

Dane County
Parks & Open Space Plan
2006—2011



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	1
AUTHORIZING RESOLUTION.....	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
INTRODUCTION.....	7
PLANNING PROCESS.....	8
DANE COUNTY PARK COMMISSION.....	10
LAND & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT	10
PLAN PRECEDENTS.....	12
GOALS, PRIORITIES & POLICIES.....	13
SUMMARY OF EXISTING SYSTEM.....	22
DEMOGRAPHICS	28
NEEDS ANALYSIS.....	31
2006-2011 PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	34
Regional Resource Protection Initiatives.....	35
Partner Projects	37
Recreation Parks	38
Natural Resource Areas.....	46
Forests	54
Regional Trails	55
Scenic Driving Corridors	58
Historical/Cultural Sites.....	58
Prairie and Oak Savanna Sites.....	60
Stream Corridor Protection and Management.....	61
PROGRAM AREA RECOMMENDATIONS	63
Adult Conservation Team	63
Lussier Family Heritage Center	64
Cooperative Management Programs.....	66
Park Planning.....	67
Land Acquisition.....	68
Operations and Maintenance	69
PARTNERSHIP FUNDING PROGRAMS	70
SUMMARY.....	71

Figure 1. Public Input Process Comment Summary 8

Figure 2. Public Input Process General Issues & Comments Summary 9

Figure 3. Recreation Park Inventory 23

Figure 4. Natural Resource Area Inventory 25

Figure 5. Forest Inventory 26

Figure 6. Historical/Cultural Site Inventory 27

Figure 7. Dane County Population 28

Figure 8. Developed Land Use Forecasts 29

Figure 9. Developed Land Demand 29

Figure 10. Projected 2030 Dane County Age Distribution 30

Figure 11. WDNR Region 5 Outdoor Recreation Participants Percentage by Activity .. 31

Figure 12. 2004 Dane County Park Permits 32

Figure 13. Prairie & Oak Savanna Sites 60

Figure 14. Tier I & II Stream Project Areas 62

Map 1. Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan 2006-2011 Appendix

Map 2. Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan 2006-2011 Regional Trails Appendix

I want to communicate a sincere thank you to the twenty-six Dane County local units of government, fifteen non-profit conservation organizations, Jefferson County Parks Department, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), other Dane County Departments and many Dane County residents who gave time and input toward the preparation of this plan. I also commend the staff of the Dane County Land & Water Resources Department, under the direction of Kevin Connors. In particular, I want to acknowledge Chris James, as the lead planner for this project for his professional and dedicated work and Laura Guyer and Sara Kwitek for their expertise and assistance. Finally, I want to thank the Dane County Park Commission and the Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee for their guidance and support. This document will guide our work for years to come.

-- William Lunney, Chair, Dane County Park Commission & Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee

**DANE COUNTY PARK COMMISSION and
PARKS & OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

- William G. Lunney, Chair**
- Elizabeth A. Lewis, Vice Chair**
- Tom Dawson, Secretary**
- Supervisor Jeff Kostelic**
- Supervisor Dave Ripp**
- John B. Hutchinson**
- Tom Thoresen**
- Supervisor Mark Opitz
- Supervisor Scott McDonell
- Supervisor Rich Pertzborn

Bold print indicates Park Commission members. The Park & Open Space Advisory Committee is composed of the Park Commission and three county board supervisors.

DANE COUNTY LAND & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

- Kevin Connors, Director
- Laura Guyer, Conservation Fund Manager
- Chris James, Park Planner
- Susan Jones, Lakes and Watershed Program Coordinator
- Pete Jopke, Watershed Project Management Coordinator

- Sara Kwitek, Acquisition & Planning Specialist
- Darren Marsh, Dane County Parks Director
- Michelle Richardson, Conservation GIS Analyst
- Pat Sutter, County Conservationist

Park and Open Space Planning Team
Front row left to right: Erin Lewis, Angela Meszaros, Laura Guyer, Kevin Connors. Back row : Michelle Richardson, Darren Marsh, Chris James, Pat Sutter, Sue Jones, Sara Kwitek, Pete Jopke.



Resolution 180, 2006-2007
Adopting the 2006-2011 Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan

For thirty years the Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan has provided the foundation for preservation of key cultural, natural and historic resources that enhance the quality of life in Dane County.

The Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan Update Advisory Sub-Committee has completed an update of the County Parks and Open Space Plan for the period of 2006-2011. The plan must be updated every five years in order to be eligible to apply for land acquisition and park development funding through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grant program.

The planning process included six public informational meetings and nearly fifty individual meetings with local units of government, non-profit conservation organizations, and other state and federal agencies for the purpose of soliciting input on recommendations to be included in the updated plan. The plan is used by the Dane County Park Commission as a guide for making future resource protection and park development decisions over the next five years. It also provides the vision and framework for the Dane County Conservation Fund and land acquisition program.

Participation by private land owners or local units of government to carry out any of the resource protection initiatives or park and trail development projects outlined in the plan is on a voluntary basis. This plan is not a land use plan or created for the purpose of guiding future zoning decisions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors and the Dane County Executive approves and adopts the 2006-2011 Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors, Dane County Executive, and Dane County Parks Commission thank all of the citizens, local units of government, non profit conservation organizations, and other stakeholders who assisted in the preparation of this plan.

Adopted by the Dane County Board of Supervisors on 12/7/06

The Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan 2006-2011 seeks to identify significant cultural, historical, and natural resources that should be considered for possible protection, preservation or restoration over the next five years. The plan also seeks to identify countywide recreation needs and Dane County's role in providing facilities to meet anticipated demands. This plan is not a land use plan or created for the purpose of guiding future zoning decisions. The Parks & Open Space Plan must be updated and adopted by the County Board every five years in order to be eligible to participate in a variety of state and federal grant funding programs for park land acquisition and development, including trails. This update to the Parks & Open Space Plan has five primary goals:

1. Provide sufficient park land and recreation facilities to meet the demand of Dane County residents without adversely affecting existing natural resources.
2. Preserve for posterity the characteristics and diversity of the natural, cultural and historical resources of Dane County.
3. Preserve large tracts of natural and agricultural rural landscapes at urban fringe areas that will provide regional resource protection and recreation benefits.
4. Provide environmental education programs and volunteer opportunities to County residents of all ages.
5. Protect lakes, rivers and streams, including shorelines, wetlands, high infiltration areas and associated vegetative buffers to maintain high water quality, manage water quantity and sustain water-related recreation throughout Dane County.

PLANNING PROCESS

The update to the Parks & Open Space Plan began in September of 2005 and included a comprehensive public input process consisting of six public informational meetings and nearly fifty individual meetings with local units of government, non-profit conservation organizations, and other state and federal agencies for the purpose of soliciting input on recommendations to be included in the updated plan. An interactive web page with feedback form was also posted on the Dane County Land and Water Resources Department website. The majority of the comments heard during the public input process related to creating additional trails and increased efforts to protect larger, landscape scale resource protection areas, especially those associated with water and wetlands.

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Several related planning reports were considered during the preparation of this plan including all prior completed Dane County Parks & Open Space Plans (1970-2005), 2005-2010 Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Dane County Comprehensive Plan, 2005 Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Bike Plan, 2004 Dane County Water Quality Plan, and the 2003 Dane County Land and Water Resources Plan.

An inventory of existing park lands and facilities was completed for each category of park land including recreation parks, natural resource areas, forests and historic sites. The park system includes 26 recreation parks (~5000 acres), 26 natural resource areas (~3000 acres), 3 forests (~200 acres) and 2 historic sites (~116 acres). A detailed list of park facilities found at each property for all categories is also provided.

An analysis of population trends and future County development growth areas was conducted. In terms of population, of most significance is the trend toward an aging population. The Wisconsin Department of Administration forecasts that by the year 2030 there will be a 120% increase in the number of Dane County residents age 60 or older. This may suggest an increasing need to provide more passive recreation facilities such as picnic areas, hiking and biking trails. Future residential growth and development areas were also taken into account during the preparation of this plan. It is important to identify where growth is anticipated for the purpose of locating future recreation parks, prioritizing acquisition of lands targeted for resource protection and prioritizing future trail development projects.

A recreation needs analysis was completed that considered several factors for determining future types of recreation facilities to be recommended by the plan. A summary of all of the information reviewed would suggest the following primary recreation needs and expectations of the Dane County Park system: trails, lake access facilities, camping, picnicking and shelters, disc golf, dog exercise areas, hunting (where compatible with other recreation uses) and fishing.

In terms of acquiring future park lands over the next five years, input gathered throughout the public planning process suggested a strong interest in acquiring lands that protect water and wetlands. There was also a recurring theme that the County should work toward creating large, contiguous tracts of land devoted toward resource protection.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2006-2011 Parks and Open Space Plan includes two new elements. First, “**Regional Resource Protection Initiatives**” was created in response to the strong support heard during the public input process for larger, landscape scale resource protection areas. The WDNR Southwest Grasslands and Glacial Heritage Area, Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area, and Recharge Area for Frederick Springs are examples of projects included under this section. Inclusion of these project areas is primarily to allow partner agencies and non-profit conservation organizations eligibility to apply for matching funds through the Dane County Conservation Fund.

The second new element included is “**Partner Projects**”. Projects included under this category have some connection to County owned park lands, facilities or trails and are expected to provide some regional recreational, cultural or natural resource protection value. The proposed Central Park in the City of Madison is a representative project of this category. Again, Dane County is not expected to participate in planning, development, or maintenance of these projects and inclusion in the plan is for the purpose of allowing partner agencies and non-profit conservation organizations eligibility to apply for matching funds through the Dane County Conservation Fund.

RECREATION PARKS

Recreation parks are usually several hundred acres in size and provide a mix of natural and developed park land areas. The County’s role is to provide large, regional-scale parks that attract users from several communities.

Two new future recreation parks are proposed in the 2006-2011 Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan in response to public input, forecasted residential growth, and lack of parks within the region. One new park site is proposed in the northeast quadrant of the County and the other in the south-central region of the County near the Village of Oregon. Ideally, these parks would be 100 acres or more in size to provide for multiple uses and contain a mix of natural resource features. This plan also recommends exploring future development of a new disc golf facility and dog exercise area in the west central portion of the County. More specific park development recommendations are identified for each recreation park for the purpose of being able to apply for a variety of grant programs.

NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS

A natural resource area consists of lands that contain valuable natural resources or greenbelt corridors that were identified through a public process. Ideally, lands protected within these project areas should be large, contiguous blocks that may include a mixture of agricultural, water, wetlands, steep topography, prairie and forests.

There are also two new Natural Resource Areas (NRA) proposed in this plan. The Koshkonong Creek NRA is located east of Madison in the Town of Sun Prairie. The vision for this project is that it would become a greenway between the cities of Sun Prairie, Madison, and Cottage Grove providing a diversity of benefits including flood mitigation, wetland restoration potential, and preservation of working farm lands.

This plan also proposes a Starkweather Creek NRA that extends along both stream branches north and east from Lake Monona. Lands protected under this project area are expected to provide lake and water quality protection, water and land based trails, upland vegetation buffers and wildlife habitat.

FORESTS

The 2006-2011 Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan recommends active management of county owned forests and woodlots that includes removal of invasive species, selective timber harvest to promote the overall health of the forest, and provision of limited, passive recreation uses that are compatible with timber management objectives.

REGIONAL TRAILS

Throughout the public input process, trails were the most frequently requested recreation facility addition to the park system. Development of additional trails is also consistent with providing future recreation opportunities for the forecasted aging population of Dane County. This plan will make County-wide recommendations for regionally significant hiking, water, bicycle-pedestrian, equestrian and snowmobile trails.

SCENIC DRIVING CORRIDORS

Driving for pleasure was listed as the fourth most popular recreational activity in the Dane County region in the WDNR 2005-2010 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. This program requires further definition through a planning process that includes County and State coordination. Development of this recreation program is consistent with providing opportunities for the projected aging population.

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL SITES

These project areas consist of lands specifically purchased for the preservation, restoration or reconstruction of features significant to the history or cultural heritage of an area. Recommendations include continued implementation of the 2005 Schumacher Farm Master Plan and planning for a comprehensive cultural exhibit at the Lussier Family Heritage Center that would illustrate Native American and early settlement of Dane County.

PRAIRIE AND OAK SAVANNA SITES

Dane County staff worked with the Prairie Enthusiasts to update and map remaining high quality prairie remnants and the seven best potential grassland/prairie landscape scale management areas. Dane County's role in this initiative is to work with non-profit conservation organizations and land trusts, such as the Prairie Enthusiasts and Natural Heritage Land Trust, as well as with local units of governments and the WDNR, in funding the acquisition and preservation of those areas that coincide with other objectives of the Parks and Open Space Plan.

STREAM CORRIDOR PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Dane County staff worked closely with the WDNR to update and expand streams designated for protection and restoration within this plan. Streams classified as Tier I are primarily high quality, cold water streams where considerable County and WDNR restoration and habitat improvement measures have already been undertaken. Tier II are primarily warm water streams that have significant potential for habitat improvement. Restoration work on Tier II streams would be completed primarily by non-profit conservation organizations and partner groups.

PROGRAM AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

Initiatives outlined in this plan will be carried out by multiple partners and the newly created Land and Water Resources Department included within the following program areas: Adult Conservation Team, Lussier Family Heritage Center, Naturalist, Park Planning, Land Acquisition, Operations and Maintenance. This plan provides an overview of each program area along with recommendations for priority projects to be undertaken over the next five years.

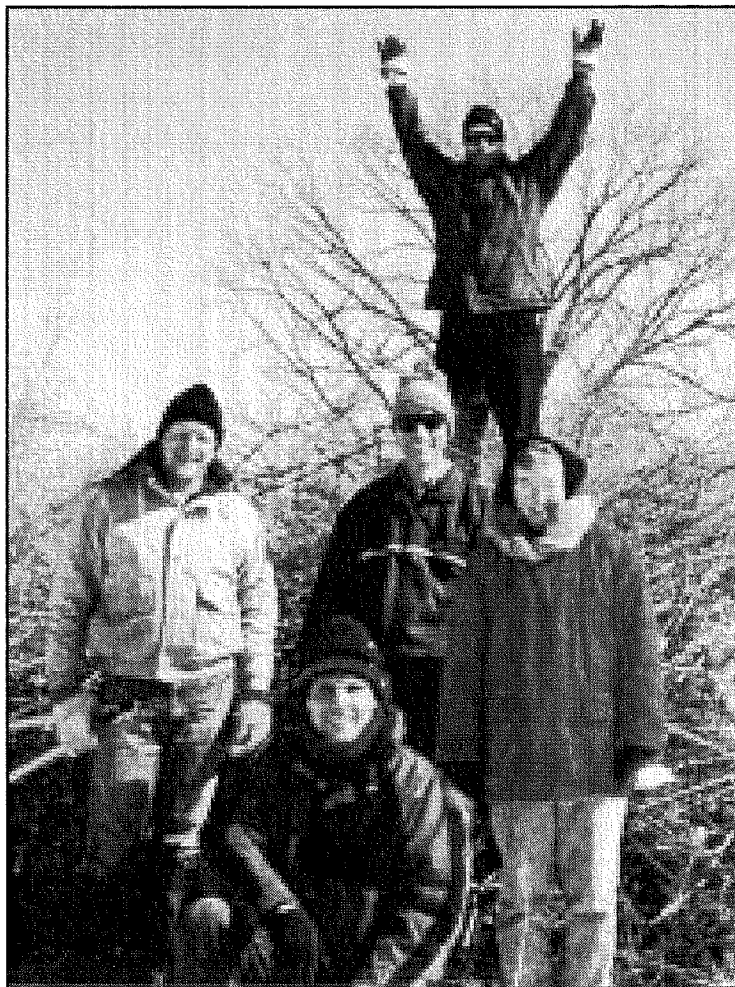
SUMMARY

The recent Parks merger with Land Conservation and Lakes and Watershed offers both opportunities and challenges. Identifying strategies to maintain open and current communication lines between operations, planning, adult conservation team, land acquisition and naturalist staff will be critical to the success of the new organizational structure. With continued support and existence of the Dane County Conservation Fund, Dane County Parks will have the financial capacity to continue protecting important natural, historical and cultural resources while improving water quality and natural environments. This plan should be considered a general guide for future acquisition, planning, development, and management of the park system over the next five years, with more specific decisions being carried out within day to day operations of the Land and Water Resources Department. As park acreages continue to increase and number of developed trails and park areas rise, it will become critical to identify successful strategies to adequately carry out on-going maintenance, restoration and operations of these lands.

Dane County continues to be one of the fastest growing counties in the state. As the population continues to grow and change rapidly, it has become increasingly important to identify and prioritize Dane County park and recreation needs to insure that limited resources available for this purpose are utilized wisely and in a timely fashion.

The Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan 2006-2011 seeks to identify significant cultural, historical, and natural resources that should be considered for possible protection, preservation or restoration over the next five years. The plan also seeks to identify countywide recreation needs and Dane County's role in providing facilities to meet anticipated demands. Both resource and recreation needs were identified through a comprehensive public input process.

This Parks & Open Space Plan must be updated and adopted by the County every five years in order for the County to be eligible to participate in a variety of state and federal funding programs for park land acquisition and development, including trails.



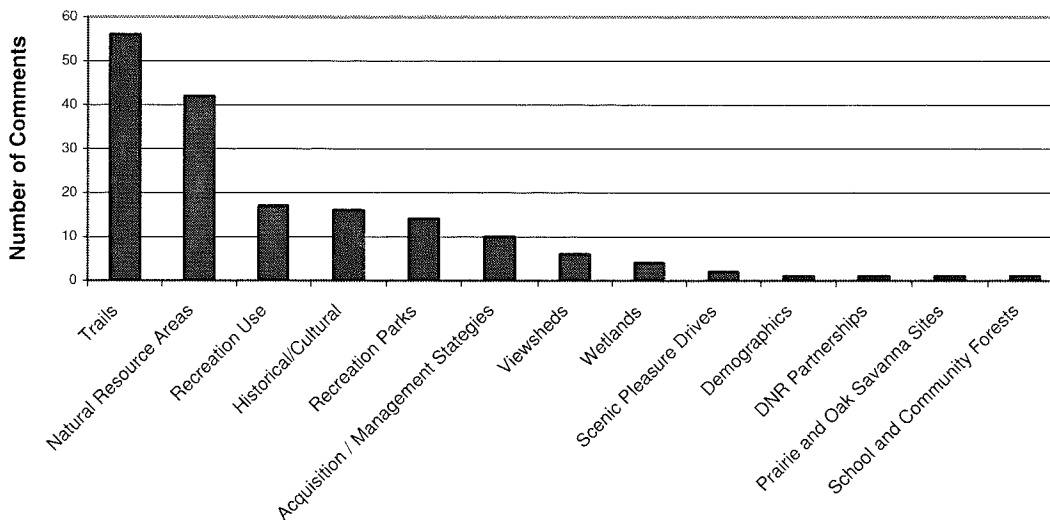
Members of the Adult Conservation Team celebrate a job well done following a day of volunteer restoration activities.

Recommendations for updates to this plan were gathered through a variety of means, including a feedback form on the Land & Water Resources Department website, five public listening sessions held throughout the County, and individual stakeholder meetings over a six month time period.

In the fall of 2005, invitations were sent to Dane County local units of government and non-profit conservation and recreation organizations to provide suggestions on possible updates or additions to this plan. This resulted in meetings with twenty-six County local units of governments, fifteen non-profit conservation organizations, and various special interest groups, government committees and state agencies. The public input process is a critical component of the Parks & Open Space Plan, as it provides an opportunity for staff to build partnerships with other units of government and learn of the needs and issues of County residents at a grass roots level. All of the comments generated throughout the public input process were categorized generally by type in an attempt to uncover themes that were prevalent countywide.

The graph below presents a summary of comments that were gathered during the public input process.

Figure I
2006-11 Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan
Public Input Process Comment Summary

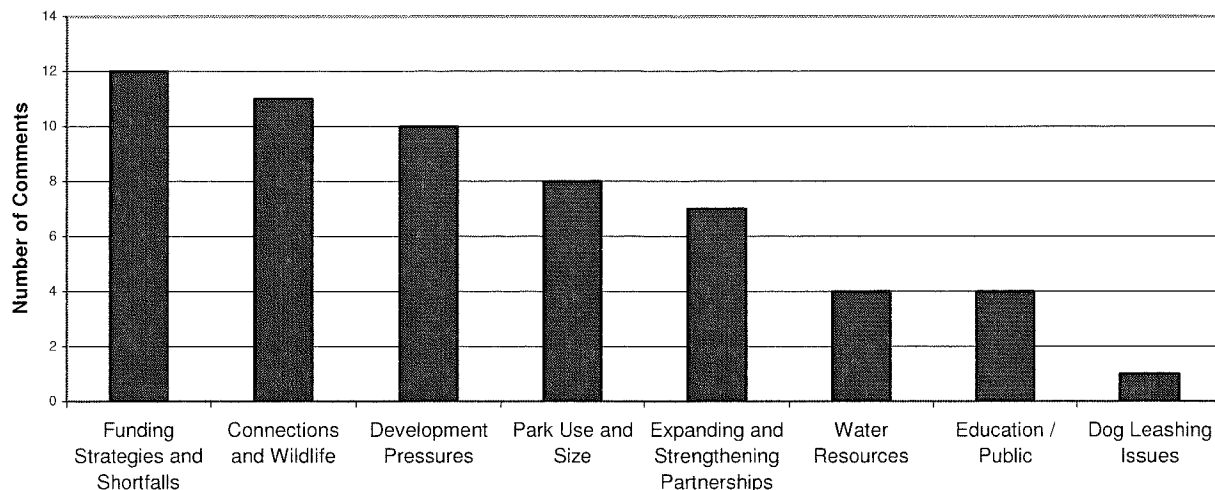


Trails and natural resource areas received the most comments. The majority of trail-related comments were to create more passive recreation opportunities and low impact trails within parks, to create more bike trails, to complete the Capital City Trail connection to the Glacial Drumlin State Trail, and to develop a regional equestrian trail system.

Comments related to natural resource areas included more effort to preserve larger tracts of woodland, prairie, grasslands and wetlands and to create better connections and ecological corridors among them. Water and wetland resources were also brought up frequently, with comments including increasing wetland restoration efforts, providing additional buffers to wetland and groundwater recharge areas, and improving fish habitat. A commonly heard recreation use topic throughout the planning process was expansion of hunting opportunities.

In addition to specific topics, a number of miscellaneous comments were gathered on concerns and issues related to the County park system. These also were categorized and are presented below.

Figure 2
2006-11 Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan
Public Input Process General Issues and Comments Summary



Three primary themes were evident in this general category of information gathered. There appeared to be a strong public perception that Dane County has a lack of sufficient park staff and resources to plan, maintain and develop existing and future park lands. Several revenue producing strategies were discussed including sale of timber harvested in a sustainable manner and land lease or rental options. Expanding and strengthening partnerships was often mentioned as a critical measure in carrying out future land acquisition and property management goals.

There were also several suggestions heard throughout the process regarding the importance of connecting existing public lands through a network of “green infrastructure” that would provide habitat and travel corridors for wildlife. Finally, a sense of development pressures on existing and potential public lands led to several discussions on the importance of prioritizing parkland acquisition and development projects over the next five years.

The Dane County Park Commission provides oversight and guidance to Parks and Land Acquisition division staff of the Department of Land & Water Resources on a variety of topics that may require a more formal public decision process. Meetings are usually held on Wednesday evenings twice per month and are publicly noticed by the County. The Dane County Park Commission is authorized by Wisconsin Statute Section 27.02(2), which states that in any county with a county executive, the county park commission shall consist of seven members appointed by the county executive, subject to confirmation by the county board. The Park Commission is an advisory committee to the Environment, Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee (EANR), which is a standing committee of the County Board that focuses primarily on oversight of the Land & Water Resources Department.



Members of the Park Commission meet with the Friends of Donald Park at Delma's Shelter. Left to right: Darren Marsh, Libby Lewis, Bill Lunney, Pat Hitchcock, Tom Thoresen, David Hughes, Judie Pfeifer, Dave Ripp and Jeff Kostelic.

The Park Commission and the Land & Water Resources Department may exercise certain powers delineated in state statutes, subject to the supervision and approval of EANR and the County Board. The County Board, made up of 37 elected supervisors, directs the Land & Water Resources Department to carry out adopted policies and authorizes Park Commission actions, such as the acquisition of land.

DEPARTMENT OF LAND & WATER RESOURCES

The 2005 Dane County budget created the Land and Water Resources Department (LWRD), effective January 1, 2005, by merging Dane County Parks, the Land Conservation Department, and the Office of Lakes and Watersheds. The goal of the new LWRD is to protect and restore Dane County's natural resources and to promote the sustainable and environmentally responsible enjoyment of public natural areas. The Department consists of five work units: Administration Division, Office of Lakes and Watersheds, Land Conservation Division, Land Acquisition Division, and Parks Division.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

The Administration Division provides administrative oversight and support and GIS services to the entire department. The Division is also responsible for preparing park master plans, bicycle/pedestrian trail planning, overseeing park and trail facility development, preparing the County Parks and Open Space Plan and coordinating watershed management and planning activities funded through multiple state and federal programs.

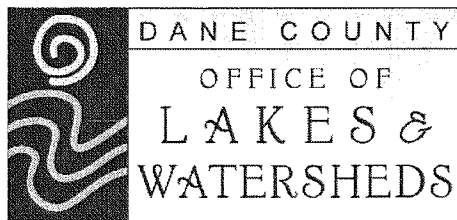
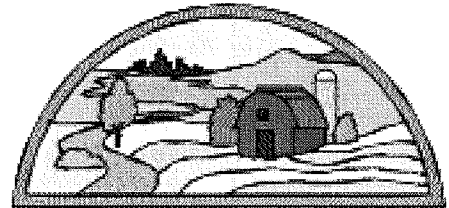


LAND ACQUISITION DIVISION

The Land Acquisition Division acquires historical/cultural, recreational and natural resource lands or land interests for the protection, use, benefit, restoration and enjoyment of Dane County citizens and visitors and coordinates the management and restoration of said lands with the Parks Division. The Division also administers the County's land acquisition grant programs and provides real estate assistance to all County departments.

LAND CONSERVATION DIVISION

The Land Conservation Division provides conservation implementation services to private landowners and land users in order to protect and enhance Dane County soil and water resources. The Division's three work groups provide conservation services on agricultural and urban lands and apply scientific methods to measure, monitor and manage lake levels.



OFFICE OF LAKES AND WATERSHEDS

The Office of Lakes and Watersheds coordinates water-related policy initiatives across the County and informs and educates the public about water resource issues and actions citizens can take to protect lakes, streams and wetlands. The Office also provides staff support to the Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission.

PARKS DIVISION

The Parks Division operates and maintains over 8400 acres of recreation parks, natural resource areas, trail corridors, historical sites and forests for Dane County's citizens. The Division is organized into five work units: visitor services and enforcement, land maintenance and development, adult conservation team, lock and dam operations, aquatic plant harvesting, and the Lussier Family Heritage Center.



Following is a list of planning efforts that were considered in the preparation of the Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan 2006-2011:

Dane County Parks & Open Space Plans 1970-2005

The County has completed six Park and Open Space Plans over the last 35 years. The first plan was done in 1970 and was completed by the Dane County Regional Planning Commission (RPC). All subsequent planning efforts completed by RPC and County planning staff have continued to build upon this original plan with additional recommendations for park planning and facility development, acquisition of new lands and ongoing recreation and trail needs analysis.

2005-2010 Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

The SCORP plan is completed by the WDNR every 5 years to identify essential issues that affect the future of outdoor recreation and make appropriate recommendations. All supply, demand and recreational issue data was compiled on eight SCORP planning regions across the state. SCORP included a recreational demand survey and needs assessment of recreational resource requirements for the Dane County region that was considered in preparing the recreation needs analysis element of this plan.

Dane County Comprehensive Plan

A Comprehensive Planning Law (Smart Growth) was passed as part of the 1999-2001 Wisconsin biennial budget, required that by 2010 all land use related actions (regulations, etc.) be consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan. In 2001, Dane County, in concert with 14 communities, applied for and received a grant from the Wisconsin Comprehensive Grant Program. By accepting this funding, Dane County has agreed to complete and adopt a comprehensive plan. Dane County's planning process has been guided by a steering committee and three work groups that addressed nine required planning elements: issues and opportunities; housing; transportation; utilities and community facilities; land use; **agriculture, natural, and cultural resources**; economic development; intergovernmental cooperation; and implementation.

LWRD staff and the Park Commission have been working together with the Dane County Agriculture, Natural and Cultural Resources planning team staff to identify ways to coordinate the objectives of the Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan and the Comprehensive Plan.

2005 Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Bike Plan

The Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) prepared a comprehensive inventory of existing and proposed bicycle facilities throughout the County that was based on a compilation of several bicycle/pedestrian planning efforts. Dane County Parks met with MPO transportation planning staff to review county-wide existing and proposed bicycle facilities and discuss future trails.

2004 Dane County Water Quality Plan and 2003 Dane County Land and Water Resource Management Plan

These plans were utilized to update the "Streambank Protection Easement Program" of the Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan 2001-2005. Both plans were consulted to prepare an updated list of streams included in the "Stream Corridor Protection and Management" section of this plan.

GOALS

Goals in this plan are intended to be broad, visionary statements that are not time specific and serve to guide the policies and direction of Dane County Parks. This update to the County Parks and Open Space Plan has five primary goals:

1. Provide sufficient park land and recreation facilities to meet the demand of Dane County residents without adversely affecting existing natural resources.
2. Preserve for posterity the characteristics and diversity of the natural, cultural and historical resources of Dane County.
3. Preserve large tracts of natural and agricultural rural landscapes at urban fringe areas that will provide regional resource protection and recreation benefits.
4. Provide environmental education programs and volunteer opportunities to County residents of all ages.
5. Protect lakes, rivers and streams, including shorelines, wetlands, high infiltration areas and associated vegetative buffers to maintain high water quality, manage water quantity and sustain water-related recreation throughout Dane County.

PRIORITIES & POLICIES

Priorities generally identify acquisition or preservation efforts that should always be a part of ongoing work programs throughout the course of a year. However, it should be noted that park acquisition, development and management decisions are often based on opportunity, partnerships and willing sellers rather than priority; listed priorities should not be used as justification against pursuing projects not included under this section.



View of the Pleasure Valley Natural Resource Area looking northwest towards the Wisconsin River valley.

Policies are more specific statements that provide guidance for future park planning, development, management and land acquisition decision making processes. The policies of the Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan 2001-2005 were updated by staff to reflect current park operation, planning, and land acquisition procedure and practices.

The Parks & Open Space Plan 2006-2011 provides priorities and policies for parks, recreation and trails, cultural and historic resources, natural resource areas, forests, land acquisition, operations and maintenance, partnerships, and planning, development and management.

PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAILS

Priorities

1. Develop a County-wide regional bicycle-pedestrian system that connects communities and large population centers with other public parks and regional trail systems. Continue to work with the National Park Service, the WDNR, and Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation complete the Ice Age National Scenic Trail through Dane County.
2. Investigate sustainable alternative sources of revenue to fund increasing park and trail operation, maintenance and development costs.
3. Consider potential expansion of disc golf, dog exercise and camping program areas throughout existing and new park lands to meet growing demands.

Policies

1. Provide park and recreation resources that have regional significance and provide multiple uses for County residents from several local units of government.
2. Locate new recreation parks close to, but isolated from, large population centers on lands that provide for year round multiple recreation uses with diverse natural resources. Ideally, natural features such as rugged topography, water or wetlands will provide separation from urban areas.
3. Undertake partnerships with other recreation groups, including private non-profit, organizations that have a regional user base.
4. Charge fees in balance with other available resources for use of park facilities in order to provide funding for operations, maintenance and development of the park system.
5. Consider development of new regional recreation uses on existing or future park land if the demand is quantifiable, designated lands are suitable for the intended use and there are sufficient resources available to plan, develop and manage the proposed use.
6. Consider expanding types of hunting allowed and areas open to hunting on County owned lands in coordination with other Federal, State, and local properties that is compatible with park land public uses and safety, to complement land management and wildlife protection goals.
7. Incorporate a minimum of twenty-five acres of level, utility open space available for parking and special events into recreation parks where possible.

CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

A historic chapel built in 1857 on a hilltop overlooking the lake and surrounding valley is a popular destination for hikers at Indian Lake County Park



Priorities

1. Implement cultural and historic educational exhibits and outreach programs at the Lussier Family Heritage Center.
2. Plan for construction of additional educational and exhibit areas at the Lussier Family Heritage Center.
3. Design and install additional Native American interpretive signage at the Lake Farm Unit of Lake Farm Centennial State Park and throughout the park system where appropriate.
4. Continue working with the Friends of Schumacher Farm to implement recommendations of the adopted 2005 Master Plan.

Policies

1. Friends, non-profit and special interest groups are responsible for all costs and fund raising related to construction or restoration of historic buildings or structures.
2. Dane County Park Commission and Public Works are responsible for design oversight and approval, development of construction plans and specifications and review of bidding and construction for all new building construction or building relocation.
3. As staff time and resources allow, continue to develop interpretive and educational signage to increase public interest and appreciation of cultural and historical sites.

NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS

Priorities

1. Preserve lands adjacent to urban areas that improve water and wetland quality and quantity.
2. Acquire or fund through partners natural resource area acreage that increases overall size and connectivity of existing natural resource areas.
3. Focus on projects that involve and foster multiple partnerships.
4. Continue expanding existing and creating new natural resource areas that provide a variety of regional functions, including nature-based recreation uses, water quality improvement, trail connectivity and habitat improvement.
5. Continue and increase restoration efforts to the extent possible on woodlands, wetlands, prairie and savanna ecosystems.

Policies

1. Communicate project area resource protection priorities to partnering agencies and non profit groups to provide a common vision and work plan.
2. Work with partnering agencies and groups toward creation of larger landscape-scale parks and natural resource areas.
3. Plan and implement greenway connections that enhance non-motorized public access from population centers to existing public lands and regional trails.
4. Plan, implement and partner on projects that provide environmentally sensitive access to Dane County lakes, streams and rivers, including water-based trails and shore fishing.
5. Acquire buffer lands to Dane County water and wetland areas to reduce flooding and enhance water quality.
6. Allow low-impact, nature-based recreation development and use of natural resource areas that include overlook areas for natural and scenic views.
7. Where advantageous, undertake alternative land lease, rental or sustainable resource management practices that could generate revenues for future operation, maintenance and development of natural resource areas.
8. Stabilize streambanks, shorelines and other areas of erosion through coordinated planning efforts on County-owned parklands, working jointly with adjacent property owners as necessary to insure permanent stabilization.
9. Consider both working and non-working farm lands as a complementary component of natural resource areas.

FORESTS

Priorities

1. Consider WDNR staff expertise and resources to create Forest Management Plans (including sustainable timber harvest) for County forests and woodlots that are compatible with other forest use objectives.
2. Educate County park users about sustainable forest management practices, including sustainable timber harvest, when compatible with other forest use objectives.
3. Increase County-owned acreage of forests and woodlots and consider future transition into an expanded "County Forest" program as forest lands increase.
4. Utilize proceeds of sustainable and environmentally compatible timber harvests for future forest land acquisition, management and facility development.

Policies

1. Consider multiple low-impact recreation use of County forests and woodlots, including hiking, cross country skiing, picnicking and hunting, compatible with forest objectives.
2. Investigate revenue-generating sustainable timber management practices and collection of firewood.
3. Maximize volunteer efforts to control invasive vegetative species.
4. Work toward establishing partnerships with schools, Friends and non-profit conservation organizations to assist with management, maintenance and monitoring of forest lands.



Winter at Scheidegger Forest.

LAND ACQUISITION

Priorities

1. Develop a land evaluation program for potential acquisitions that integrates participation of all divisions within the Land & Water Resources Department.
2. Develop a system to develop and restore newly-acquired lands, using revenue from the lease program.
3. Plan for the continuation of the Conservation Fund.
4. Participate in the development of the Land and Water Legacy Program.

Policies

1. Cooperate with federal and state agencies, local units of government and community organizations in acquiring land.
2. Identify properties of high interest and proactively contact the owners.
3. Provide real estate assistance to all Dane County departments.
4. Work with willing sellers and treat all landowners fairly and equally when pursuing lands identified in the Parks & Open Space Plan.
5. Participate and assist in the removal, sale or conversion of incompatible buildings located on recently acquired properties.
6. In relinquishing County-owned parkland for purposes other than preservation or recreation, take into account the following factors:
 - The long-term impacts on parks and recreational use throughout Dane County.
 - An equitable exchange of land.
 - Dedication of revenues for additional park lands or improvements.
 - Action being consistent with local and regional plans.
 - Total costs and benefits of land ownership.
 - Possible deed restrictions placed on property being relinquished.
 - Existing deed restrictions that carry mitigation requirements for any parkland that is relinquished.
7. Evaluate donations of land to the Park Commission on the following:
 - Consistency with needs identified in the Parks & Open Space Plan.
 - Proximity to existing parks.
 - Maintenance and development costs.
 - Special environmental or cultural qualities.
 - Acceptance of land donations for resale, with proceeds used to purchase other park and resource land.
8. Participate in discussions regarding the impact, if any, of removing lands from tax rolls.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Priorities

1. Maintain cleanliness, function and integrity of County-owned lands, restrooms, shower buildings, boat landings, boat locks, campgrounds and Lussier Family Heritage Center.
2. Improve and increase accessibility to park buildings and facilities as staff and resources allow.
3. Provide for the safe enjoyment of County park lands through public contact, enforcement and information programs.
4. Provide prioritized aquatic plant harvesting throughout the boating season with guidance from the WDNR.
5. Implement shoreline stabilization and erosion control measures as necessary throughout County-owned lands as staff and resources allow.

Policies

1. Provide courteous and responsive public information and contact.
2. Make facilities available for public use in a timely, safe and cost-efficient manner, as resources allow.
3. Provide facilities to accommodate a variety of recreation uses and special events.
4. Maintain park facilities and grounds by the most efficient and practical means, as resources allow.
5. Develop cooperative partnerships with public, non-profit and private groups to help provide for future management and operation of the parks.
6. Oversee the County forestry program that provides storm damage clean-up, hazard tree removal, vegetation management and restoration efforts.
7. Provide through Lake Management for safe use of County waters, including maintenance of navigation buoys and channels, lake access points, and flood mitigation through aquatic plant management.
8. Oversee the Naturalist program that provides long-range vegetation management plans for all County park lands.
9. Oversee the Adult Conservation Team to coordinate volunteer assistance with park maintenance and development duties.

PARTNERSHIPS

Priorities

1. Work with the WDNR and other government agencies on creating joint management agreement and policies that define agency roles for managing recreation use, restoration efforts, development of facilities, maintenance and enforcement.
2. Forge new and innovative partnerships with local units of government and community organizations to support land acquisition and park development projects through the Conservation Fund Grant Program, Park Partner Match Program and Scheidegger Grant Program.

Policies

1. Consider arrangements or transactions with local governments for those parks and facilities which serve only local needs and do not meet county standards. Transactions should keep parks open to all, and not change use to the detriment of the public and value of the land.
2. Cooperate with other units of government in establishing a permanent network of connected open space around the central urban areas of the county.
3. Support cities, villages and towns in their efforts to conserve lands that address local and regional economies, environmental ethics and landscape-scale regional environmental concerns, and support their efforts to help create regionally significant parks, open spaces and natural areas in the Dane County neighborhoods most blighted in character or deficient in park space.
4. Where consistent with other goals of this plan, identify or set aside lands in the Park System for permanent or temporary use as community gardens.
5. Encourage greater state and federal allocation of financial resources for parks and open space in Dane County.
6. Encourage greater private sector participation in the preservation of park and open space lands, with appropriate conditions, including the possibility of corporate sponsor of county park and recreation facilities.
7. Seek new and innovative methods of obtaining land, revenue and in-kind donations.
8. Expand the Adult Conservation Team, a volunteer program that identifies tasks for volunteers and provides supervision, support and recognition, and include adopt-a-use groups to help maintain or develop specific facilities.
9. Support programs to provide transportation to and from County park lands for those without access to transportation.
10. Cooperate with federal and state agencies, local units of government and community organizations in financing, management and acquisition of recreation and natural resources as appropriate, including the promotion of consistent and effective management of resources that extend beyond Dane County.
11. Encourage and cooperate with local units of government and developers interested in implementing design standards for development near County park and open space lands, including developments within the viewshed of county park and open space lands and on ecologically-connected lands.

PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND LAND MANAGEMENT

Priorities

1. Conduct a joint inventory and analysis of existing and proposed land management practices on all County park lands that share boundaries with other State, Federal and local government property to work toward consistent and compatible management practices throughout project areas.
2. Utilize salvaged construction materials and employ sustainable building practices to the maximum extent possible when developing park infrastructure.
3. Meet with the Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and local units of government in rapidly urbanizing areas on an annual basis to coordinate implementation of regional trail objectives identified in this plan.

Policies

1. Provide peripheral support and input into other State, County and local natural resource protection planning efforts.
2. Provide review and peripheral input to local units of government on park, open space and resource protection plans, as staff and resources allow.
3. Dane County Park Commission and Public Works are responsible for design oversight and approval, development of construction plans and specifications and review of bidding and construction for all new building construction or building relocation.
4. Dane County Parks will prepare, with Park Commission review, Project Plans for Natural Resource Areas identified in this plan, as staff and resources allow. Project Plans will include a comprehensive inventory of existing natural, cultural, historical and recreational resources within and adjacent to project area boundaries, recommendations for future property management, park and trail development, land acquisition, boundary adjustment(s), and identification of potential future project partners and their roles in implementing plan recommendations.
5. Dane County Parks will conduct, with Park Commission review, all planning and design efforts for recreation parks, trails, forests and historic sites, including site development plans, exterior signage, and master plans.
6. Develop park lands in a manner that restores and preserves to the greatest extent possible the original character and integrity of existing natural, biotic, cultural and geographic features.
7. Conduct thorough archeological inventories prior to starting any park or trail development projects.
8. Develop new and retrofit existing park facilities to meet guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Consumer Product Safety Commission, regardless of the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum.
9. Park and recreation plans completed by Dane County Parks are not land use plans or created for the purpose of guiding future zoning decisions.
10. Consider the protection of significant natural, cultural and historical resources on lands adjacent to and within the viewshed of county, state, and federally-owned recreation and habitat lands.

HISTORY

The Dane County Parks Department was created in 1935 when the County acquired land for Stewart Park. Eleven additional park sites—Babcock, LaFollette, Goodland, Mendota, Brigham, Fish Lake, Riley-Deppe, Festge, Half-Way Prairie, Token Creek and Lake View Woods— were added over the next 30 years.

The first County Park and Open Space Plan was adopted in 1970, enabling the Department to apply for a number of State and Federal park acquisition and development funding programs. This resulted in a substantial increase in both the size and diversity of the Dane County Park system over the next 20 years.

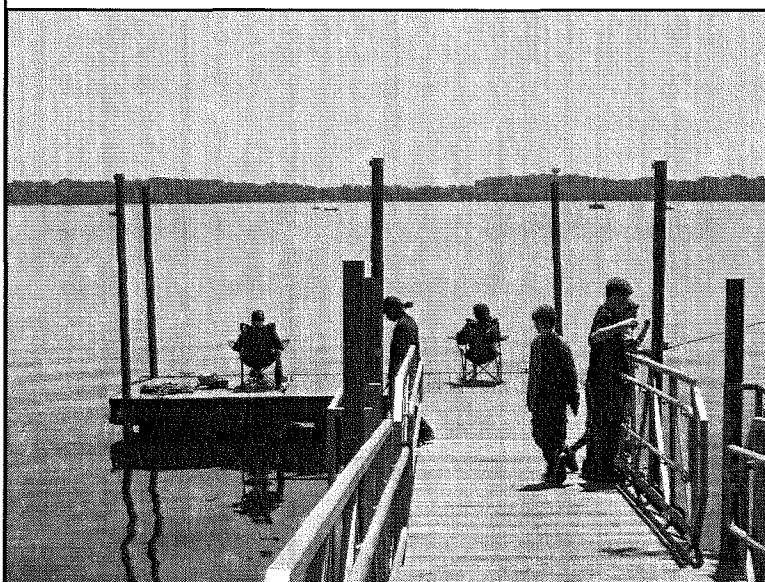
Beginning around 1990, the Dane County Park Commission began to focus more on acquiring larger tracts of land for the purpose of protecting key natural resources, water and wetlands and also became more active in exploring diverse recreation opportunities, including off-leash dog exercise areas, model airplane fields, and disc golf courses. In addition to recreation, the Parks Division is taking a much greater role in the stewardship of Dane County land and water resources through the aquatic plant management program as well as streambank and shoreline stabilization projects. The Parks Division is also taking a lead role on removing buildings from newly-acquired lands and providing relief from natural disasters such as tornados. Acquisition, operations, maintenance and park planning roles and responsibilities continue to expand and evolve within the current County park system as a result of the Land and Water Resources Department merger.

PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

In 2000, the Park Commission adopted a park classification system that divided county park lands into four categories to assist in the development of consistent management practices for each type and also to further the public's comprehension of the purpose and potential use of Dane County park lands.

The categories are Recreation Parks, Natural Resource Areas, Forests, and Cultural/Historical Sites.

EXISTING PARK LAND AND FACILITY INVENTORY



Park patrons enjoy an accessible fishing pier at Lake Farm Centennial State Park.

Recreation Parks

A recreation park is land specifically set aside for active and passive recreation uses. Its use is often extensive and intensive. A recreation park serves users who are attracted to outdoor recreation. It may provide facilities that offer a wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities or cater to only one predominant activity (special use), or provide a trail corridor that offers continuous, protected and safe routes of outdoor recreation. Recreation parks may be located within the boundaries of lands in a different category.

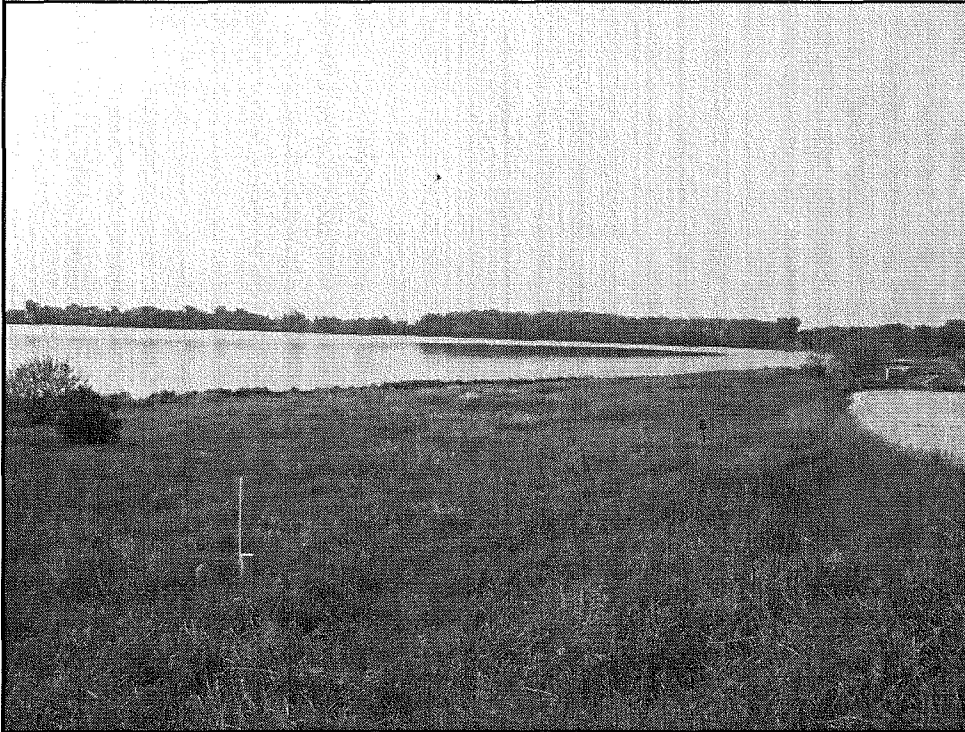
Figure 3
Recreation Park
Inventory

Park: Date Represents Year Established in County POSP	Total Acres	Car Parking and Public Access	Number of Camp Sites	Electric Campsites	Camping with Showers	Group Camping	Restrooms	Reservable Shelters	Non-Reservable Shelters	Picnic Area	Playground Equipment	Improved Boat Launch (Trailer Parking Spaces)	Small Watercraft Launch	Canoe Launch	Swimming	Accessible Fishing Pier	Multi-Purpose Hard Surface Trails (Miles)	Hiking / Natural Surface Trail (Miles)	Mountain Biking (Miles)	Bridle Trail (Miles)	Cross-Country Skiing (Miles)	Snowmobile Trail (Miles)	Softball Field	Basketball Courts	Volleyball Courts	Tennis Courts	Pet Exercise Area (Acres)	Pet Exercise Trails (Miles)	Historic Site	Facilities for People with Disabilities	Other Amenities
Babcock (1936)	36.4	●	25	●	●	●	●	●	—	—	●	78				—	0.5											●			
Badger Prairie (1976)	350.2	●					●	1		1	●						0.3	1.9	3				●	●		8			Aeromodeling Field		
Brigham (1952)	120.2	●	25			●	●	2		1	●							1					●	●							
Cam-Rock (1970)	439.9	●				●	●	3		3	●		●			1	1	4.1	6.2		4.1		●								
Donald (1993)	538.4	●				●	●	1		2	●					1	6.9		6.2		1.2							●			
Festge (1963)	155.6	●				●	●	3		1	●							2				●									
Fish Camp (1976)	15.6	●								2		21	●			2		0.3													
Fish Lake (2000)	2.9	●					●		1	1			●										●	●	●						
Goodland (1937)	13.9	●				●	●	2		1	●	19		●								●	●	●	●						
Indian Lake (1975)	480.9	●				●	●	1		1			●					8.8			8.8	1				24	1.3	●			
Jenni & Kyle (1989)	160.3	●				●	●	1		1						3		3*										●			
La Follette (1936)	28.6	●				●	●	1		1	●		●																		
Lake Farm Centennial State Park (1973)	588.8	●	54	●	●	●	●	3		3	●	54				1	0.4	4.5		4.5		●	●					●			
Lake View Hill Park (1967)	41.3	●																●										●			
Lussier (2000)	133.2	●								1				●																	
McCarthy (1974)	263.5	●				●				1								4.3	4.3	4.3											
Mendota (1951)	19	●	30	●	●	●	●	2	1	2	●		●	●	1							●	●	●	●				5 Unit Boat Campground		
Prairie Moraine (1993)	161.4	●																3.9								51					
Riley-Deppe (1962)	12.9	●					●	1		1	●		●																		
Salmo Pond (1980)	7.5	●				●				1						1		0.4											●		
Silverwood (2000)	283.9	●																													
Stewart (1935)	176.3	●				●	●	1	2	3	●		●					2.7			2.7										
Token Creek (1966)	417.9	●	42	●	●	●	●	5		6	●					1		6.3	2.5	3.6			●		46	1.4	●	Disc Golf			
Viking (1972)	83.3	●				●	●	1		1			●				1.2	1							14	1					
Walking Iron (1972)	316.6	●								1								5.8	5.8		5.8										
Yahara Heights (2000)	140.5	●												●												20					
Totals	4989.0		176					28	5	36		172				12	3.4	53.9	18.0	28	8				163	3.7					

* Jenni & Kyle Trails are ADA Accessible

Natural Resource Areas

A natural resource area is land specifically set aside for the protection of a valuable natural environment. This can include habitat protection and open space preservation. Recreation at natural resource areas is a secondary objective, and users are encouraged to enjoy the resource as is. Nature-based recreation activities dominate the site use, active recreation takes place only, if at all, on the fringes or in small pockets (areas) of a natural resource area. As natural resource areas expand in the future, hunting should be considered both for recreation and for wildlife management. Natural resource areas may surround lands in another category, such as recreation parks.



Patrick Marsh Viewshed



Black Earth Creek Viewshed

Figure 4
Natural Resource Area Inventory

Natural Resource Areas: Date Represents Year Established in County POSP	Project Area Boundary (acres)*	Total Acres under County Ownership**	Car Parking and Public Access	Number of Campsites	Camping with Showers	Electric Campsites	Group Camping	Restrooms	Reservable Shelters	Non-Reservable Shelters	Picnic Area	Playground Equipment	Improved Boat Launch	Small Watercraft Launch	Canoe Launch	Accessible Fishing Pier	Swimming	Multi-Purpose Hard Surface (Miles)	Hiking / Natural Surface Trail (Miles)	Mountain Biking (Miles)	Bridle Trail (Miles)	Cross-Country Skiing (Miles)***	Snowmobile Trail (Miles)	Softball Field	Pet Exercise Area (Acres)	Historic Site or Interpretive Information	Other Amenities
																											Facilities for People with Disabilities
Badger Mill Creek (1995)	623.1	0.0																									
Black Earth Creek (2001)	11630.7	394.6	●																								
Blooming Grove Drumlin (2000)	1320.9	151.8																									
Capital Springs State Recreation Area (2004)****	2755.4	0.0	●					●	1									4	1.7							●	
Cherokee Marsh (1970)	3721.7	119.1	●																								
Door Creek Wetlands (2000)	3804.3	455.6																									
Fish Lake (1996)	683.3	117.4																									
Holtzman (1973)	63.2	63.2	●																								
Ice Age Trail (1995)	14051.2	280.1	●																	18.5							
Ice Age Trail Junction (1993)	1949.6	535.9	●																	●							
Koshkonong Creek	3599.8	0.0																									
Leopold-Riley Game Cooperative (2001)	1820.0	0.0																									
Lower Mud Lake (1995)	2226.0	276.5	●											●													
Nine Springs E-Way (1976)	3889.1	558.6	●																						●		
North Mendota (2006)**	2641.4	39.7																							●		
Patrick Marsh (2001)	990.0	13.4	●																						●		
Pheasant Branch Conservancy (1995)	501.7	99.9	●															0.75	1.5						●		
Phil's Woods (1974)	36.1	36.1	●																	●							
Pleasure Valley (2001)	1176.0	101.4																									
South Waubesa Marsh (1990)	1209.0	0.0																									
Springfield Hill (2001)	701.0	117.5																									
Starkweather Creek (2006)	2372.8	0.0																									
Sugar River (1983)	7644.4	0.0																									
Token Creek (1970)	890.3	18.6																									
Upper Yahara River (2001)	496.0	0.0																									
Totals	70797.0	3379.4																									

* Not all lands within Natural Resource Area Project boundaries are in public ownership. Please respect private landowner rights.

** Does not include recreation park lands.

*** Combines Six Mile Creek NRA, Dorn Creek NRA and Cherokee Marsh NRA Lands west of STH 113 from the 2001-2005 Plan.

**** Includes only groomed trails that require a trail pass.

***** Acreages for Capital Springs State Recreation Area included under Nine Springs E-way.

Note: This facility inventory includes only those found on County-owned property.

Forests

These lands were classified as "County Forest Sites" in the Parks & Open Space Plan 2001-2005. County Forests are usually vast, uninterrupted tracts of forest acreage more typical in the northern part of the state that accommodate recreation uses such as snowmobiling, ATV's, hunting and fishing. This update to the plan recommends renaming this County classification of park lands to "Forests." These County-owned and managed forests and woodlots have the potential to become excellent outdoor classrooms for people of all ages to learn about forest ecology, vegetation management practices, and the wildlife that use these areas. These lands also offer great demonstration areas for land management practices, such as prescribed burns, invasive species removal and selective cutting of trees, that contribute to the overall health and sustainability of forest ecosystems.

Lands managed under this category will allow the County to receive income from timber management as well as from a variety of grant programs. Some passive recreation such as hiking and cross country skiing may be incorporated into these lands as appropriate. As acreage increases in the future, hunting should also be considered both for recreation and wildlife management purposes compatible with forest use and ecology. The County may also consider enrolling some lands in the WDNR "County Forest" program that would make them eligible for a greater variety of funding programs as this program area increases in the future. Some lands in recreation parks and natural resource areas may be managed as "Forests" if compatible with other use and management of the property.

The Madison School Forest provides a number of educational classes and tours throughout the year at its property in the Town of Verona. Activities and programs include bird watching, tree identification, nature hikes, rustic camping and a nature center. This project area is managed and maintained by the Madison Metropolitan School District and the Friends of the Madison School Forest.

Other Amenities			
Facilities for People with Disabilities			
Historic Site			
Pet Exercise Trails			
Pet Exercise Area (Acres)			
Tennis Courts			
Volleyball Courts			
Basketball Courts			
Softball Field			
Snowmobile Trail (Miles)			
Cross-Country Skiing (Miles)			
Bridle Trail (Miles)			
Mountain Biking (Miles)			
Hiking / Natural Surface Trail (Miles)	●		
Multi-Purpose Hard Surface Trails (Miles)			
Accessible Fishing Pier			
Swimming			
Canoe Launch			
Small Watercraft Launch			
Improved Boat Launch (Trailer Parking Spaces)			
Playground Equipment			
Picnic Area			
Non-Reservable Shelters ●			
Reservable Shelters			
Restrooms			
Group Camping			
Camping with Showers			
Electric Campsites			
Number of Camp Sites			
Car Parking and Public Access ●			
Project Area Boundary (acres)**	450		
Total Acres	336.2	113.9	73.4
Forests: Date Represents Year Established in County POSP			
Madison School Forest (1959)			
Morton Forest (1999)			
Scheldigger Forest (2002)			
Total			543.5

**Figure 5
Forest Inventory**

Historical/Cultural Sites

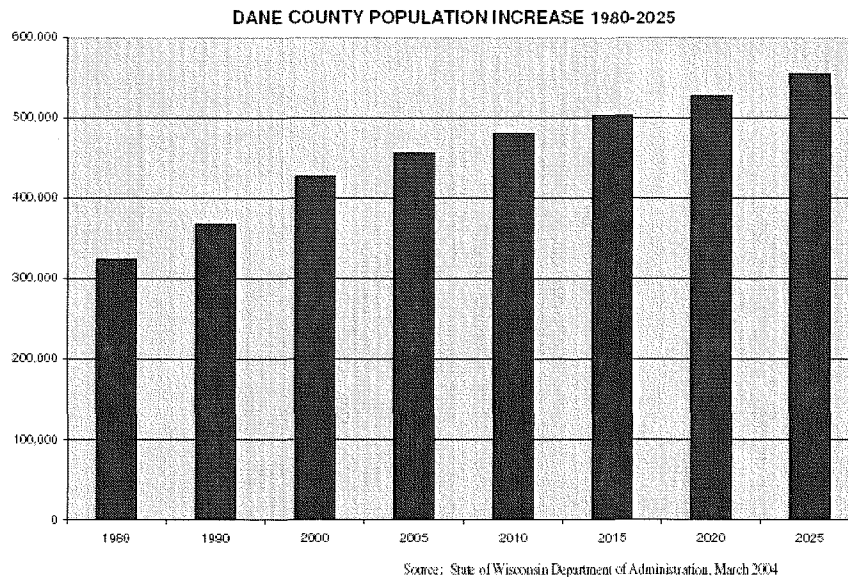
These lands are specifically set aside for the preservation, restoration or reconstruction of features significant to the history or cultural heritage of an area. This may include historic buildings, reconstructed historic buildings and archaeological sites. Activities at a historic site may be limited to sightseeing and the study of its historic or cultural features. Sites may be surrounded by lands in another category, such as recreation parks or natural resource areas. *Note: This category does not include several smaller historical sites on County owned property such as native American mound sites, cabin remnants, etc.*

Other Amenities			
Facilities for People with Disabilities			
Historic Site	●	●	
Pet Exercise Trails			
Pet Exercise Area (Acres)			
Tennis Courts			
Volleyball Courts			
Basketball Courts			
Softball Field			
Snowmobile Trail (Miles)			
Cross-Country Skiing (Miles)			
Bridle Trail (Miles)			
Mountain Biking (Miles)			
Hiking / Natural Surface Trail (Miles)		●	
Multi-Purpose Hard Surface Trails (Miles)			
Accessible Fishing Pier			
Swimming			
Canoe Launch			
Small Watercraft Launch			
Improved Boat Launch (Trailer Parking Spaces)			
Playground Equipment	●		
Picnic Area	●		
Non-Reservable Shelters			
Reservable Shelters			
Restrooms			
Group Camping			
Camping with Showers			
Electric Campsites			
Number of Camp Sites			
Car Parking and Public Access	●	●	
Total Acres	0.6	115.5	116.1
Historic Sites: Date Represents Year Established in County POSP			
Halfway Prairie (1964)			
Schumacher Farm (1978)			
Total			

Figure 6
Historical/Cultural Site Inventory

Analysis of population trends and future urban growth areas is an important park and open space planning consideration. Dane County continues to be one of the fastest growing counties in the State, and the population is expected to continue to increase steadily for the next thirty years according to the Wisconsin Department of Administration. In 2004, the estimated Dane County population was over 450,000. It is expected to rise to over 550,000 by 2025, or an approximate 22% increase.

Figure 7



The following Developed Land Use Forecast from the Draft Dane County Comprehensive Plan illustrates a steady demand for developable land over the next 25 years. The majority of this growth is anticipated to occur outside of the Central Urban Service Area, reinforcing the importance of maintaining positive working relationships with County developers, towns and villages.

Urban service areas that are expected to experience the greatest percentage of population increases from 2000 to 2030 are Cottage Grove, Verona and Waunakee. It is important to identify where growth is anticipated for the purpose of locating future recreation parks, prioritizing acquisition of lands targeted for resource protection and prioritizing future trail development projects.

DEVELOPED LAND USE FORECASTS: 2000-2030

Figure 8

Table L-6: Dane County Developed Land Demand: 2000-2030

Land Use	2000	2010	2020	2030	2000-2030	
	Developed Land				Number	Percent
Central USA	46,217	50,508	54,799	59,089	12,872	28%
Outlying USAs	19,614	24,246	28,878	33,510	13,896	71%
Rural Area	61,224	66,454	71,684	76,914	15,690	26%
County	127,055	141,208	155,361	169,513	42,458	33%
	Residential Developed Land				Number	Percent
Central USA	18,058	19,617	21,176	22,734	4,676	26%
Outlying USAs	9,335	11,405	13,475	15,545	6,210	67%
Rural Area	21,843	23,978	26,111	28,249	6,406	29%
County	49,236	55,000	60,762	66,528	17,292	35%
	Residential Percent of Developed Land					
Central USA	39.1%	38.8%	38.6%	38.5%		
Outlying USAs	47.6%	47.0%	46.7%	46.4%		
Rural Area	35.7%	36.1%	36.4%	36.7%		
County	38.8%	38.9%	39.1%	39.2%		

The developed land use forecasts are based upon the application of 1970 to 2000 land use inventory data from housing and land use analysis of the 26 urban service areas and the rural area. Comparing developed land use forecasts to existing land use patterns and densities in 2000 indicates slightly higher densities in the future due to three factors:

1. Higher land costs, hence smaller lots for single-family detached homes;
2. More condominiums for retiring homeowners; and
3. A higher percentage of the County's housing expected to be built in urban areas.

The County's developed land use is expected to grow from 127,055 acres in 2000 to 189,513 acres in 2030, a 33% increase a rate similar to population growth. Residential land use, the largest component of developed land use, is expected to grow from 49,236 acres in 2000 to 66,528 acres in 2030, as shown in see Table L-6.

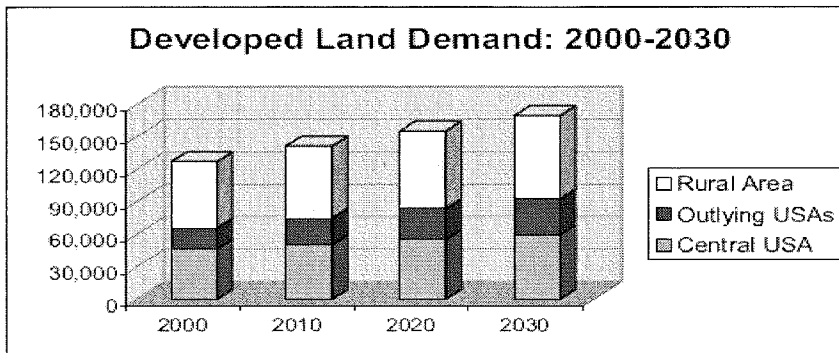
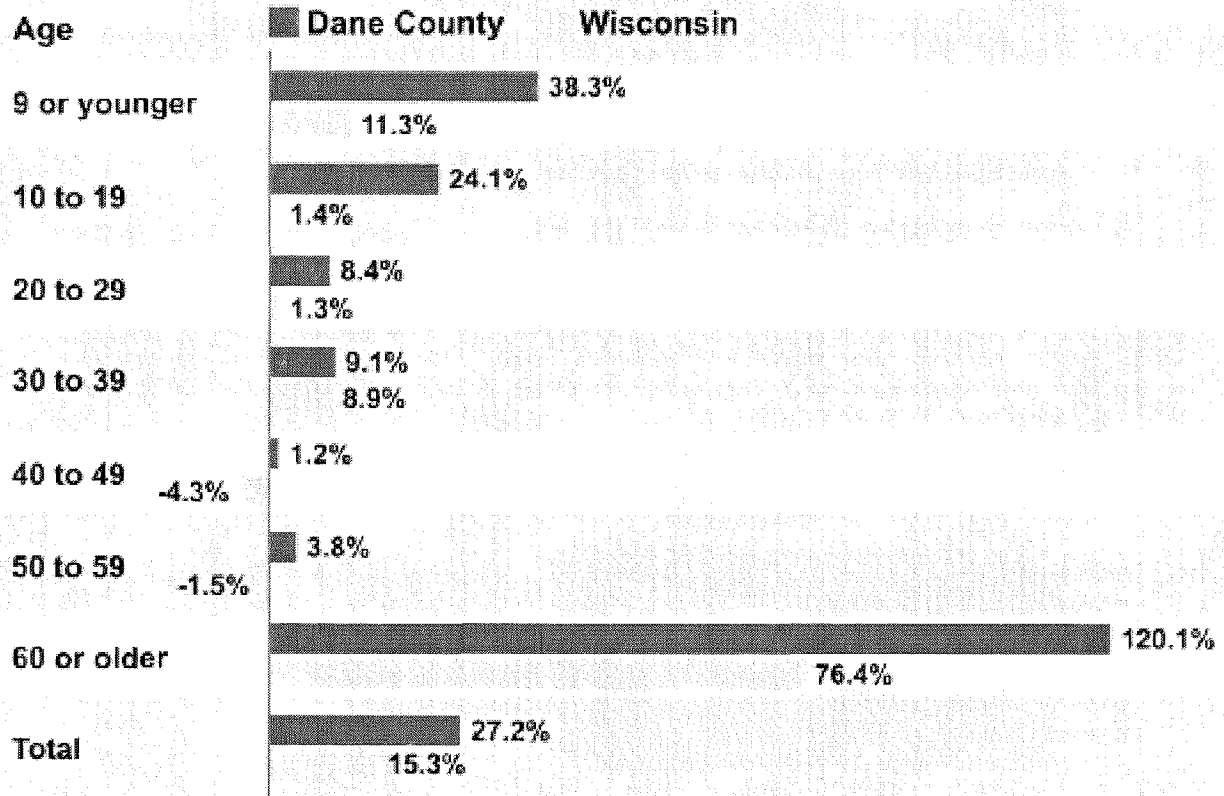


Figure 9

In addition to population increases, the average age of Dane County residents is expected to increase dramatically. Wisconsin Department of Administration forecasts that by the year 2030 there will be a 120% increase in the number of Dane County's residents age 60 or older. The trend toward an older population suggests the increasing need to provide passive recreation facilities such as picnic areas and hiking and biking trails. In addition, the aging population projection further emphasizes the importance of fostering a greater awareness and appreciation of the Dane County Park system in current middle-aged residents, who could become a key source of volunteer labor as they retire.

Figure 10
Projected 2030 Dane County Age Distribution



Source: David Egan-Robertson, Wisconsin Department of Administration

Determining future recreation and park land needs is typically justified using a combination of the following methods:

Method 1

The first needs analysis method is quantitative in nature and utilizes comparison to national standards provided by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA):

- Comparison of existing park land acreages to NRPA-recommended acreage standards.
- Analysis of service area distances from individual parks to population centers in comparison to NRPA recommended service radii standards.

Method 2

The second needs analysis method is based on comparison to related park and open space planning efforts and determining local facility needs by:

- Comparison to related regional park and open space studies such as the 2005-2010 Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).
- Analysis of public input and user information gathered as part of the planning process.

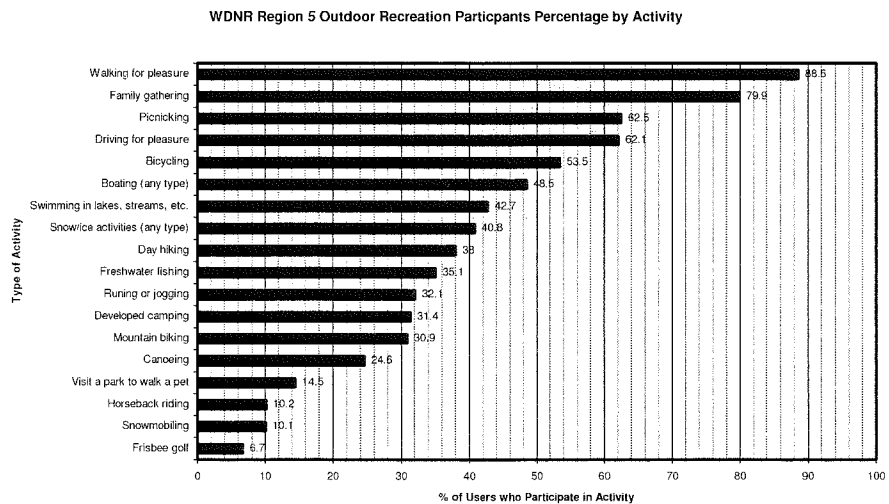
Historically, method 1 has not been considered in the update to this plan because there are no applicable or variable NRPA standards for the natural resource protection-oriented lands that make up the majority of the park system. Moreover, planning for future recreation needs and park locations has been based on actual County resident interest and input rather than on national standards. Hence, future recreation and park land needs for this plan were assessed utilizing method 2.

RECREATION NEEDS ANALYSIS

Dane County Parks considered several factors for determining future types of recreation facilities to be recommended in this plan.

First, the WDNR recently completed the 2005-2010 Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. This planning effort included a detailed user analysis by individual regions of the state. The graph in Figure 11 represents a summary of recreation use for Wisconsin Region 5 which included Richland, Sauk, Columbia, Dodge, Iowa, Dane, Jefferson, Lafayette, Green, and Rock counties.

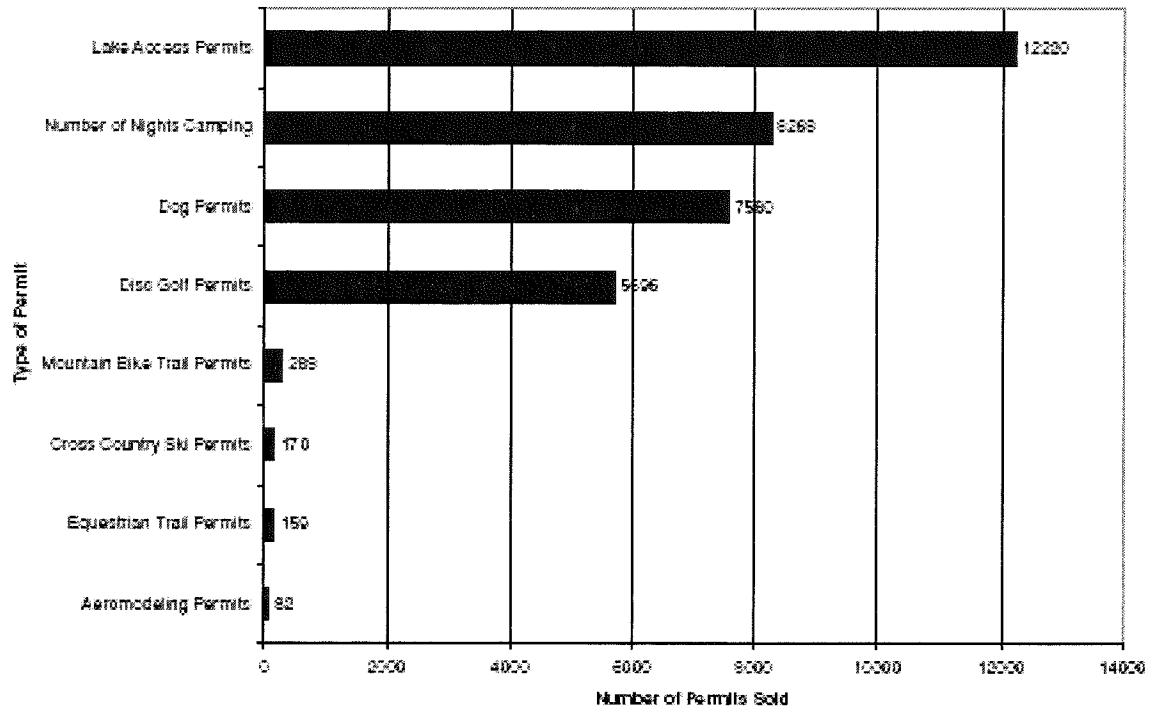
Figure 11



Dane County Parks also analyzed recreation uses that require purchase of a permit. It is important to note that permit data for use of the Capital City Trail was not included, and also that general walking/hiking in the parks does not require a permit. The graph presented below depicts total recreation permits sold in 2004.

Figure 12

2004 County Park Permits



In January 2006, Dane County Parks conducted an informal survey of its park ranger staff to list highest recreation uses of park properties observed on a day-to-day basis throughout the year, regardless of seasonal or weather factors. The top 4 responses were: dog walking (on and off leash), lake access (summer and winter), shelters for picnicking, and camping. These responses are consistent with the user numbers based on permits sold.

A final factor considered in analyzing recreation use were the comments gathered throughout the public input process regarding desired recreation uses of park lands. Overall, development of additional trail systems, including bicycle, pedestrian, equestrian and water, were the most requested recreation use. There were numerous suggestions to allow more hunting on County owned lands.

RECREATION NEEDS SUMMARY

It is interesting to note that although disc golf and dog walking rank as some of the lowest recreation uses in Region 5, according to the WDNR, they score high in two different Dane County analyses. This may be attributed to the availability and high quality of these facilities in Dane County, as well as the lack of such facilities in adjacent counties.

A synthesis of all recreation user inventories provides an accurate portrayal of the primary recreation expectations and needs of the Dane County Park system. They are as follows in no particular order:

- Trails
- Lake Access Facilities (*Boat Landings, Ice Fishing Access, Canoe Access*)
- Camping
- Picnicking and Shelters
- Disc Golf
- Dog Exercise Areas
- Hunting and Fishing

Future development of these recreation programs is also compatible with projected County population trends that point toward an aging population, with an accompanying need for passive recreation facilities. As additional lands continue to be acquired and added to the park system, it is important to have a thorough understanding of what types of recreation facilities and opportunities should be developed on them.

FUTURE PARK LAND NEEDS ANALYSIS

Dane County is unique in that it has its own funding mechanism (Conservation Fund) for acquiring and expanding park lands. With rising land costs and rapidly developing cities, villages, and townships, it is becoming increasingly critical to determine the future park land needs while the opportunity to purchase land still exists.

Future park land needs recommended in the Parks & Open Space Plan historically have been identified primarily through stakeholder and local unit of government input during the planning process. This method has been successful in generating a greater sense of ownership by plan stakeholders and broadening partnership opportunities with other government agencies and non-profit conservation groups.

Input gathered throughout the public input process for this plan suggested a strong interest in acquiring lands that protect water and wetlands. There was also a recurring theme that the County should continue to work toward creating larger contiguous tracts of lands devoted to natural resource protection.

Historically, the Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan has made recommendations for park land acquisition, development and other conservation measures primarily within identified project area boundaries of recreation parks, natural resource areas, school forests, trails, streams, prairie and oak savanna sites. This update to the plan includes two new project areas: regional resource protection areas and partner projects.

Regional resource protection initiatives seek to protect landscape scale natural resource and working farm land areas. Many of these lands would stay under private ownership with protection achieved through conservation easements, agricultural programs, streambank easements, or purchase of development rights from willing land owners. Partner projects may fall outside of identified project area boundaries, however, have a beneficial connection to existing or proposed park lands and facilities included in this plan.

Both of these new project categories will further expand the implementation capacity of Dane County partners through the Conservation Fund grant program.



Patrick Marsh Viewshed

REGIONAL RESOURCE PROTECTION INITIATIVES

Strong support was evident throughout the public input process for the County to preserve larger tracts of lands dedicated for resource protection as well as to strengthen and expand partnerships with other conservation organizations. These resource protection and recreation initiatives may be a component of larger conservation projects that extend far beyond Dane County borders.

The WDNR is currently working on completing public planning processes for two regional resource protection projects that include lands in Dane County. Both of these proposed project areas are identified in the WDNR Land Legacy Report which identifies places most important to meeting Wisconsin's conservation and recreation needs over the next fifty years.

SOUTHWEST GRASSLANDS

The goal of this proposed project is to work with a broad group of partners to conserve and enhance functioning grassland, savanna and stream ecosystems on rural farmland in southwest Wisconsin. The project focuses on the area's biological, cultural, historical, economic, and recreational values. The proposed project area includes the Townships of Blue Mounds and Perry, and possibly Primrose and parts of Springdale. The project area is composed of agriculture lands, prairies, savannas, grasslands, streams, rare plant and animal species, recreational opportunities, historical and cultural resources. The project will work to conserve the open rural landscape of southwest Wisconsin by utilizing a wide range of conservation tools.

GLACIAL HERITAGE AREA

The Glacial Heritage Area project includes lands primarily in Jefferson County but also includes lands in Dane, Dodge, and Rock counties and proposes to establish a coordinated network of conservation lands and recreation opportunities. The project seeks to protect and restore native grasslands, forest and wetland habitats, improve water quality, identify and protect cultural and historical resources, and collaborate with working farms to maintain open, agricultural landscapes. This project area is expected to provide easily accessible opportunities for area residents to connect with the outdoors. Places to bike, watch wildlife, camp, hunt, fish, ride horses, study nature, participate in environmental education, and other activities close enough to one's residence to be able to get to after work or on a day trip. This project area is easily accessible to large portion of the state's population and could help address significantly increasing outdoor recreation demands.

The WDNR and other non-profit conservation groups would be responsible for planning, management and implementation of conservation tools for these project areas. Access to the County grant program is contingent upon the WDNR completing and adopting feasibility studies and environmental impact statements that follow public processes. Other Land Legacy projects in Dane County such as the Arlington Prairie and Dunn-Rutland Savanna and Potholes that become adopted project areas by the same process could also be considered for County participation in the future.

In addition to the WDNR proposed projects, this update to the plan also recommends inclusion of the following Regional Resource Protection Initiatives.

RECHARGE AREA FOR FREDERICK SPRINGS

In 2000, R.J. Hunt and J.J. Steuer with the U.S. Geological Survey prepared Water-Resources Investigations Report 00-4172 in cooperation with the City of Middleton and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The report identifies critical groundwater recharge areas for the spring and wetland areas of the Pheasant Branch Conservancy. It is envisioned partners such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, WDNR, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, and local conservation organizations would work toward protecting working farm lands and open space within the recharge zone identified in the plan by utilizing a variety of acquisition tools.

MILITARY RIDGE PRAIRIE HERITAGE AREA

The MRPHA lies in southwestern Dane and southeastern Iowa counties at the headwaters of the Sugar and Pecatonica Rivers. The historic prairie that covered these lands and additional areas to the west was called the Military Ridge Prairie, after Military Ridge Road that was built in 1835. The road served as a highway for immigration of settlers into this region of the County. The Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area organization is made up of eight partnering agencies who signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2003 pledging resources toward protecting and promoting the grasslands and water quality of this project area. The Nature Conservancy has been helping coordinate efforts of this organization with other agencies, private land owners and local units of government.

Dane County's role in all of these project areas would be limited to potentially providing matching funds to government and non-profit conservation organizations through the Conservation Fund grant application program only on lands that are within Dane County.

PARTNER PROJECTS

Projects in this section were brought forward to the Park Commission through the public input process by local units of government or non-profit agencies with the purpose of becoming eligible to apply for matching funds from the Dane County Conservation Fund for land acquisition. These projects have some connection to County owned park lands, facilities or trails and are expected to provide some regional recreational, cultural, or natural resource protection value. Inclusion of projects in this section does not guarantee grant funding, and the Conservation Fund Grant Advisory Committee and the Park Commission retain the right to determine cost-share amounts, reversionary rights and any other relevant restrictions or conditions as appropriate, based on the details of the project, including other project partners.

CENTRAL PARK (City of Madison, 17 acres)

This proposed park in the City of Madison is planned to include native gardens, bicycle and pedestrian paths, plazas, and a market center. The park would be located along the Capital City Trail and is anticipated to be a hub for bike trails across southern Wisconsin. The City of Madison is expected to begin additional planning for this park. Revised park concepts should continue to investigate relocating the Capital City Trail to an off-road alignment throughout the entire park.

Fund raising, planning and development efforts for the park will be the responsibility of the Urban Open Space Foundation and its partners. Its inclusion in this plan is intended for the sole purpose of enabling the Urban Open Space Foundation to be eligible to apply for matching funds to acquire land through the Conservation Fund grant program.

RECREATION PARKS

Dane County Parks has 26 recreation parks, which account for about half, or around 5000 acres, of all the park lands in the system. The County's role is to provide large, regional-scale parks that attract users from several communities. Recreation parks are usually several hundred acres in size and provide a mix of natural and developed park land areas. Recreational use of Dane County park land is extremely diverse and includes hiking, biking, horseback riding, camping, picnicking, mountain biking, soccer, aeromodeling fields, boat launches, dog walking, disc golf, bowhunting and fishing.

Future County Park Locations

Two new recreation parks are proposed in this plan update. The first would be located centrally in the northeast quadrant of the County. This suggestion came from several of the participants who attended the northeast public listening session and by several local units of government. This region of the County is expected to experience a large amount of residential growth according to local land use plans.

The second recreation park would be near the Village of Oregon. Again, the request for this park came from area local units of government and was supported in the public input process. This park would complete an even distribution of recreation parks across the southern tier of Dane County.

Park Recommendations

A detailed inventory of existing recreation park facilities is found on page 21. Most of the infrastructure in Dane County's recreation parks is more than 30 years old and will need on-going repair and replacement. Also, much of the signage throughout the entire park system is extremely outdated and needs to be re-designed and replaced. The need for these park improvements should be viewed as an opportunity in that it will allow the parks department to re-evaluate design standards for all park facilities and create a more uniform appearance. This "branding" of the park system will help promote an awareness and visibility of the Dane County Park system.

Dane County Parks should continue working with local units of government to connect bicycle-pedestrian trails from urban areas to County recreation parks and trails. This will enhance access to a variety of recreation facilities for County residents of all age and income levels. Also, in response to considerable interest by park users and local units of government, development of a disc golf course and dog exercise area should be considered in the west-central region of the County.

The following are improvements and boundary adjustments for individual parks to be considered over the next five years.

BABCOCK County Park (Village of McFarland/Town of Dunn, 36.4 acres)

Babcock Park is located on the east shore of Lake Waubesa where the Yahara River flows under USH 51. The park is named after Stephen Moulton Babcock who came to the University of Wisconsin faculty in 1887 and remained until his death in 1931. He is best known for the perfection of the butterfat test which bears his name and his work in the field of animal nutrition. The park has a very popular boat launch facility, shore fishing area and campground that are used extensively during the summer months. **Recommendations:**

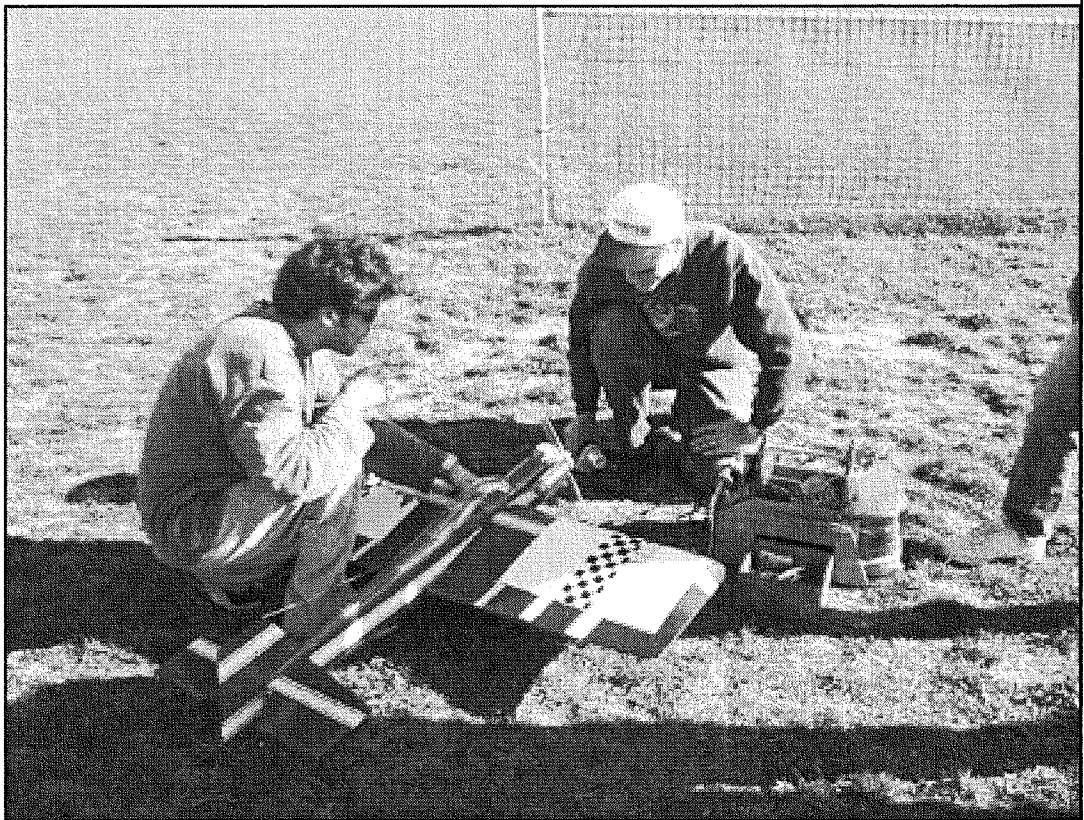
- Relocate boat landing overflow parking lot to west side of USH 51.
- Construct shore fishing pier at shoreline on north side of lock.
- Update lock facility to facilitate easier boat access to Lower Yahara River.
- Resurface pavement areas at lock, shower building and campground and incorporate stormwater infiltration areas.
- Reconfigure bicycle/pedestrian path between shower building and lock.

BADGER PRAIRIE County Park (Town of Verona/City of Verona, 350.2 acres)

Badger Prairie County Park is located at the eastern edge of the City of Verona at the intersection of CTH MV and USH 151. Recently, the City of Verona constructed a library off Enterprise Drive which provides a new western entrance to the park. A variety of recreation uses take place at the park including aeromodeling, dog exercise area, soccer, lacrosse, and mountain biking. **Recommendations:**

- Construct a bicycle pedestrian path/entrance to the park from Cross Country Road that provides connection to the Military Ridge State Trail.
- Construct a bicycle pedestrian underpass at CTH MV to the Military Ridge State Trail parking lot.
- Complete a Master Plan for the park that incorporates the new library and future plans for the Badger Prairie Health Care Facility.
- Construct a new shelter restroom north of the dog exercise area.

Preparing for takeoff at the Badger Prairie County Park Aeromodeling Field.



BRIGHAM County Park (Town of Blue Mounds, 120.2 acres)

Brigham County Park is located on CTH F just northeast of the Village of Blue Mounds and is named after Ebenezer Brigham, one of the first to homestead in the area. The park offers camping and outstanding panoramic views of the surrounding countryside. **Recommendations:**

- Improve signage throughout the park.
- Replace park master sign.
- Create hiking/mountain bike trail to Blue Mounds State Park.
- Consider expanding park boundaries, including a continuous corridor south and east to Military Ridge State Trail and west to Blue Mounds State Park.
- Work with the Village to develop a bicycle trail connector from the park to Military Ridge State Trail.

CAMROCK County Park (Town of Christiana, 439.9 acres)

CamRock County Park is located along the Koskonong Creek between the Villages of Cambridge and Rockdale. The original park property acquisition was made possible through efforts of the Cambridge Foundation and Dane County Park Commission. Mountain biking and cross country skiing are popular recreation uses.

Recommendations:

- Begin implementing recommendations of the park's 2006 Master Plan.

DONALD County Park (Town of Springdale, 538.4 acres)

Located along USH 92 south of Mount Horeb, Donald County Park was made possible by a donation of 105 acres from the Donald/Woodburn family in 1993. The park has potential to become a premier equestrian destination with an extensive trail system and also offers outstanding hiking, trout fishing and picnicking opportunities. **Recommendations:**

- Continue implementing recommendations of the park's 2005 Master Plan.

FESTGE County Park (Town of Berry, 155.6 acres)

Festge County Park is located along USH 14 between the Villages of Cross Plains and Black Earth. Festge County Park has an overlook area that provides panoramic views of the Black Earth Creek valleys. **Recommendations:**

- Acquire lands/easements to protect views from the overlook area.
- Expand boundary to include connection to Swamplovers parcel.

FISH CAMP County Park (Town of Dunn, 15.6 acres)

Located at the end of Fish Camp Road off CTH B, this park's primary use is the boat landing for water access to the Lower Yahara River and Lake Kegonsa. In 1934, the Wisconsin Conservation Department hired seining crews and established rough-fish camps. Fish Camp Launch was one of several rough fish removal facilities. Carp were harvested by seining and herded into holding pens. They were shipped live in tanks and trucks to stock ponds in other states or packed in ice and sent by rail to fresh fish markets in Chicago and New York. Over 9,000 tons of rough fish were harvested at this fish camp during the years of operation. The WDNR discontinued Yahara Lakes seining in 1969 because of declining carp markets and increasing operation costs. **Recommendations:**

- Develop interpretive signage and exhibits pertaining to the historical rough fish removal operations that took place at the park.
- Acquire lands north of park to facilitate future development of Lower Yahara River trail.
- Begin planning for bridge and boardwalk facilities required for implementation of the Lower Yahara River Trail.

FISH LAKE County Park (Town of Roxbury, 2.9 acres)

Fish Lake County Park is located on the northwest shore of Fish Lake and is primarily used for boat access to the lake. Only electric boat motors are allowed on the lake. Fish Lake is 252 acres in size and has a maximum depth of 62 feet. It is one of only a handful of southern Wisconsin lakes that are capable of supporting a coldwater cisco population. **Recommendations:**

- Consider working with WDNR to relocate boat launch facility to Lussier County Park on east side of lake.
- Include park in a Master Plan that would include recommendations for future recreation development of Fish Lake and Lussier County Parks, as well as all lands within the Fish Lake Natural Resource Area.

GOODLAND County Park (Town of Dunn, 13.9 acres)

Goodland County Park is located on the western shore of Lake Waubesa and provides a variety of recreation facilities including picnic areas, tennis, basketball and volleyball courts, ball diamond, unsupervised swimming beach and boat launch facility. **Recommendations:**

- Replace and relocate permit kiosk to central area of boat landing turn around at ramp.

INDIAN LAKE County Park (Town of Berry, 480.9 acres)

Indian Lake County Park is located along STH 19 approximately 2 miles west of USH 12. The park includes a historic chapel building atop a wooded hill with overlook that provides outstanding views of the park and surrounding hillsides. This park is used extensively for cross country skiing during the winter. Only electric boat motors are allowed on the lake. **Recommendations:**

- Increase park acreage by approximately 250 acres. Acquisition areas include buffers to the north shore of the lake, as well as the headwaters to the lake that are north and east of the park and contain wetlands and springs.
- Replace permit board with 3 sided informational kiosk that would be centrally located in parking area.
- Relocate historical marker to more accessible and visible location.
- Continue repair/restoration work on stairs to overlook and on warming house.

JENNI AND KYLE Preserve (City of Fitchburg, 160.3 acres)

The Jenni and Kyle Preserve began in 1989 with 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. This park was designed and developed with the intent of providing children and persons with disabilities a place to enjoy outdoor activities and learn about natural environments. **Recommendations:**

- Develop interpretive signage throughout the park.
- Complete an accessible path and waterfowl observation area surrounding the wetland complex south of the ponds.
- Contract with an artist to design and install a mural on the shelter façade.



Children hoping for a bite at the Jenni & Kyle Preserve.

LAFOLLETTE County Park (Town of Pleasant Springs, 28.6 acres)

LaFollette County Park is located on the eastern shore of Lake Kegonsa on Williams Drive. The park is very linear in nature and includes a small picnic shelter, restroom and play equipment. Use of this park is limited due to its close proximity to Lake Kegonsa State Park. **Recommendations:**

- Consider transfer of park to the Department of Natural Resources as a potential addition to the State Park.
- Provide increased shore fishing opportunities at the lock on the Yahara River.

LAKE FARM CENTENNIAL State Park (City of Madison/Twn. of Blooming Grove, 588.6 acres)

This park is a combination of the historic Lake Farm County Park and new lands purchased by the WDNR to establish a new Centennial State Park commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Wisconsin State Park system. It is located along the Capital City Trail on Libby Road west of Lake Waubesa and forms the eastern end of the Dane County E-Way. The park was previously listed as "Capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area" in the 2001-2005 County Park and Open Space Plan.

Recommendations:

- The State and County are in the process of completing a Master Plan for the park that is anticipated to be finished by early 2007. Future park development and acquisitions would follow recommendations found in the plan.

LAKE VIEW HILL County Park (City of Madison, 41.3 acres)

Located on Northport Drive on the north side of the City of Madison, this park aims to conserve both natural and cultural resources, while also offering recreation uses such as walking trails, an area to fly kites and watch fireworks. The buildings on the site are on the National Register of Historic Places and originally functioned as a County tuberculosis sanitarium from 1930 to 1966. Currently, the buildings are being used as office space for Dane County Health and Human Services. A newly forming Friends group has been working actively on vegetation management of woodland areas and overall stewardship of the property.

Recommendations:

- Continue vegetation restoration efforts per Applied Ecological Services management plan.
- Work jointly with the Friends to prepare a Master Plan for the property that addresses restoration, recreation and management goals for the entire property.

LUSSIER County Park (Town of Roxbury, 133.2 acres)

Lussier County Park is located on the eastern shore of Fish Lake and was made possible by a significant donation from John H. Lussier. The property includes approximately 3000 feet of shoreline and a small parking area. Some prairie restoration and vegetative management efforts are already underway.

Recommendations:

- Include park in a Master Plan that would include recommendations for future recreation development of Fish Lake and Lussier County Parks, as well as all lands within the Fish Lake Natural Resource Area.

MCCARTHY Youth and Conservation Park (Town of Sun Prairie, 263.5 acres)

This park is located about six miles east of Madison on CTH TT. The original park lands were donated by Russell and Ella McCarthy with the objective of providing “a place where kids from the city could learn about nature.” A Master Plan was prepared for the park in 1994 with this theme in mind and recommends development of park facilities such as natural play areas, horse and livestock demonstration arenas, camping, trails, ponds, mountain bike training area, and a ropes course. **Recommendations:**

- Develop group campground at north end of property.
- Develop equestrian group camp.
- Develop natural playground area at first parking lot with small shelter.
- Acquire additional lands east, north and west of the park for expansion of trail and wetland restoration projects.
- Develop additional recommendations of 1994 Master Plan as funding allows.

MENDOTA County Park (Town of Westport, 19.0 acres)

Mendota County Park is located along CTH M at the eastern edge of the City of Middleton along the north shore of Lake Mendota. The park is used very heavily as more of a neighborhood park; however, it does still provide regional benefit as it is the only campground available on Lake Mendota. **Recommendations:**

- Consider extending the canal further north and creating a sediment trap area that could also provide additional shore fishing opportunities.

PRAIRIE MORaine County Park (Town of Verona, 161.4 acres)

Prairie Moraine County Park is located on CTH PB about 1 mile south of Badger Prairie County Park. The primary uses of the park are the Ice Age Trail corridor along one of the best examples of a terminal moraine in southern Wisconsin and an extremely popular dog exercise area. **Recommendations:**

- Continue working with the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation to develop interpretive signage along existing trails and at the overlook area.
- Expand park boundary north, east, and south to protect the terminal moraine and other glacial features, upland oak woodlands and scenic views as well as to provide an adequate buffer for these features.



Looking north towards the terminal moraine from the dog exercise area at Prairie Moraine County Park.

RILEY-DEPPE County Park (Town of Medina, 12.9 acres)

This park is located on STH 19 just west of the Village of Marshall on a millpond impoundment of the Maunsha River. Facilities including shelter, picnic area, play equipment, and small boat launch are primarily used on a very local level. Further interest in a regional water trail on the Maunsha River and possible future creation of a regional bicycle pedestrian trail may make this park a trail hub for northeast Dane County.

Recommendations:

- The Village recently completed a Park and Open Space Plan and is working on restoration plans for the Maunsha River. Contact Village officials to identify potential partnerships for future trail development and river restoration projects.

SALMO Pond (Town of Berry, 7.5 acres)

This park is located on USH 14 immediately south of Festge County Park.

The property is owned by the WDNR, however, Dane County has a 99 year management lease that allows it to operate and maintain the property as a County park. Dane County recently completed a shoreline restoration project that enhances bank fishing opportunities. The DNR is in the process of completing vegetation management practices along Black Earth Creek. **Recommendations:**

- Consider pavement resurfacing at parking area.
- Pave accessible trail to fishing pier.

SILVERWOOD County Park (Town of Albion, 283.9 acres)

This property is located in the southeastern corner of the county along STH 106. The concept of this future park began with a donation of land from Irene Silverwood. The vision for this park is to provide a place for people from the city to visit and experience a working farm environment. The property also includes a mature oak woodlot and shoreline frontage on Rice Lake. The land is currently under lease agreement to be actively farmed through 2009 and has no public access. **Recommendations:**

- Complete a Master Plan for future development of the park.
- Explore demonstration areas of old and new cropping methods, and how farming and recreation use can co-exist on the same property.

STEWART County Park (Town of Blue Mounds, 176.3 acres)

Stewart County Park is located on CTH JG immediately north of the Village of Mount Horeb. This park is nearly 70 years old and was the County's first park in the system. The County recently completed an extensive water quality improvement project to reduce the amount of sediment being washed into the lake. Phase two of lake restoration efforts will include dredging and aquatic habitat improvement. **Recommendations:**

- Complete a Master Plan for the park that identifies future park boundary expansion areas, new access points into the park and additional recreation facility development that may include an off leash dog exercise area.
- Construct accessible shore fishing platforms at the lake.
- Complete dredging and habitat restoration work at Stewart Lake that includes creation of a small craft launch site.
- Acquire buffer lands east of the park and lands to the west to provide connection to STH 92. Consider acquisition of conservation easements on adjacent lands to maintain rural viewsheds of surrounding hillsides from within the park.

TOKEN CREEK County Park (Town of Burke, 417.9 acres)

Token Creek County Park is located near the intersection of Interstate 90-94 and USH 51. The park is perhaps best known for its very popular disc golf course. Token Creek is the only stream in northeastern Dane County with the potential to support a cold water fishery. Dane County Parks and the WDNR are currently working on a stream restoration project within the park to stabilize banks and improve habitat. **Recommendations:**

- Complete a Master Plan for the park that takes into account possible relocation of the park entrance to a southeast location.
- Investigate potential addition of 9 holes to the disc golf course.

VIKING County Park (Towns of Dunkirk and Pleasant Springs, 83.3 acres)

Viking County Park is located on the Yahara River north of Stoughton on CTH N. A bicycle-pedestrian path and bridge was recently completed that connects the park to the City of Stoughton. Upgrades have recently been done to the parking lot and dog exercise area. **Recommendations:**

- Consider replacing small open shelter near lagoon.
- Work with WDNR on shoreline restoration and habitat improvement projects throughout the park.

WALKING IRON County Park (Town of Mazomanie, 316.6 acres)

Walking Iron County Park is located in northwestern Dane County adjacent to the Village of Mazomanie. The park contains native sand prairies and a segment of Black Earth Creek. Access to the park is primarily through the Lions Park in the Village of Mazomanie. **Recommendations:**

- Acquire additional property north and east of the park with possible connections to the WDNR Lower Wisconsin Riverway lands.
- Explore expansion of equestrian trails into newly acquired lands as available and consider possible connection to Blackhawk state riding area.



Pasque flowers at Walking Iron County Park.

YAHARA HEIGHTS County Park (Town of Westport, 140.5 acres)

This park is located at the intersections of CTH M and STH 113 along the Yahara River. The primary use is as an off-leash dog exercise area; there is also a canoe landing area along the river. **Recommendations:**

- Relocate entry road access and parking area from Catfish Court to River Road.

NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS

A natural resource area consists of lands that contain valuable natural resources or greenbelt corridors that were identified through a public process. Project area boundaries can include a mixture of private and publicly owned lands, and decisions by private landowners to participate in any conservation programs or practices are purely voluntary. Ideally, lands protected within these project areas should be large, contiguous blocks that may include a mixture of agricultural working lands, water, wetlands, steep topography, prairie and forests. Some of these lands may be protected through fee title purchase, however, much of the protection of larger landscapes can be achieved through purchase of conservation easements and continue to remain under private ownership. Land or easements are only purchased from willing sellers. During the public input process, there was considerable interest in placing more emphasis and priority on wetland protection and restoration.

Creation of these larger areas will provide enough space to incorporate some limited recreation use without impacting the resource and also allow natural vegetation management practices such as burning to take place within them. Lands protected within natural resource areas are often owned by multiple public agencies, therefore, it is critical that the County work jointly with these other agencies to insure cohesive resource and recreation management.

Acreages listed are for the entire project area boundary, and do not represent the actual amount of acreage under County ownership.

NEW NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS

KOSHKONONG CREEK Natural Resource Area (Town of Sun Prairie, 3599.8 acres)

This project area is new to this plan and was not included in any prior County Parks and Open Space Plans. This project area spans from the City of Sun Prairie south to Interstate 94 and the northern tip of the Blooming Grove Drumlin Natural Resource Area. It also includes environmental corridor lands northeast of McCarthy County Park that drain into the Koshkonong Creek. The vision for this project area is that it would become a greenbelt corridor between the Cities of Sun Prairie, Madison and the Village of Cottage Grove while also providing a rural transition into the Town of Sun Prairie. This corridor could provide a diversity of benefits including flood mitigation, wetland restoration potential, and future recreation opportunities such as shore fishing and trails. Protection of these lands is also expected to include working farms that exist throughout the drainage district areas.

STARKWEATHER CREEK Natural Resource Area (City of Madison, Town of Burke, 2372.8 acres)

This proposed Natural Resource Area would extend from the confluence of Starkweather Creek at Lake Monona north and east, including both branches of Starkweather Creek. The proposed boundary includes environmental corridor identified in the 1983 Water Quality Plan for Starkweather Creek plus additional area as recommended by the City of Madison Parks Department that extend to adjacent watersheds of Cherokee Marsh, Token Creek, Door Creek, and Koshkonong Creek. The Dane County Airport is the largest property owner in the watershed. Lands protected within this proposed Natural Resource Area are primarily envisioned to provide lake and water quality protection, water and land based trails, upland vegetation buffers and wildlife habitat. The project boundary included in this plan is based on information in the City of Madison's draft Comprehensive Plan. This boundary should be revised in the future as local units of government complete more detailed neighborhood plans for developing areas.

EXISTING NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS

BADGER MILL CREEK Natural Resource Area (Town of Verona, 623.1 acres)

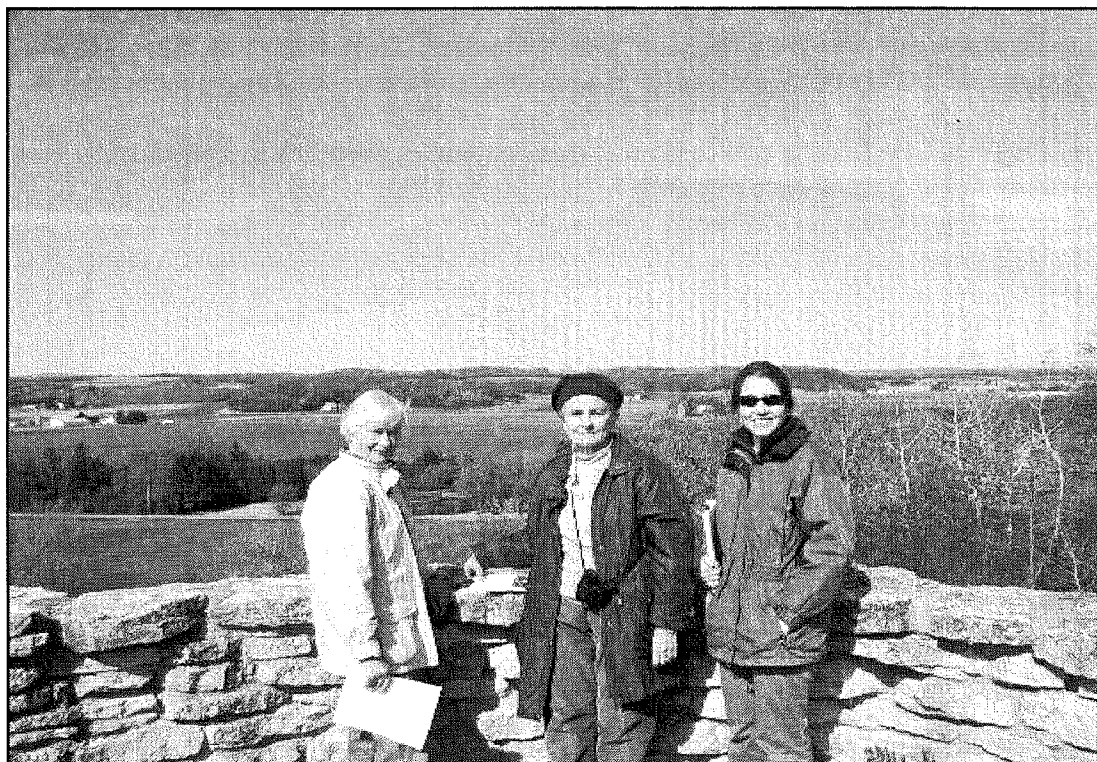
This project area includes wetlands and adjacent upland buffer lands along the lower stretch of Badger Mill Creek. The WDNR is currently looking at reclassifying Badger Mill Creek as a “cool water fishery,” indicating it does have the potential to sustain some trout populations. **Recommendations:**

- Expand project area boundary to include Wisconsin Department of Transportation lands north and west and connect with the Sugar River Natural Resource Area.

BLACK EARTH CREEK Natural Resource Area (Towns of Black Earth, Berry, Mazomanie, Cross Plains, Middleton, 11,630.7 acres)

Black Earth Creek Natural Resource Area combines the Black Earth Creek Valley and Upper Black Earth Creek project areas that were included in the 2001-2005 plan. Black Earth Creek is a nationally known stream for its excellent trout fishing. Some of the lands along the creek are owned by the WDNR as public fishing and wildlife habitat areas. Future land acquisitions would seek to fill in the gaps between existing publicly-owned lands and protect the scenic quality of the stream corridor. The Dane County Regional Planning Commission completed a project plan for Black Earth Creek in 2003 that was adopted by the Dane County Board. **Recommendations:**

- Acquire “Old Mud Lake” north of USH 14 and additional headwater lands immediately south of USH 14 with the help of multiple partners for future wetland restoration projects.
- Expand Sunnyside Seed Farms property west and south along the creek, and north to expand future park, access and recreation potential.
- Continue working with the Natural Heritage Land Trust on its identified priority areas within the project boundary, including acquisition of conservation easements from ridge top to ridge top between Cross Plains and Mazomanie.
- Investigate allowing hunting on County lands adjacent to WDNR public hunting grounds where compatible with other park uses.



Overlook of the Black Earth Creek valley from Festge County Park. Left to right: Connie Threinen, Libby Lewis and Kate Wiperman.

BLOOMING GROVE DRUMLINS Natural Resource Area (Towns of Blooming Grove and Cottage Grove, 1320.9 acres)

This project seeks to protect the glacial drumlin features found throughout this region as well as the associated wetlands that surround them. Drumlins are low, smoothly rounded, elongated hills of compact glacial till (sand, gravel, rock) deposited under the sheet of ice and shaped by its flow; with the longer axis parallel to the direction of ice movement. They have a blunt nose that points in the direction from which the ice approached, and a gentler slope tapering in the opposite direction. **Recommendations:**

- Continue acquiring acreage with the eventual goal of providing a continuous corridor of public land between Interstate 94 and the Glacial Drumlin State Trail.
- Explore possibility of developing a bicycle-pedestrian trail that would link to the Glacial Drumlin State Trail.

CAPITAL SPRINGS State Recreation Area (2755.4 acres)

This project area boundary includes much of the historic Nine Springs E-Way boundary from Fish Hatchery Road east to Upper Mud Lake. It is comprised of six recreation management units and includes land ownership within the cities of Madison, Monona and Fitchburg, Town of Blooming Grove, Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Village of McFarland and private landowners. Lands include a diversity of resources and recreation opportunities very close to the majority of the County's population. **Recommendations:**

- The State and County are in the process of completing a Master Plan for the recreation area that is anticipated to be finished by early 2007. Future park development and acquisitions would follow recommendations found in the plan.

CHEROKEE MARSH Natural Resource Area (City of Madison, Towns of Burke, Windsor, and Westport, 3721.7 acres)

For the purposes of this planning report, the Cherokee Marsh project area includes the historic boundaries west of Interstate 90-94 and east of STH 113. Public ownership is a mixture of City of Madison, Dane County, and WDNR owned lands. The City of Madison has been conducting extensive vegetation and wetland management efforts on the south side of the river. Dane County has been working on removal of invasive species and prairie restoration on the north side of the river. **Recommendations:**

- Explore creation of a land based trail that provides connections to Token Creek Park and the Upper Yahara River Natural Resource Area.
- Continue vegetation management practices.
- Investigate allowing hunting on County lands adjacent to WDNR public hunting grounds where compatible with other park uses.

DOOR CREEK WETLANDS Natural Resource Area (Village of McFarland, Towns of Dunn and Pleasant Springs, 3804.3 acres)

This project area includes wetlands and surrounding upland buffer areas of Door Creek on the north shore of Lake Kegonsa. A project plan completed by the Dane County Regional Planning Commission and adopted by the County Board in 2000 provides management recommendations that include protection of wetlands and associated buffers, provision of northern pike spawning areas, and enhancement of Door Creek water quality. **Recommendations:**

- Work with the WDNR on creating unified resource and recreation management strategies for the entire project area.
- Explore creation of a land based trail that will be a segment of the Lower Yahara River Trail.
- Expand boundary north and east to Blooming Grove Drumlin Natural Resource Area per City of Madison's recommendation.
- This boundary should be revised in the future as local units of government complete more detailed neighborhood plans for developing areas.

FISH LAKE Natural Resource Area (Town of Roxbury, 683.3 acres)

This project area is located on lands surrounding Fish Lake in the far northwestern corner of the County. There have been perennially high lake levels here for several years. A lake district was formed, and under a WDNR permit, pumping of the lake has begun in an effort to decrease water levels. Dane County has begun purchasing some properties within the project area boundary. **Recommendations:**

- Continue to expand County owned lands, with priority given to acquiring shoreline and shoreline buffer areas.
- Complete a Master Plan that would include resource and recreation recommendations for all lands within the Fish Lake Natural Resource Area, including Lussier County Park.
- Work with WDNR to explore the possibility of creating a boat launch facility on the east end of the lake.

HOLTZMAN Natural Resource Area (Town of Dunn, 63.2 acres)

This property is located just south of the Capital Springs Recreation Area and is currently included in operation and maintenance agreements with the WDNR for the Recreation Area. The property was donated to Dane County with the intent that it be considered a nature preserve. Because the property is not located along a roadway, access can only be obtained by receiving permission from one of the surrounding landowners. **Recommendations:**

- Consider acquiring property that would provide public access if the opportunity becomes available.

ICE AGE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL (14,051.2 acres)

The Ice Age Trail corridor traverses north to south through the western side of the County and follows the end moraines that mark the extent of the glacial advancement in Dane County. The intent of the trail is to provide users with an opportunity to see and learn first hand about impacts of the glacier on our landscape. The trail was designated a National Scenic Trail by Congress in 1980. More information about the Ice Age Trail can be found on the Foundation's website at www.iceagetrail.org. **Recommendations:**

- Continue working with the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation on acquisition of land and development of the trail.

ICE AGE JUNCTION Natural Resource Area (Town of Verona, 1,949.6 acres)

This project area includes Ice Age Trail corridor lands north and south of Badger Prairie County Park and the park itself. It also includes the habitat and WDOT wetland mitigation area known as Goose Lake. The Ice Age Trail Junction Area was the result of a 1991 proposal that called for a wider Ice Age Trail corridor in the Verona-Madison area to encompass key resource and scenic features associated with the trail. In 1992, the Dane County Park Commission established an intergovernmental advisory committee composed of the Town of Verona, City of Verona, Dane County Board, Dane County Executive and the Park Commission to create a project plan for the area that was adopted by the County Board in 1993. **Recommendations:**

- Continue to implement acquisition and trail development recommendations of the Ice Age Trail Junction Area project plan, including Ice Age National Scenic Trail/bicycle-pedestrian overpass at CTH PD.

LEOPOLD-RILEY Game Cooperative (Towns of Springdale, Verona, and Cross Plains, 1820.0 acres)

In 1931 Aldo Leopold formed a cooperative for the purpose of providing its members a place to hunt. The area encompassed all or part of 11 farms, or about 1800 acres, mostly in the Town of Springdale, but also extending into the Towns of Verona and Cross Plains. Within the reserve boundary were croplands, pastures, oak savanna, woods, cattail marsh, sedge meadow, springs and spring ponds, and the Sugar River. Historically, the Chicago and Northwestern railroad track ran through Riley on the way between Madison and Mount Horeb, the railroad right of way is now the Military Ridge State bike trail. This project area seeks to preserve the remaining natural resources and rural landscape within the original boundary designated by Leopold. **Recommendations:**

- Accelerate landowner contact efforts for purposes of acquiring land or easements.
- Work with WDNR and Dane County Conservation League on exploring the possibility of providing public hunting opportunities in the future as additional lands are acquired or leased.
- Work with the University and volunteer groups to prepare a management plan for the project area.

LOWER MUD LAKE Natural Resource Area (Town of Dunn, Village of McFarland, 2226.0 acres)

This extensive natural resource area stretches between Lake Waubesa and Lake Kegonsa along the Yahara River. The land is a mix of County, Town, Village and DNR ownership and supports a variety of recreation uses including public hunting, canoeing, cross country track and field races, and fishing. The Village is in the process of planning a community park along the northern boundary off of Elvehjem Road. The County Board adopted a project plan for this area in 1994. **Recommendations:**

- Expand project area boundary north to Elvehjem Road and east to CTH AB.
- Explore creation of a land-based trail that will be a segment of the Lower Yahara River Trail.
- Work with the WDNR on creating unified resource and recreation management strategies for the entire project area.
- Incorporate interpretive signage at Native American fish weir sites.

NINE SPRINGS E-WAY (Cities of Madison & Fitchburg, Town of Dunn, 3,889.1 acres)

In 1969, the National Endowment for the Arts provided funds for the development of an environmental study model to illustrate how a community can identify and capitalize on existing natural and human made resources in an effort to elevate environmental, ecological and esthetic planning decisions to a higher priority within the community development decision making process. This resulted in an "E Way" concept developed through efforts of the University of Wisconsin Environmental Awareness Center, with the "E" representing educational, environmental, esthetic and ecological. The Nine Springs E-way project area extends from Dunn's Marsh at Seminole Highway east to Lake Waubesa and includes more than 1300 acres of land under County ownership. **Recommendations:**

- Implement recommendations of the Capital Springs Recreation Area master plan on lands within the E-way boundary when the plan is adopted.
- Develop a series of educational kiosks along the Capital City Trail.
- Amend the E-way boundary to reflect boundary expansion recommendations of the Capital Springs Recreation Area master plan when it becomes adopted.

NORTH MENDOTA Natural Resource Area (Town of Westport, 2,641.4 acres)

This project area combines Six Mile Creek, Dorn Creek, and portions of Cherokee Marsh Natural Resource Area lands that were included in the 2001-2005 Parks and Open Space Plan in an attempt to simplify and clarify boundary configurations. The project area begins at STH 113 and the Yahara River to the east and follows the north shore of Lake Mendota, including Six Mile and Dorn Creeks and their associated wetlands. Dorn and Six Mile Creeks contain some state fishery lands and public hunting areas. Properties within this project area are anticipated to serve to primarily enhance water quality of the Yahara chain of lakes and provide fish and wildlife habitat. **Recommendations:**

- Plan and implement a segment of the proposed North Mendota bicycle and pedestrian trail to provide connection from Waunakee to Governor Nelson State Park and westward to Middleton.
- Investigate connecting this Natural Resource Area with the Pheasant Branch Conservancy.
- Work with WDNR on creating unified resource and recreation management strategies for the entire project area.

PATRICK MARSH Natural Resource Area (Towns of Sun Prairie, Bristol, City of Sun Prairie, 990.0 acres)

Patrick Marsh is located on the eastern edge of the City of Sun Prairie just south of USH 151. The property was the first Wisconsin Department of Transportation wetland mitigation bank site in the state. The majority of public land around the marsh is owned by the WDNR and contains some prairie restoration efforts. The shallow marsh area is home to many varieties of waterfowl and grassland nesting birds. Rising water levels have resulted in the marsh becoming more of a lake, and therefore long-term goals should involve lowering water levels to restore vegetative diversity of a shallow marsh. Dane County Parks worked with area local units of government, the Patrick Marsh Middle School and several area stakeholders to prepare a project plan that was adopted by the County Board in 2003. **Recommendations:**

- Continue to provide peripheral planning support to stakeholder groups for development of a master plan that identifies future recreation and management objectives for Patrick Marsh.
- Continue to acquire lands designated under priority one within the Patrick Marsh project plan.
- Continue to fund partner acquisitions within the project area boundary.

PHEASANT BRANCH Conservancy (City of Middleton, Town of Springfield, 501.7 acres)

This project area is located on the northern boundary of the City of Middleton and is jointly owned by Dane County, WDNR and the City of Middleton. An active Friends group has been assisting the County Naturalist with ongoing wetland, savanna and prairie restoration efforts throughout the Conservancy. In 2005, the City and the County worked jointly on installation of a crushed limestone bicycle-hiking trail, with interpretive kiosks, that extends from Orchid Heights Park in Middleton west to an existing trailhead along Pheasant Branch Road. The property also contains an overlook for a large spring that is a major supplier of water to Lake Mendota. Dane County, the City of Middleton and the Town of Westport partnered with a private consultant in 1999 to prepare the Northern Lake Mendota Regional Plan that described in detail proposed public use and restoration of the site. **Recommendations:**

- Acquire lands north and east of the County owned lands for a water quality purposes and for future establishment of regional bicycle trail connector to Governor Nelson State Park.

PHIL'S WOODS Natural Resource Area (Town of Roxbury, 36.10 acres)

Phil's Woods is located in the Town of Roxbury west of USH 12 along North Dunlap Hollow Road, and is named for Philip LaFollette, three-time governor of Wisconsin. The site consists of woods and open meadows with hilltop views of the Wisconsin River valley and Baraboo Range. **Recommendations:**

- Construct small gravel parking lot and trailhead off North Dunlap Hollow Road.
- Consider reclassifying as a "Forest" to enable the property to come under a forest management plan.

PLEASURE VALLEY Natural Resource Area (Towns of Blue Mounds & Vermont, 1176.0 acres)

Pleasure Valley is located north and west of Brigham County Park and potentially will one day provide a continuous link to Blue Mound State Park. The area includes rugged, wooded hillsides as well as oak savanna. The WDNR has indicated interest in acquiring lands in this project area. The WDNR or conservation non-profit groups are envisioned to be the lead agencies on acquisition of lands north of CTH F, the County would work with the WDNR on securing a connection between the Blue Mounds State Park and Brigham County Park. **Recommendations:**

- Explore potential land based recreation trail connections to Blue Mound State Park from Brigham County Park.
- If County owned acreage expands in future, consider managing as "Forest" lands.

SPRINGFIELD HILL Natural Resource Area (Town of Springfield, 701.0 acres)

This project area is located along the new USH 12 corridor and provides outstanding views from atop Springfield Hill, one of the highest points in the area. The landscape includes steep wooded valleys, glacial kettle ponds, and open meadow areas. Inclusion of this project area is closely linked to future development of the Ice Age Trail. The County recently purchased nearly 120 acres within this project area that has provided some limited bowhunting opportunities and will facilitate future development of a segment of the Ice Age Trail. **Recommendations:**

- Acquire lands for small parking lot trailhead at pedestrian bridge overpass.
- Continue to work with the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation on acquisition of lands necessary for trail development and to maintain the scenic, rural quality.

SOUTH WAUBESA MARSH Natural Resource Area (Town of Dunn, 1209.0 acres)

South Waubesa Marsh is located on the southwest end of Lake Waubesa and includes a segment of Murphys Creek. The marsh includes deep peat deposits and major springs and seepages that provide water to Lake Waubesa. A Friends of Lake Waubesa group has recently been working on some wetland restoration and enhancement projects within the project area. The Nature Conservancy and WDNR are the primary public landowners. **Recommendations:**

- Expand project area boundary to include the Swan and Murphys Creek tributary lands to STH 14. A hydrologic study of the area is currently being created by an advocacy group. Upon completion and review of the study by Dane County (or appropriate agency), the local units of government or eligible non-profit conservation organizations would be able to apply for matching funds through the Conservation Fund grant program for protection of additional lands critical to maintaining the existing hydrologic function outside of the project area boundary.

SUGAR RIVER Natural Resource Area (Town of Verona, 7644.4 acres)

The Sugar River Natural Resource Area lies just west of the City of Verona and includes a segment of the Military Ridge State Trail. It is one of the largest continuous wetland complexes along the boundary of the driftless area in western Dane County. The WDNR and WDOT are the primary public land owners in this project area. **Recommendations:**

- Extend project area boundary south to County border at Brooklyn and include the West Branch of the Sugar River.

TOKEN CREEK Natural Resource Area (Towns of Windsor, Burke, 890.3 acres)

This update to the plan defines the boundary as Interstate 90-94 on the western edge and extending along the creek to CTH C. The dam was removed from the mill pond in 2004, and the WDNR has been actively working on restoration efforts to enhance habitat and water quality of the stream. Token Creek is the only cold water fishery in the northeast quadrant of Dane County. **Recommendations:**

- Continue working with WDNR and other non-profit conservation organizations on streambank restoration and fish habitat improvement projects.
- Dane County would work toward acquiring lands north and east of Token Creek Park to STH 19. Local units of government and/or non-profit conservation organizations would work on protection of lands from STH 19 east to the mill pond either through dedication or acquisition. These agencies would be eligible to apply for partial funding through the Dane County Conservation Fund grant program.

UPPER YAHARA RIVER Natural Resource Area (Village of Deforest, Town of Vienna, 496.0 acres)

This project area lies along the Upper Yahara River and on the western boundary of the Village of DeForest. It contains large areas of wetlands, floodplain forest, a heron rookery and calcareous fens. The Village is currently beginning to develop properties adjacent to this project area. **Recommendations:**

- Work with the Village on development of a regional off-road bicycle trail along the river that would provide connections to Token Creek Park and Cherokee Marsh.

FORESTS

Properties that fall under this classification are intended to be actively managed forests and woodlots by Dane County. A variety of forest management practices will be utilized to grow healthy forests and provide timber for revenue using sustainable harvest practices. A forest management plan that meets State requirements and County approval will be prepared for all County owned forests and woodlots before any timber harvest takes place. Benefits of registering properties into State forestry programs include: free trees from state forest nurseries, technical assistance from state foresters and eligibility for educational assistance from the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board.

These lands will also provide nature-based recreation as a secondary use of the site. Trail development through these properties should be coordinated with timber harvest access routes. Hunting should also be considered if sufficient acreage is available and is compatible with forest use and ecology. All properties should include educational information about sustainable forest management practices, wildlife habitat and watershed protection at prominent locations.

MORTON Forest (Town of Mazomanie, 113.9 acres)

The Morton Forest is located on Reeve Road at the western boundary of the County. The landscape includes steep wooded areas, prairie remnants on the hilltops and scenic overlook points. Stephen Morton donated the property to the County in 1999. Mr. Morton retains life estate on the property, and at this time there is no public access to this property. **Recommendations:**

- There are no recommendations until the County has property rights for the site.

SCHEIDEGGER Forest (Town of Verona, 73.4 acres)

This forest property was made possible through a generous donation from Walter R. Scheidegger in 2001. The land was formerly the Abraham's Shooting Range for the Dane County Sheriff's Department. In 2005 Dane County Parks requested assistance from the WDNR to complete a Forest Stewardship Management Plan for the Scheidegger Forest and enrolled the property in the State Community Forest program. The plan was completed in December 2005 and takes into consideration the property objectives outlined in the Dane County Park and Open Space Plan. Dane County Parks is also working on preparing a master plan for the property. **Recommendations:**

- Complete a master plan for the property that will provide management and recreation use recommendations for the property.

MADISON SCHOOL Forest (Towns of Verona, Montrose, 356.2 acres)

The Madison School Forest is located on Spring Rose Road just west of STH 69. Public land owners of the Madison School Forest are the Madison Metropolitan School District, Friends of the Madison School Forest and WDNR. The purpose of including it in the County Park and Open Space Plan is solely to provide eligibility for State Stewardship and County Conservation Fund grant dollars for future acquisition of contiguous parcels from willing sellers as they become available. The Friends, WDNR, and Nature Conservancy would continue to be the lead agency on all acquisition, management, and maintenance efforts for this project area.

Recommendations:

- Expand project area boundary per Friends recommendation to allow additional acquisition of contiguous parcels.

REGIONAL TRAILS

Throughout the public input process, trails were the most frequently requested recreation facility addition to the park system. Development of additional trails is also consistent with providing future recreation opportunities for the forecasted aging population of Dane County. This plan will make County-wide recommendations for regionally significant recreational water, bicycle-pedestrian, equestrian and snowmobile trails.

Water Trails

Dane County has a number of lakes, streams and rivers that provide outstanding water trail opportunities. Capitol Water Trails Ltd. has been spearheading most of the water trail development efforts in Dane County. Some of the waters that provide water trail opportunities include Token Creek, the Yahara chain of lakes, Badfish Creek, Maunasha River, Black Earth Creek, Dunlap Creek, Halfway Prairie Creek, Sugar River, Pheasant Branch Creek and Koshkonong Creek. Extent of trail development, public access points and more detailed trail maps can be found on the Capitol Water Trails website at www.capitolwatertrails.org, or by calling 608-223-0995.

Trail guides for the Yahara Water Trail will be available in the Spring of 2007. A project led by the Dane County Environmental Council and many partners, the trail highlights historical, cultural and environmental features. More information about the trail and guides are available on the Dane County Office of Lakes and Watersheds website: www.danewaters.com.

Another recommended water trail that was included in the 2001-2005 Park and Open Space Plan is the implementation of a bicycle-pedestrian ferry from Middleton to downtown Madison. This update to the plan calls for an additional route that would extend from Governor Nelson State Park to the downtown area.

Recommendations:

- The County's role will be to continue acquiring lands that provide public access for parking and canoe/kayak launching to navigable water ways. Dane County Parks may also construct small gravel parking lots and trailhead facilities as staff and budgets allow. Development, signing and maintenance of these water trails will be carried out by volunteer organizations.
- Include east and west branches of Starkweather Creek as a potential future waterway from Olbrich Park north to Highway 30.

Priorities:

- Establish a canoe/kayak trail from the Village of Cambridge to the Village of Rockdale along the Koshkonong Creek. The Village of Cambridge would be responsible for providing water trailhead access at Liberty Park, Dane County would be responsible for providing trailhead access at CamRock Park per the park master plan.



Canoeing the Yahara River.

Bicycle-Pedestrian Trails

In terms of bicycle-pedestrian trails, Dane County Parks is best known for development of the approximately 9 mile long Capital City Trail. The trail supports a variety of uses, including hiking, biking, jogging, roller blading and stride skiing. The trail is now managed by the WDNR and maintained by Dane County under a Memorandum of Understanding. Dane County Parks also offers bicycle-pedestrian trails at Viking Park and the Pheasant Branch Conservancy. Trails in this plan that fall under this category are typically 10' in width, and hard surface. Many start out as crushed limestone trails, with the eventual goal of paving them with asphalt as funding allows. The long term vision is for a regional bicycle-pedestrian trail system that connects major population centers to County park facilities and other regional trails. **Recommendations:**

- The County's role is to develop off road regional trails within project areas identified in the Park and Open Space Plan. Regional trails that extend outside of these project areas would be developed by the local unit of government. In some circumstances, the County may consider partnering with local units of government to utilize its own staff and equipment to develop off-road regional trails identified in this plan by formal agreements.
- For regional trails identified in this plan that extend outside of County project area boundaries and are funded or developed with assistance of Dane County Parks, the County may have the option to eventually transfer ownership to the State and charge user fees to offset maintenance costs. These trails would be identified by signage as County trails, with other partner logos as appropriate.
- For regional trails identified in this plan that extend outside of County project area boundaries, the County's primary role is to provide eligibility to apply for Conservation Fund grant dollars for local units of government to acquire lands necessary for trail construction.
- Some of the regional bicycle-pedestrian trails identified on this plan may be on-road bike routes or bike lanes. These would be implemented by the local unit of government and possibly coordinated with the Dane County Highway and Transportation Department. The intent of including them in this plan is for grant eligibility purposes only.

Priorities:

Dane County should work on planning and development of off-road regional bicycle-pedestrian trail projects identified in this plan that are closest to major population centers or are through areas targeted for development adjacent to urban areas. These trails can serve both commuter and recreation needs. Over the next five years, as staff and budget allow, Dane County should work on planning and development of the following regional off-road bicycle-pedestrian projects:

- **North Mendota Trail**-This trail provides a connection between Schumacher Farm in Waunakee, to Governor Nelson State Park, to Pheasant Branch Conservancy. The Village of Waunakee and City of Middleton have already constructed segments of trail that could potentially be incorporated into this system. The Dane County Highway and Transportation Department constructed a bicycle/pedestrian underpass on CTH M in 2005 in anticipation of future construction of this trail.
- **Lower Yahara River Trail**-This trail provides connection from the Capital City Trail at Lake Farm Centennial State Park, to the Village of McFarland, to the City of Stoughton.
- **Ice Age Junction Trail**-This trail would begin at the Ice Age Trail parking lot on CTH PD and travel south to Badger Prairie County Park. Eventually, an underpass would be constructed under CTH MV.
- **Token Creek Trail**-This trail would extend from Token Creek County Park to Patrick Marsh Natural Resource Area.
- **Georgia O'Keefe Trail**-There was strong support for this trail that would extend between McCarthy County Park and Patrick Marsh, traveling past the original homestead and countryside that inspired many of Georgia O'Keefe's paintings. Educational signage about the life and work of O'Keefe could be placed along the trail at bicycle rest stops.
- **CamRock Trail**-This trail connects the Villages of Rockdale and Cambridge through CamRock Park.
- **Upper Yahara River Trail**-Continue working with the Village to create a MOU for development of this trail.
- **Capital City Trail**-Continue working with the WDNR and City of Madison on connection between Cottage Grove and the east side of Madison.

Equestrian

Dane County Parks has been working with equestrian riders to develop an “outside the park” regional trail system. These trails are made possible by volunteers securing formal access agreements to construct equestrian trails on lands adjacent to and beyond County park lands. Donald County Park has recently developed such a trail, and additional loops are currently being planned. The equestrian community hopes to further this concept from other public riding areas in the County, with the eventual goal of forming a continuous loop through rural areas around the entire metropolitan area. **Recommendations:**

- It is envisioned that Dane County equestrian clubs would form a committee that would carry out land-owner negotiations, development and maintenance of this regional trail system.



Riding the trails at Donald County Park.

Snowmobile

A comprehensive study of the present snowmobile trail system in Dane County should be done in conjunction with the Dane County Snowmobile Council. This study should identify snowmobile trail needs for the future and designate permanent corridor goals. **Recommendations:**

- Utilize summer intern, university students or volunteer help to complete this study.

SCENIC DRIVING CORRIDORS

Driving for pleasure was listed as the fourth most popular recreational activity in the Dane County region in the WDNR 2005-2010 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. The 2001-2005 Park and Open Space Plan recommended designation of a County scenic roads driving program, similar to the States Rustic Road program, that could potentially link local, county and state park facilities. Safety determinations would have to be made prior to the designation of any road. These roads could be designated on a map and provide pull off areas that offer scenic views of the countryside and interpretive signage. This program requires further definition through a planning process that includes County and State coordination. Development of this recreation program is consistent with providing opportunities for the projected aging population. **Recommendations:**

- Utilize student interns or university student help to begin investigating designation of this program with Park Commission oversight.

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL SITES

These project areas consist of lands specifically purchased for the preservation, restoration or reconstruction of features significant to the history or cultural heritage of an area. This can include historic buildings, reconstructed historic buildings and archeological sites. Activities at these sites may be limited to sightseeing and the study of historic or cultural features. Recreation use at these properties should be extremely passive, such as trails, nature study and picnicking.

HALFWAY PRAIRIE SCHOOL Historical/Cultural Site (Town of Mazomanie, 0.6 acres)

This site is located at the junction of CTH F and STH 19 two and a half miles north of the Village of Black Earth and contains the oldest elementary school in Dane County. The one-room school was operated from 1844 until it closed as a result of consolidation in 1961. Visitors may view the inside of the school in its original restored condition on holidays and Sunday afternoons, from 1-5 p.m., Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Recommendations:

- There are no new recommendations for this site.

SCHUMACHER FARM Historical/Cultural Site(Town of Westport, 115.5 acres)

Schumacher Farm is located just east of the Village of Waunakee on the north side of STH 19-113. The original property was donated to Dane County Parks by Marcella Pendall Schumacher and is intended to be a demonstration area of early Dane County farming practices from the early 1900's era. The site includes several buildings from the original farmstead and a newly constructed barn that will eventually serve as a gathering area for special events, office space for Friends of Schumacher Farm staff and storage of historic farm equipment. A master plan for Schumacher Farm was completed and adopted by the County board in 2005.

Recommendations:

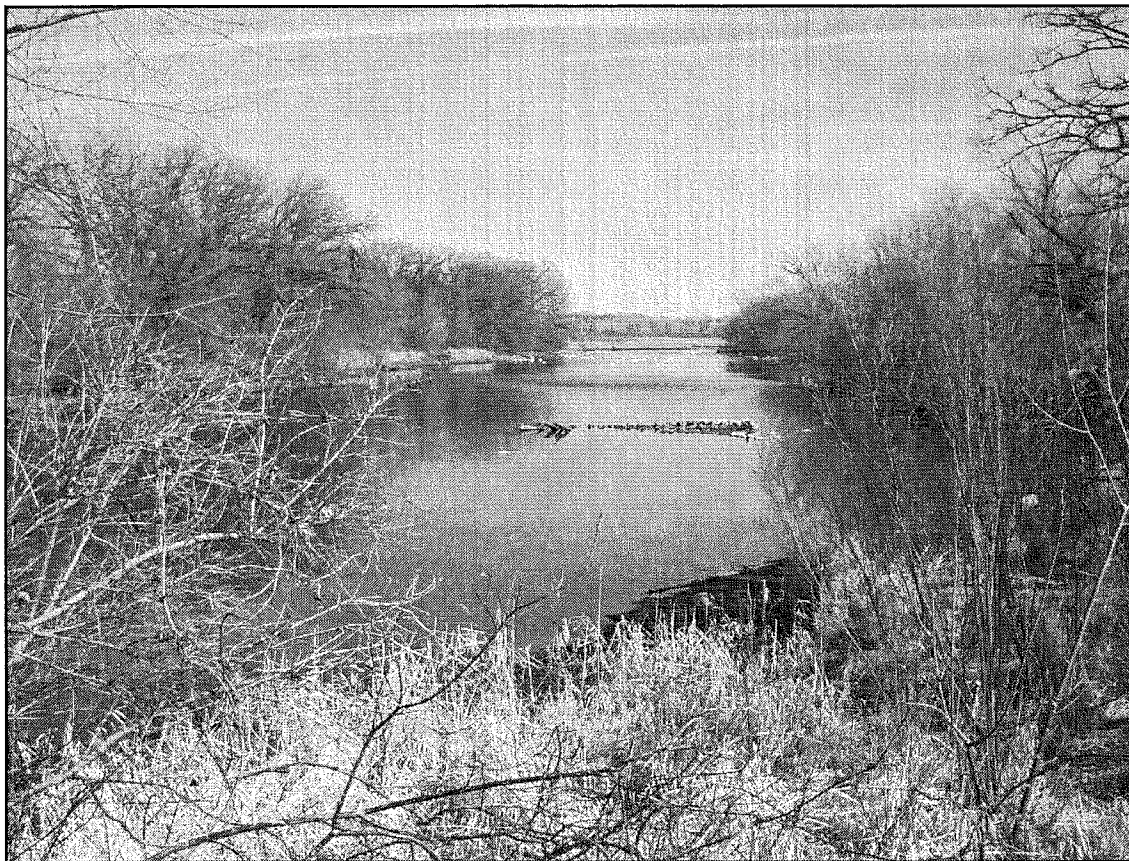
- Implement recommendations of the adopted master plan.
- Schumacher Farm should be considered as a future place where historic buildings could be relocated that are consistent with the historic integrity of the property. Relocation of additional buildings to the site beyond those shown on the adopted master plan would be reviewed by the Dane County Park Commission on a case by case basis.

LAKE FARM ARCHEOLOGICAL DISTRICT (Town of Dunn)

Native Americans have lived in Wisconsin for about 12,000 years. Evidence of Native American inhabitation in Dane County dates back to the Paleo-Indian Tradition, or 10,000-5,000 B.C. It is still unclear as to the name of the people who first inhabited the park area or if they were related to the historic tribes met by the first European settlers. By far the greatest concentration of archaeological resources found within the recreation area is located within the Lake Farm Centennial State Park Unit. Between September and November of 1976, Philip H. Salkin and Thomas E. Emerson conducted an environmental impact survey of the proposed E-Way that identified 10 prehistoric sites at Lake Farm Park and artifacts dating back to the Early Archaic and Late Woodland periods. Salkin and a team of University of Wisconsin students conducted a more intensive study in 1977 and identified 32 prehistoric sites at Lake Farm Park. A Lake Farm Archeological District was designated and placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The geography of this area may have been what made it so attractive as a settlement area. The park is on a peninsula that had a vast wetland marsh complex to the north and west, Lake Waubesa to the east, and oak woodlands on the upland areas to the south. These areas were rich in a variety of fish, shellfish, wild game, nuts and berries.

Additional information about the archeological resources of the Lake Farm Archeological District can be found in Phil Salkin's report, "*An Intensive Archeological Survey in the Lake Farms Archaeological District of Madison, Wisconsin*," June, 1979. The Dane County Park Commission has a pamphlet entitled "Prehistoric Native Americans in Lake Farm Park" that provides an overview of early settlement of the park by these people. **Recommendations:**

- Plan and develop a comprehensive exhibit area at the Lussier Family Heritage Center to educate park users about the extensive Native American history of this area and other people that first settled in the region.



A view of the Yahara River and a remnant fishing weir constructed with rocks by early Native Americans.






PRAIRIE AND OAK SAVANNA SITES

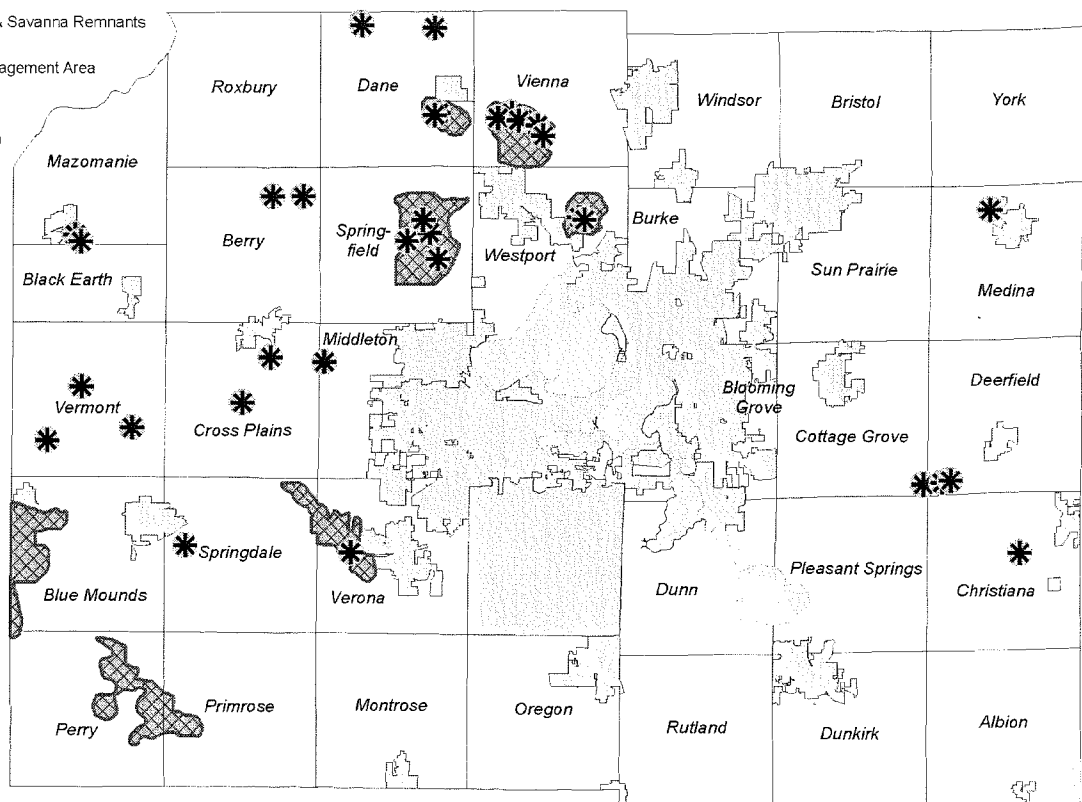
The amended Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan 1990-1995 recommended that the county support and assist in completing an inventory of prairie and oak savanna sites, notify landowners and local governments of site locations and consider these sites during urban service area, rezoning and subdivision decisions. The Prairie Enthusiasts is developing a database of known prairie and savanna remnants. Its goal is to inform the owners of the existence of these remnants and work with them on restoration, management and protection if the owners so choose. **Recommendations:**

- Dane County's role in this initiative is to work with non-profit conservation organizations and land trusts, such as the Prairie Enthusiasts and Natural Heritage Land Trust, as well as with local units of governments and the WDNR, in funding the acquisition and preservation of those areas that coincide with other objectives of the Parks and Open Space Plan. These objectives may relate to park, natural resource areas, trails or historical/cultural sites recommended in this plan. The County's role is also to consider partially funding the acquisition and preservation of the highest quality unprotected remnants of prairie and savanna (including limited buffering) identified on the map at Figure 13 through the Dane County Conservation Fund program. The map shows the top prairie remnants and the seven "best" potential grassland/prairie landscape-scale management areas. The latter are study areas only and are not to be considered defined project areas. These areas and their rankings have been compiled by The Prairie Enthusiasts and the WDNR Bureau of Endangered Resources.

Figure 13

Legend

-  Priority Native Prairie & Savanna Remnants
-  Grassland/Prairie Management Area
-  City/Village
-  Municipal Civil Division
-  Major Lake



STREAM CORRIDOR PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Stream Eligibility and Designation

Two stream categories were designated for inclusion into this plan, Tier I and Tier II. Streams were categorized using varying sets of criteria based on the designated biological use, current level of protection or enhancement and the likelihood of establishing conservation within the stream corridor.

Tier I streams have one or more of the following attributes/designations:

- Coldwater-high value from a biological and recreational standpoint. They support cold-water fish communities, and flow is supplied primarily from spring discharge.
- Streams which have been enhanced or protected through an existing conservation program. Restoration or enhancement programs may include but are not limited to: Priority Watershed Projects, Targeted Resource Management, WDNR Habitat Projects, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and other non-profit or conservation organization work. Most if not all have existing easements on them. Priority may be given to those streams/segments where easements have expired or will expire soon.
- Streams which have been identified under the 303(d) designation resulting from non point source pollution or habitat degradation.
- Streams classified as Outstanding Water Resources (OWR) or Exceptional Water Resources (EWR) by WDNR.
- Streams identified as sensitive in the Dane County Water Body Classification Study
- Streams within the boundary of an approved Dane County Resource Protection Area Plan.

Tier II streams have one or more of the following attributes/designations:

- Warm water streams that may exhibit a sensitivity to development or have the ability to be restored or enhanced through management actions.
- Streams within the boundary of an approved Dane County Resource Protection Area Plan.
- Streams identified in WDNR Basin Plans with “high” or “medium” designations for habitat improvement.

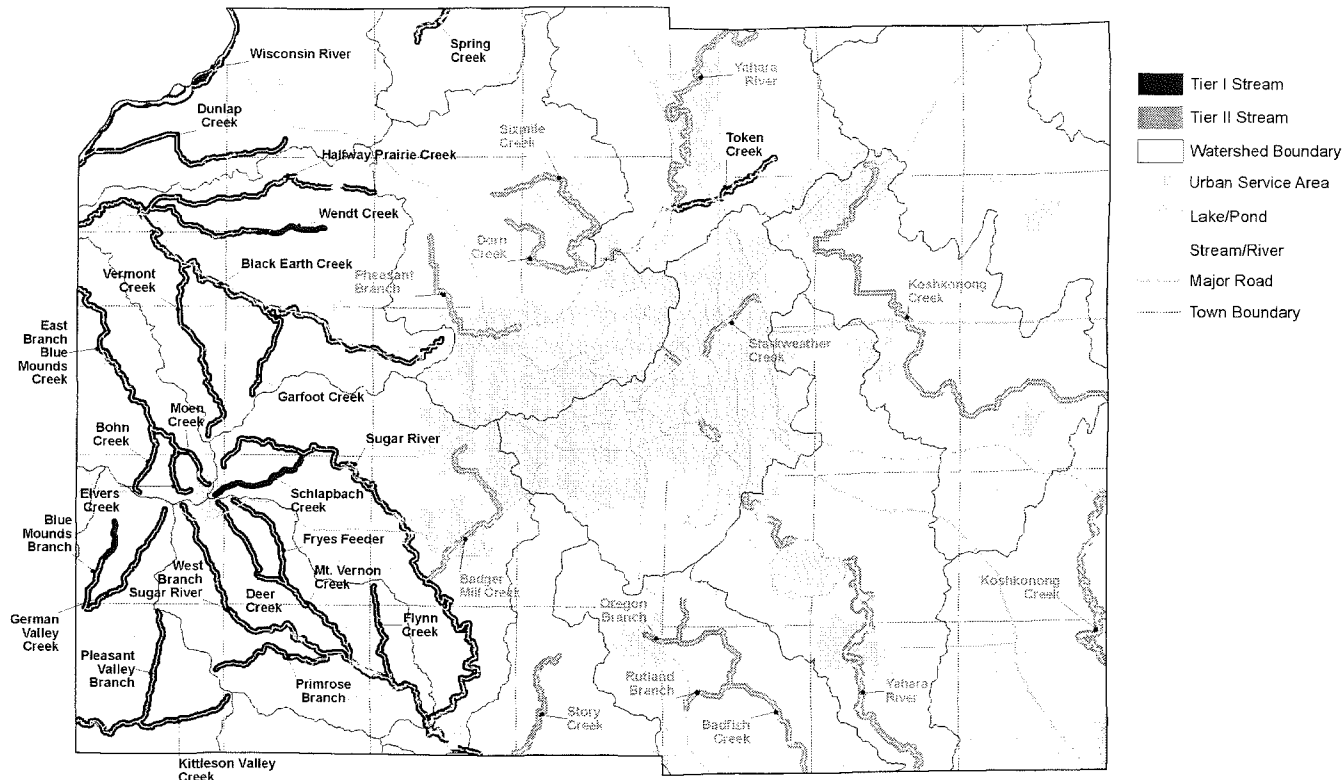
Program Implementation

Priorities for implementation will consider varying factors, including whether streams have protection plans in place, financial commitments from the local municipality or qualified non-profit organization and the recommendation of the Dane County Land and Water Resources Department and respective Divisions. In cases where opportunities arise and there is no protection plan approved, an evaluation will be conducted to determine the resource being protected, fiscal resources available for both purchase and implementation and the potential for future protection efforts. Dane County would take more of a leadership role in restoration efforts and landowner contacts on Tier I streams, while non-profits and local units of government would be expected to work on Tier II streams, with Dane County providing financial assistance through the Conservation Grant Fund program.

In addition to biological considerations, the County should investigate increasing public fishing access through acquisition of permanent easements on these streams. Dane County should work with local non-profit groups such as Trout Unlimited and the Dane County Conservation League, to identify which streams offer the highest fishing potential and would benefit from increased public access.

Figure 14

Tier I and II Stream Project Areas



- Tier I Stream
- Tier II Stream
- Watershed Boundary
- Urban Service Area
- Lake/Pond
- Stream/River
- Major Road
- Town Boundary

Tier I Streams

- Black Earth
- Bohn
- Deer
- Dunlap
- Elvers
- Flynn
- Fryes Feeder
- Garfoot
- German Valley
- Gordon
- Halfway Prairie
- Kittleson Valley
- Moen
- Mt. Vernon
- Pleasant Valley
- Primrose Branch
- Schlapbach
- Spring
- Sugar
- Token
- Vermont
- Wendt
- West Branch Blue Mounds
- West Branch Sugar
- Wisconsin

Tier II Streams

- Badfish
- Badger Mill
- Dorn
- Koshkonong
- Oregon Branch Badfish
- Pheasant Branch
- Rutland Branch Badfish
- Sixmile
- Starkweather
- Story
- Yahara

ADULT CONSERVATION TEAM

The Adult Conservation Team was created in 1992 to establish a link between the Dane County Parks Department and the community. It is also intended to educate the public about natural resources and about departmental goals, improve quality of life and raise the level of service delivery. The Adult Conservation Team extends and enriches the work done by park staff and is a source of advocacy and financial support of the parks department. The program serves as a “bridge” to the public to better understand concerns and issues at a grass roots level.

Efforts of the Adult Conservation Team have accelerated the development of parks and natural areas, increased wildlife habitats, and increased recreational opportunities. The team also carries out much of the day-to-day maintenance tasks that are beyond the capacity of Parks Division staff. Much of the volunteer work is carried out with very little supervision by Dane County Parks staff and is done on volunteer work-days. In 2005, the Adult Conservation Team had 2700 volunteers who performed over 18,000 hours of work. Some of its work includes blue bird trail development, invasive vegetative species removal, prescribed burns, prairie seed collecting, cleaning, and planting, park research, fund raising, trail clearing and stewardship and tree planting. Following is a list of Friends of the Park organizations having formal agreements with Dane County Parks (or are currently negotiating for such agreements) authorizing them to act as agents of the parks:

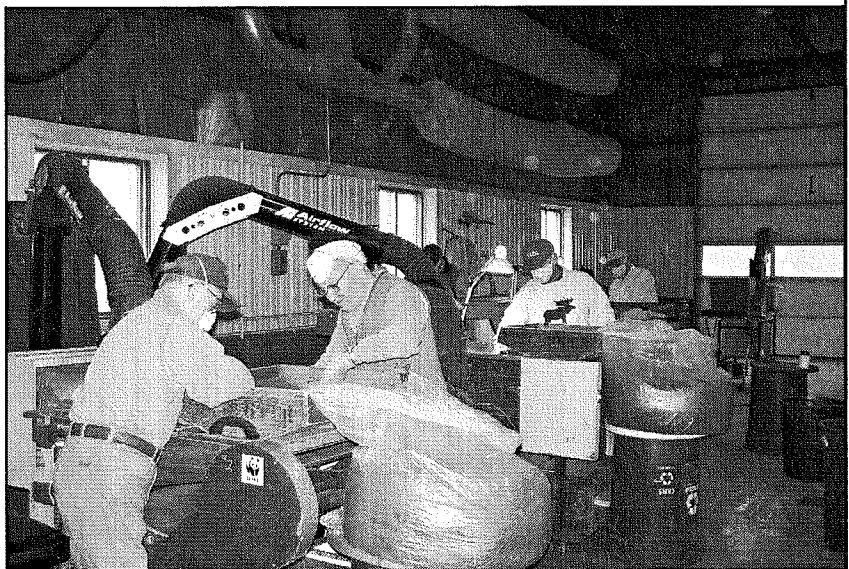
- Friends of Donald Park
- Friends of Schumacher Farm
- Friends of McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park
- Friends of Capital Springs State Park and Recreation Area

In addition, the following Friends groups also provide support to various park properties:

- Friends of Cherokee Marsh and Upper Yahara Watershed
- Friends of Old Halfway Prairie School
- Friends of Pheasant Branch
- Friends of Lake View Hill Park
- Friends of Token Creek (forming)
- Friends of CamRock Park
- Friends of Goose Lake
- Friends of Stewart Park (forming)

Recommendations:

- Dane County Parks will work jointly with labor union representatives to formally define volunteer roles in the Dane County Park system.
- Expand the role of parks staff to supervise volunteer teams in the field.



Volunteers clean prairie seed for restoration projects.

LUSSIER FAMILY HERITAGE CENTER

Situated at the heart of the Dane County environmental corridor (E-Way) and the Capital Springs State Recreational Area, the Lussier Family Heritage Center is part of the Nine Springs E-Way vision of UW Emeritus Professor Phil Lewis. The Center is proposed to provide County residents with an experiential facility to learn about the cultural and environmental heritage of Dane County. The center was built almost entirely through private funds, including a very substantial donation from John H. Lussier. It is supported in large part by user fees generated from rental of the facility for special events. Planning for the Center began in the early 1990s and its doors opened in 2001.

The upper level of the Heritage Center includes an exhibit hall and commons area. The main room of the upper level is currently being used for retreats, conferences, meetings, receptions and other special events. The long-term plan is to provide permanent and traveling educational exhibits. The upper level also includes the Lunney-Pfeifer Donor Recognition Wall that recognizes persons or organizations that have provided significant contributions to the Dane County Park system. The Natural Heritage Land Trust Wall describes land conservation activities in Dane County and recognizes those special people and organizations that have worked to preserve the county's Natural Heritage. State and County Parks offices and restrooms are located in the south half of the upper level.

On the Lower Level, the Ken LePine Hall is used for retreats, conferences, meetings, receptions and other special events. The lower level also includes a kitchen for food preparation and catered events. Dane County Historical Society offices are also located in the lower level and provide an area where County records and information can be found.



The Lussier Family Heritage Center.



Volunteers collect prairie seed behind the Lussier Family Heritage Center.

There is an observation deck outside of the upper level room with a spotting scope that provides views of the E-way flora and fauna. An existing barn is used for storage of materials for Dane County's Adult Conservation Team. The grounds also include a playground, solar panels, an experimental rain garden exhibit and butterfly and bird garden.

Although the Lussier Family Heritage Center is currently being used primarily as a rental place for meetings and special events, the long-term plan is to provide a place of permanent and traveling educational exhibits that will teach persons of all ages about the historical, cultural and natural resources of Dane County. This facility should also be used to the greatest extent possible to educate the public about the Dane County Park system and recreational opportunities that are available within it. Advertising at this location would provide outstanding exposure to many corporate entities that may provide future contributions to the park system.

Recommendations:

- Prepare informational exhibits about the Dane County Parks system for display in the entry area of the building.
- Develop an action plan for creating educational and interpretive exhibit areas within the upper and lower levels of the existing building. Consider development of a building annex that would house more permanent educational displays and exhibits.
- Include interpretive references such as family photographs and historical interpretation for the Lemanski barn that will illustrate the pattern of settlement and historic land uses.

COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

For the past fifteen years, Dane County Parks has been acquiring larger and more natural tracts of land that often are within project areas of other state and federal public land holding agencies. Recreation on these lands often takes place with minimal or no development of facilities and includes uses such as fishing, hunting, berry picking, bird watching, canoeing, nature walks and cross country skiing on lightly developed trails.

As staff and financial resources become increasingly limited for all public park and recreation organizations, forming and expanding partnerships will become ever more critical. Dane County has already entered into management agreements with the WDNR on several properties including, Salmo Pond, Capital Springs Recreation Area, the Capital City Trail and Pheasant Branch Conservancy.

Recommendations:

- The County should work with the WDNR on creating joint management agreements and policies that define agency roles for managing recreation use, restoration efforts, development of facilities, maintenance and enforcement.
- Generally, the County's role is to assist with day-to-day maintenance of access points and trailheads, minor repair and light development of park land infrastructure and provision of signage.
- The State would be able to assist with enforcement of hunting and fishing regulations, providing professional expertise for creating habitat and restoration plans and assist with administration of collecting trail pass and user fees where applicable.
- Provide master signs on jointly-owned properties that include logos of all partnering agencies.

Naturalist

Recently, the Dane County Naturalist program has been focusing primarily on vegetation management and prairie restoration efforts. The majority of public outreach, education, and volunteer efforts associated with this program have been focused on prairie seeding, prescribed burns for vegetation management, invasive vegetation species removal and prairie seed collecting.

If expanded, the Naturalist program could offer an outstanding opportunity to increase environmental education programs in the parks and to the public in general. The purpose of environmental education and outreach at the parks generally falls into three inter-related categories. First, participating in naturalist led tours, visiting interpretive exhibits, or volunteering for conservation activities provides an entertainment value for persons who are camping or visiting the parks. Second, a diverse education and outreach program instills a greater sense of awareness in park users about a variety of conservation and environmental topics and issues. Finally, these programs can motivate people participating in them to make wiser conservation decisions both in the park and at home.

The future Lake Farm Centennial State Park includes a proposed outdoor skills center building. This facility could become an ideal location for environmental education and outreach programs that could be presented by an expanded Naturalist program.

Recommendations:

- Expand and diversify the educational and public contact role of Dane County Naturalist, including creation of park educational tour pamphlets, television and radio interviews and outreach to schools.
- Utilize volunteers as "Teacher Naturalists" under direction of Naturalist.

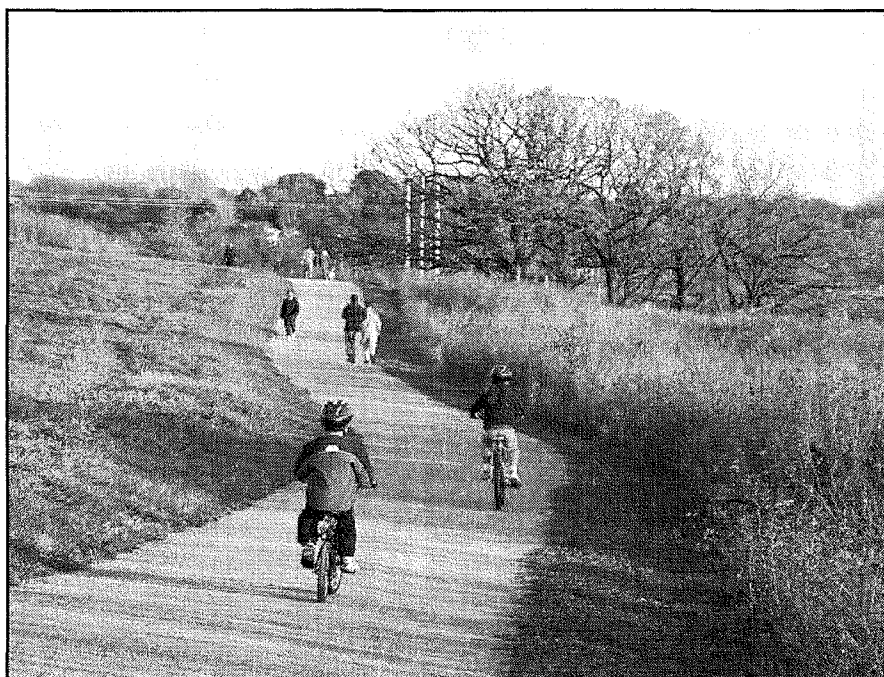
PARK PLANNING

As Dane County Parks continues to acquire additional acreage and bring new lands into the system, park planning is necessary to identify how these properties will be managed and what their use will be. In addition, many of the recreation parks are more than fifty years old and have had significant changes in the land use and transportation patterns surrounding them. Recreation trends are very fluid and continually evolve with the changing population dynamics and demands of County residents.

The majority of the County recreation parks, trails and natural resource areas currently have no or very outdated master plans. The Parks Division conducts the majority of its park and resource planning with Dane County Land and Water Resource staff through public processes. Although these plans can take considerable time and resources to complete, they play a critical role for helping to better engage partners during the implementation phases of the plans. This “in house” approach allows the County to maintain on-going grass-roots-level relationships with local units of government, non-profit conservation organizations and private landowners that are critical to long term success of future park acquisition and development efforts.

Following is a list of prioritized park planning projects that should be completed over the next five years.

- Complete a Project Plan for Fish Lake Natural Resource Area that includes master planning for development of Lussier Park.
- Prepare a master plan for Badger Prairie County Park that considers proposed expansions to the Badger Home facility, incorporation of bicycle-pedestrian trail from Cross Country Road to CTH MV, and the new library and entrance to the park.
- Prepare a master plan for Token Creek County Park that considers an alternative entrance to the park from the southeast.
- Prepare a master plan for Stewart Lake County Park that considers future access and park expansion to STH 78.
- Prepare a master plan for the newly-acquired Sunnyside property within the Black Earth Creek Natural Resource Area that identifies future acquisition areas, location and extent of public access to the property, and proposed recreational use of the property.
- Prepare a master plan for Brigham County park that considers future boundary and facility expansion, in-



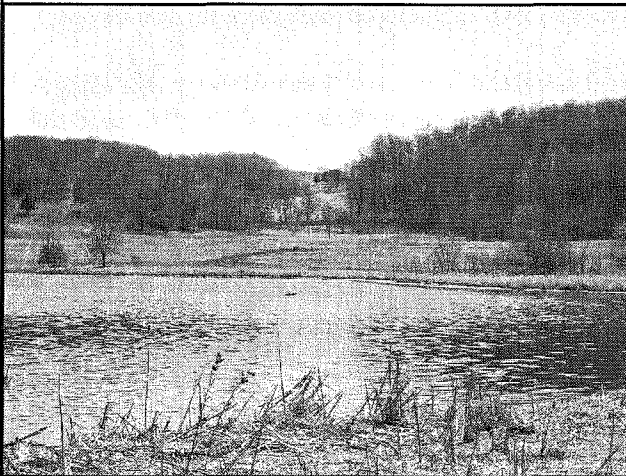
Enjoying the trails at Pheasant Branch Conservancy.

LAND ACQUISITION

Lands identified in this Plan for acquisition are purchased through the Dane County Conservation Fund. The Conservation Fund is comprised of two funds known as the "Old" and "New". The Old Conservation Fund was established in 1990 to preserve natural, recreational, and cultural resource lands in Dane County.

In April of 1999, 75% of voters county-wide approved a measure to triple the monies available for land acquisition with an additional \$30 million over 10 years in a "New" Conservation Fund. The framework for the New Conservation Fund was outlined in an Open Space Referendum Agreement between the Madison Area Builders Association, Realtors Association of South Central Wisconsin and Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk.

Monies for land acquisition in both the Old and New Conservation Funds are allocated on an annual basis through the Dane County budget approval process. These monies are spent primarily on the acquisition of land or property interests (e.g. conservation easements), including miscellaneous costs such as appraisals, title insurance, surveys, and site preparation. Summary of the annual Conservation Fund budget through 2006:



View of lands protected by Conservation Easements from Indian Lake County Park.

Due to the opportunistic nature of the land acquisition process, specific acquisitions are not identified as priorities in this Plan. However, emphasis will be placed on the following project areas over the next five years:

- Ice Age National Scenic Trail, particularly the Festge County Park to Indian Lake County Park segment.
- Door Creek Wetlands Natural Resource Area
- Brigham County Park to Military Ridge State Trail.
- Opportunities that result from the planning projects identified under Park Planning on the previous page.

Dane County Conservation Fund ANNUAL ALLOCATIONS 1990 - 2006

Year	"Old" Fund	"New" Fund	Annual Total
1990	\$ 500,000		\$ 500,000
1991	\$ 700,000		\$ 700,000
1992	\$ 700,000		\$ 700,000
1993	\$ 550,000		\$ 550,000
1994	\$ 865,000		\$ 865,000
1995	\$ 1,700,000		\$ 1,700,000
1996	\$ 1,215,000		\$ 1,215,000
1997	\$ 1,000,000		\$ 1,000,000
1998	\$ 1,300,000		\$ 1,300,000
1999	\$ 1,400,000		\$ 1,400,000
2000	\$ 846,500	\$ 4,000,000	\$ 4,846,500
2001	\$ 746,600	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 3,746,600
2002	\$ 646,600	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 3,646,600
2003	\$ 646,600	\$ 2,750,000	\$ 3,396,600
2004	\$ 500,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 2,500,000
2005	\$ 646,600	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 3,646,000
2006	\$ 646,600	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 5,646,000
Totals	\$ 14,609,500	\$ 22,750,000	\$ 37,358,300

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Budgetary resources for park operations have been decreasing as the percentage of general appropriation (tax) dollars becomes increasingly scarce and as costs of labor, fuel, utilities and supplies continue to rise. There has also been a trend in recent years toward reduction of operation and maintenance staff due to retirements and budget cuts.

Traditional revenue sources have been tied to facility use and recreation activities such as camping, shelter rentals, lake access, trail use, disc golf and dog exercise areas. Historically, these permit and rental revenues have been used to offset but not allowed to exceed the actual maintenance costs for each associated activity. With the afore mentioned budget and staffing constraints, exploration of the following options could be considered: establishing a general park access permit required of motorized vehicles entering the park to raise additional revenues from all user groups; land rental or leases; and timber harvesting and other resource management practices that are sustainable and compatible with park ecosystems. Future budgeting for the parks division should consider the increasing costs associated with development and maintenance of recreational activities and use areas on newly-acquired lands.

To gain increased efficiency in park operations, high intensity recreation use and maintenance areas should be designed and developed to be within close proximity of each other and easily accessible. Examples of this practice include facility development at Capital Springs State Recreation Area and Token Creek County Park, where layout of activity areas such as campgrounds, shelters, lake access points, dog exercise areas, trails and disc golf allows for the most efficient supervision of facilities while reducing transportation and labor costs.

Conservation Fund Grant Program

Twenty percent of the annual Conservation Fund appropriation is set aside for grants to local units of government and non-profit conservation organizations for acquisition of lands identified in the Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan. Successful applicants are eligible to receive up to 100% of the acquisition cost in addition to reimbursement on approved related costs such as appraisals, surveys, title work, etc. The program began in 2000 and is overseen by the Conservation Fund Grant Advisory Committee. In the first years of the program, partnerships with over 20 organizations have been formed to protect nearly 2,000 acres.

Park Partner Match

The Dane County Park Partner Match Program was established in 2000 to provide funding to local units of government for park development projects. Dane County encourages project proposals that will enhance community parks and better provide for the recreational needs of Dane County citizens. Construction of playground equipment, benches, trails, picnic tables, driveways and parking access are examples of eligible projects. Dane County intends to build upon the existing program to ensure that funds are utilized to the fullest extent. The County will take steps to increase the awareness of the program among local units of government to maximize the number of grant proposals. In addition, the County will strive to allocate grant funds more effectively by developing a ranking criteria for project proposals.

Scheidegger Grant Program

Upon his passing in 2001, Walter R. Scheidegger left a bequest to the Dane County Parks Commission for the purpose of acquiring, developing and maintaining park lands in the areas surrounding the communities of Riley, Verona, and Mt. Vernon. The Dane County Parks Commission established the Walter R. Scheidegger Trust Funding Program to carry out the intent of Mr. Scheidegger's gift. Local units of government and non-profit organizations are eligible for dollars from the Walter R. Scheidegger Trust Fund. These funds may be spent on buying land or interests in land, development costs, or other park capital improvements in the areas surrounding the communities of Riley, Verona and Mt. Vernon. Funding requests will be reviewed by the County on an individual basis.

The recent Parks merger with Land Conservation and Lakes and Watershed offers both opportunities and challenges. Identifying strategies to maintain open and current communication lines among operations, planning, adult conservation team, land acquisition and naturalist staff will be critical to the success of the new organizational structure.

With continued support and existence of the Dane County Conservation Fund, Dane County Parks will have the financial capacity to continue protecting important natural, historical and cultural resources while improving water quality and natural environments. This plan should be considered a general guide for future acquisition, planning, development and management of the park system over the next five years, with more specific decisions being carried out within day to day operations of the Land and Water Resources Department.

As park acreage continues to increase and the number of developed trails and park areas rises, it will be increasingly important to have a solid foundation of volunteer help to draw from through the Adult Conservation Team. Also, increasing public outreach and environmental education to schools and the County as a whole will be critical to instilling a sense of Countywide ownership in the park system and maintaining long-term sustainability of the Dane County Parks division.

Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan 2006 - 2011

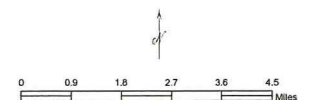
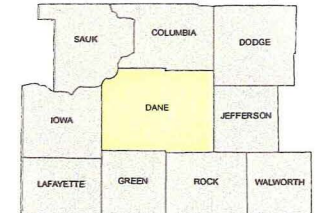
Dane County Park Commission Lands

- Recreation Park
- Forest*
- Historical/Cultural Site
- Natural Resource Area Property

Dane County Natural Resource Project Areas

- Natural Resource Area Boundary (NRAB)
- Ice Age National Scenic Trail Corridor

Map of Counties Surrounding Dane County



Reference Layers

- County & State Bike/Pedestrian Trail
- State/Federal Land
- Environmental Corridor
- Urban Service Area
- Major Road
- Railroad
- Lake/Pond
- Stream/River
- Township Boundary

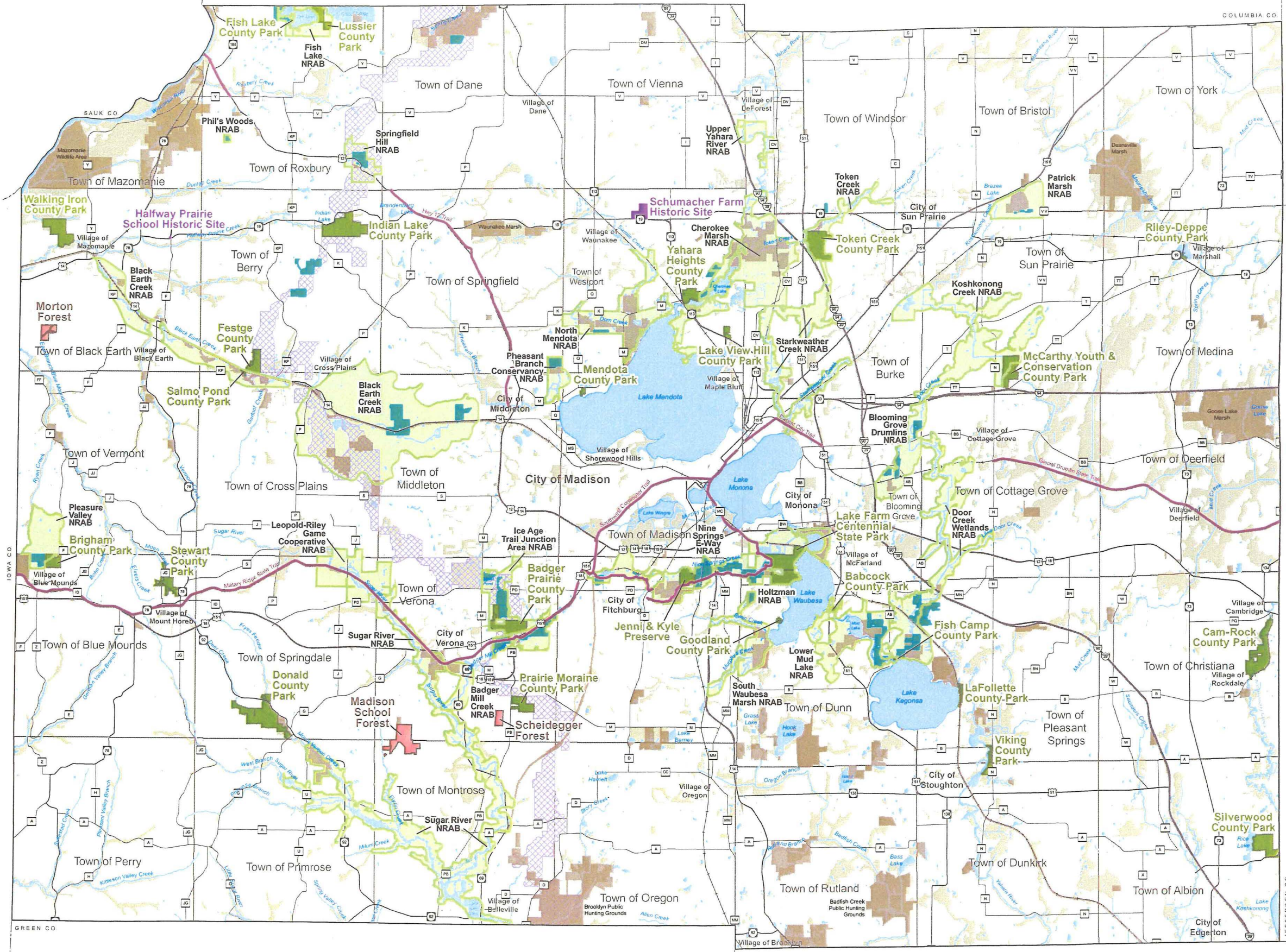


* Dane County Park Commission does not own Madison School Forest

Data Sources:
 Recreation Parks, School & Community Forests, Historical/Cultural Sites and Natural Resource Area Boundaries: (DCLWRD July 2006)
 Parks Data (June 2006)
 County & State Bike/Pedestrian Trail: MAMPO (1/2006)
 Ice Age National Scenic Trail Corridor: Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation (2000)
 Existing Ice Age National Scenic Trail: Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation (2006)
 State/Federal Lands: Dane County Parcels (June 2006)
 Grassland/Prairie Management Areas: WDNR (1994)
 Environmental Corridor: DCRPC (7/2006)
 Urban Service Area: DCRPC (1/2006)
 Railroad: DCRPC (2000)
 Hydrography: Orthophoto-derived (2000)
 Town Boundary Dane County (1/2006).



Map created December 7, 2006 by the Dane County Land & Water Resources Department.



Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan Regional Trail Map 2006 - 2011

- Existing and Proposed Trails**
- Proposed Off-road Bicycle/Pedestrian Trails
 - Water Trails
 - Proposed Bicycle Pedestrian Ferry
 - Existing Bicycle/Pedestrian Trails
 - Existing Ice Age National Scenic Trail
- Park Commission Lands & Project Areas that Intersect Existing/Proposed Trails**
- Recreation Park
 - Forest*
 - Historical/Cultural Site
 - Natural Resource Area Boundary (NRAB)
 - Ice Age National Scenic Trail Corridor

Proposed Off-Road Bicycle Pedestrian Trails

1. Token Creek Co. Park to Riley Deppe Co. Park
2. Georgia O'Keefe Trail
3. McCarthy Co. Park to Lake Kegonsa State Park
4. McCarthy Co. Park Connector Trail
5. Capital City Connector Trail
6. Blooming Grove Drumlins/Door Creek Park Trail
7. Lower Yahara River Trail
8. Kegonsa Loop (includes on-road segments)
9. Stoughton to Oregon Trail
10. Oregon to Capital Springs Trail
11. Fitchburg/Oregon Rail Trail
12. Oregon to Badger State Trail
13. Sugar River Trail
14. Sugar River to Mount Horeb Trail
15. Black Earth Creek to Pope Farm Park to Badger Prairie Co. Park
16. Black Earth Creek Trail
17. Mazomanie to Sauk City Rail Trail
18. Highway 12 Connector Trail
19. Indian Lake Spur Trail
20. North Mendota Trail
21. Upper Yahara River Trail
22. DeForest to Sun Prairie Trail
23. Starkweather Creek Trail
24. Glacial Drumlins to Rockdale Trail
25. Blue Mounds Loop

Water Trails**

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| A. Koshkonong Creek | E. Badfish Creek |
| B. Mauneha River | F. Sugar River |
| C. Starkweather Creek | G. Black Earth Creek |
| D. Yahara Chain | |



* Dane County Park Commission does not own Madison School Forest
 ** More detailed water trail information can be found at www.capitolwatertrails.org

Data Sources:
 Recreation Parks, School & Community Forests, Historical/Cultural Sites and Natural Resource Area Boundaries: (DCLWRD July 2006)
 Parks Data (June 2006)
 County & State Bike/Pedestrian Trail: MAMPO (1/2006)
 Ice Age National Scenic Trail Corridor: Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation (2000)
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 Railroad: DCRPC (2000)
 Hydrography: Orthophoto-derived (2000)
 Town Boundary: Dane County (1/2006)
 Map created on December 7, 2006 by the Dane County Land and Water Resources Department

