- Herpetology at MMSD Boardwalk with Madison Area Herpetological Society.
- Natural springs walk at Indian Springs Park
- Harvest Moon 2013 in October with over 800 attendees.
- Badger Trolley tour of Capital Springs planned, including MMSD tour in 2014.

Educational Programming

- Mother Earth Explorers Program: with UW Office of Service Learning and Dane County Parks Director, we created a summer camp program for middle school youth with a Native American focus. We had two 2-week camps and one 1-week camp in 2013, including one overnight camp and activities such as archery, fishing, stargazing, Ojibwe language study, water quality testing, and more. Six to eight students attended each camp.
- Backpack Explorer Program: we set up eight backpacks with field guides, binoculars, and other materials created for use at park in 2014. Backpacks are available for check-out beginning with next camping season with a kick-off event in spring.
- Developed extensive Capital Springs volunteer naturalist training video and PowerPoint to be used for promotion of Capital Springs

and volunteer naturalist training. It will be available in spring of 2014.

Park Improvements

- Disc Golf Course opened at Capital Springs Recreation Area.
- Dane County Parks volunteers continue restoration efforts of our prairies in Capital Spring Recreation Area. Projects include: prescribed burns, prairie management, prairie seeding, prairie seed collection.
- Invasives species removal work days organized throughout the year to improve woodlands and water trails.
- New MMSD kiosk and boardwalk panels installed at the Lewis E-Way parking lot related to water quality, water cycle, and wetland wildlife.
- Heritage Center kiosk and interpretive displays: we are working with Dane County staff to update kiosk materials at Heritage Center.
- *Five Easy Walks Around the Heritage Center* walking route/self-guided map and brochure is being developed, highlighting short walks around the Lussier Heritage Center.



New kiosk at
Lewis E-Way

Other Projects

- Web site development: we are building a site with the capability for online donations, online trail pass purchasing, detailed park maps and recreational information, and current Friends activity postings.
- Programming survey: ten-question survey sent to neighbors and volunteer groups; survey data will be used by our next naturalist for program planning.

We send our sincere thanks to Park Naturalist Program Coordinator, Terri Felton, for organizing many of these activities and improvements. We also say goodbye and best wishes to Terri as she leaves Capital Springs to pursue other interests.

LEWIS E-WAY DEDICATION AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF DANE COUNTY PARKS ENDOWMENT FUND

By Bill Lunney, Vice-President, Friends of Capital Springs

On Sept 12, 2013, The Dane County E-Way was dedicated by Dane County Officials and named the Lewis E-Way at a ceremony in the Lussier Family Heritage Center, which is part of the Capital Springs Recreation Area. Dr. Phil Lewis and his family were in attendance.

As Chair of the Dane County Parks Commission, I gave the opening introduction and the dedication remarks in honor of Phil and Libby Lewis. In addition, County Executive Joe Parisi and Bob Sorge, President of the Madison Community Foundation (MCF) announced the establishment of an Endowment Fund in the Foundation for Dane County Parks. The MCF will provide a one to two match for a total of \$150,000. The endowment will be used for Interpretation, Education, and Volunteerism in the parks. Donations can be made to the endowment by contacting the MCF at 608-232-1763 or visit madisoncommunityfoundation.org.



County Executive Joe Parisi, Parks Commission Chair Bill Lunney, Professor Phil Lewis, former County Executive Rick Phelps, and MCF President Bob Sorge

E-Way Dedication Introduction

The E-Way had its official origin in the late 1960s, when Professor Phil Lewis presented the concept in applying for a grant to the National Endowment for the Arts. But it really was born years earlier in his brilliant and creative mind. In 1970 Dane County created an E-Way committee and as government works it took 17 years before we finally had a grand opening in 1987.

There's always been the question what is the E-way, is it a concept, is it a blueprint, is it a physical place? Well, its *all* of the above.

The E-Way is a concept of interconnecting natural and cultural resources; often linked through transportation corridors. It is a connection of water, wetlands, and steep topography/slopes to create a protected environmental corridor. It is a concept that we have been able to implement here but it is one that should be considered in most areas throughout the country and the world.

The E-Way in Dane County is also a blueprint for us to follow when land use decisions are made. The E-Way covers parts of the cities of Madison, and Fitchburg, the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District, Dane County and the State of Wisconsin, McFarland, and the Dane County Archeological District. Eventually, as governments' understanding grew, the E-Way became a significant tool to guide growth and development in the area south of Madison. It was the blueprint for creation of the Capital Springs Recreation Area which represents 2,500 acres of preserved land for future generations.

But still the E-Way is a Place. It extends from Lake Waubesa on the East, through Lake Farm Park, the Lussier Family Heritage Center; the Capital City State Bicycle Trail; the Jenni and Kyle Preserve, covers the Madison Metropolitan Sewer grounds, the Nevin Fish hatchery, numerous neighborhood parks in Fitchburg, into the Arboretum and in Professor Lewis vision all the way to the State Capitol Building, down John Nolen Drive and connecting back here.

The other question is What does the E stand in E-Way? Environmental, Ecological, Educational, Exercise and Esthetic:

1. The E-Way is an *Environmental* corridor. It has water resources including, Lake Waubesa, Hogg Island, the Nine Springs Creek with beautiful deep water springs, wetland complexes including Dunn's Marsh, as well as forested areas, and hilly topography.
2. It represents a wonderful *Ecological* and cultural mixture as Lake Farm Park has been the settlement of native peoples for several thousand years. With its diversity, the E-Way presents a unique resource to the people of Southern Wisconsin.
3. Which leads us to the third E, *Education*. It is intended to be an education laboratory for people to learn and understand our natural and cultural environment. In order to make that work effectively we need natu-

Lewis E-Way

Environmental
Ecological
Educational
Exercise
Esthetic
Economy

- ralists. The Friends of Capital Springs is funding a part-time naturalist using monies from a grant from Madison Metropolitan Sewerage Commission and has begun this education effort.
4. Exercise is the fourth E. We are finally appreciating the health value of exercise. Studies have shown that life can be prolonged, and quality of life enhanced through regular exercise. The E-way is traversed by the Capital City Bicycle Trail, which provides easily accessible hiking and bicycling.
 5. And finally the fifth E, *Esthetic*. There are few things as meaningful to the human existence as natural beauty. The E-Way gives us all a place to reflect and enjoy the natural beauty we are so blessed with in Dane County. What is even more significant is that within the next 50 years as Dane County grows to a projected one million or more people, we will still have this wonderful area of green; in my opinion it will be like a Central Park for our County. With that projected growth it is even more important that our Park system grow to meet that need and conserve what will be dwindling resources.
 6. Without permission I suggest a sixth E, the *Economy*. The E-Way and our Parks and trails boost our local economy by drawing visitors and tourists. Last year, Dane County Parks had over 2 million visitors and the availability of green space often attracts new businesses and residents. So we in Dane County have an extraordinary asset. The Lewis E-Way will be with us for generations to come as an environmental, cultural and economic resource.

Remarks by Bill Lunney, at the Lewis E-way Dedication Sept 12, 2013. "Dedication"

Phil and Libby Lewis were always a team as Phil is very quick to point out. It is fitting that this environmental treasure, the E-Way, be named after them both.

Libby Lewis

Libby served 26 years as a member of the Dane County Parks Commission. It was a time of great growth in our Park system and Libby made a significant and lasting mark on our county parks and natural resources. Libby possessed an extraordinary intellect. There were countless times when her insight perceived an issue's ramifications on our Parks. But it was her tenacity and unwavering commitment to planning our parklands and natural resources to high standards that was a constant. She always strived to assure that we navigated the tricky balance between preserving the natural resource, and providing access to the public. Libby was a tireless advocate for our parks and the E-way in particular. She would always speak up on issues and was not afraid to carry the message to the County Executive and the County Board. It was her job to advocate and help to create an implementation framework for Phil's dreams. While it's truly unfortunate that she has passed away and could not be at the dedication, we all know that in her quiet and unassuming way, she is smiling now beaming with her lovely modest smile that this dedication day has come. Phil and Libby were truly a team for over fifty years.

Professor Phil Lewis

To talk about Professor Phil Lewis is a daunting task because words fall short of describing his contributions to our environment in Dane County, our State and our Country. Phil is a leader in defining an interdisciplinary regional design process for the identification, protection and enhancement of regional landscapes and urban settlements. His ideas included environmental corridors, nodes of diversity, heritage necklaces, heritage awareness centers, urban constellations, state rail parks.

Among his many awards are Lifetime Achievements by the Natural Heritage Land Trust and from the Environmental Science Institute. Phil was recognized by two Governors for his service (Democrat Lucy and Republican Thompson) to Wisconsin. In 1987, he was recipient of the American Society of Landscape Architect's highest award, the ASLA Medal. Phil served as Chair of the UW Dept. of Landscape Architecture and was Founder and Director of the UW Environmental Awareness Center. His seminal work, "Tomorrow By Design," provides a core prototype for a national inventory and analysis of resources. Phil Lewis has been an inspiration to us all and continues to do so.

Today we are all grateful for Phil's and his teammate Libby's ideas and their impact on County. Tomorrow and in the future, countless thousands of visitors will marvel at his ideas, his dream, his vision because those will endure and grow in importance over time. Please join me in thanking Libby and Phil Lewis. The time has come to officially dedicate the E-Way in honor of Phil and Libby Lewis.

BATMAN V. BUCKTHORN: WORK DAY AT CAPITAL SPRINGS

By Dan Kerkman and Clare Carlson

Buckthorn is no match with Batman on the job.

It was a great day for the work crew on Nov 2. The mighty buckthorn plant was winning in the battle in the woods off Lorena Parkway.

The crew was doing their best pulling, cutting with loppers and real big stuff using a chainsaw. There were just too many. Then a masked man came down the bike path with the energy of ten men and proceeded to do battle with the mighty buckthorn.

The tide turned and the crew started to see tremendous progress in removing this stubborn fiend. In a few short hours the battle was won by rejuvenated crew and the buckthorn was no more. Many thanks to this masked man.



Batman, a.k.a. Evan Eilertson, age 4, battles buckthorn with his superhero clippers.

Buckthorn a “thorn” in the landscape

Chances are good that you’ve seen buckthorn along a wood’s edge; it’s easy to spot in late fall as it maintains its thick green crown long after most trees have dropped foliage. First introduced to the Midwest around 1849 from Eurasia as an ornamental, buckthorn has spread rapidly throughout the state. Unfortunately, buckthorn is a “thorn” to our native Wisconsin landscape: it grows like a tall shrub or short tree, creating a hedge-like canopy that kills ground layer plants and young trees as it spreads through our habitat.

Common or Glossy?

Did you know that our state is home to two varieties of buckthorn: common and glossy? Common buckthorn prefers woodlands and wood edges, and spreads rapidly in drained soils such as prairies, untilled fields, and yards, while glossy buckthorn prefers similar habitats but with frequent wet soil.

Both species are prolific berry-producers (spread by birds) and both grow rapidly in a wide variety of habitats. These factors create a bad situation for healthy woodland, which require species biodiversity to support the creatures that call it home. Many birds, for instance, need habitat with a varying vertical and horizontal structure that can only be developed with a large variety of plant life. Buckthorn, in contrast, creates a dense monoculture screen which allows only one horizontal structure, shading all plant life underneath it. Good thing we have volunteers--and Batman--like our crew from Capital Springs willing to tackle this woodland invasive.



Buckthorn creates a thick canopy, shading out all plant life underneath it.

References:

Czarapata, Elizabeth J. 2005. *Invasive Plants of the Upper Midwest*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.

LAKE FARM OUTINGS WITH BRIDGE/LAKEPOINT/WAUNONA NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

By Terri Felton

For the past two years, I have had the pleasure of enjoying the fall splendor at Lake Farm Park with a small group of middle school students from Bridge/LakePoint/Waunona Neighborhood Center.

With the help of Rutabaga Paddlesports and grant money from FOCSRA, we were able to take 8-10 kids and a few adult volunteers out on the water to develop our paddling skills, explore some of the flora and fauna of the area, and just plain have fun.

Since we had some of the same kids both years in a row, it was nice to see how their paddling confidence had improved, and also how they remembered the area. "Hey, that was the same dog that barked at us last year!" was a common refrain, as was the excitement over seeing people catch fish in the lake and, of course, the fun reactions to hearing and seeing Sandhill Cranes overhead.

We began each trip with a brief paddling overview onshore, followed by practice on the lake just off of the launch. We practiced forward and backward strokes, right and left turns, and how to spin our boat in a circle. Once the students felt comfortable with that, we set out exploring. This year's trip was a beautiful fall day, but a little windy, so we kept close to shore. We explored white and yellow water lilies just past the railroad bridge, and the students had fun tracing the flower stems under the water with their paddles. We also saw several dragonflies, mostly green darners, as well as some damselflies.

Once we left the lily "pond", we had a race out toward Gilligan's Island, but the wind proved a bit much for some of the younger paddlers, and we decided to head back. Once we were back in the shelter of the shoreline, we had a very relaxing paddle back to the boat launch, enjoying the beginnings of the fall colors and the rich late afternoon sunlight.

It's been a pleasure to work with these students and to have the support of FOCSRA and Rutabaga to bring this experience to them. We will have another outing later this year to try some late-season fishing and enjoy a twilight bonfire at one of the Lake Farm shelters. There is always plenty to do in any season at Capital Springs! Thanks for a great year.



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 the Lewis 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 maps.



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

Hiking and skiing trails, picnic shelters, boat launch onto Lake Waubesa, water trails for paddling, and the Lake Farm Campground are just some of the activities available to visitors. 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.

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