

Dane County Land & Water Resources Department  
*2008 Annual Report*



*Dane County* is blessed with beautiful, fertile lands and waters. Each year, the Land & Water Resources Department, County Board, and I work with landowners and volunteers to make our waters cleaner and more bountiful and our lands healthier and more productive. Thanks to the Department and all of you who contribute to this great conservation effort.

*Kathleen Falk—Dane County Executive*

## From the Director

Welcome to our third Land & Water Resources Department Annual Report. This report shares with our customers and the public accomplishments achieved by the Department in the past year.

One such accomplishment was the initiation of the Land & Water Resources Department *Making a Difference Award*. This award, based on peer nominations, was established to recognize Department staff who go above and beyond the call of duty. The first recipients are the Parks Operations Staff. They exemplify elements of the Department's mission statement that states in part, "... (to) provide quality

resource-based recreational services and facilities...." In this report, you will find references to many other Department-wide accomplishments, although due to space limitations, certainly not all.

On behalf of everyone in the Land & Water Resources Department, I hope you enjoy this report and find it informative. As always, if you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at:

608-224-3731, or email, [connors.kevin@co.dane.wi.us](mailto:connors.kevin@co.dane.wi.us).

- *Kevin Connors, Director*

## Conservation Fund

More acres were protected in 2008 through the Conservation Fund than ever before! This is due in large part to the acquisition of 1,097 acres adjacent to Walking Iron County Park. This large property connects Walking Iron County Park to the Mazomanie State Wildlife Area and the Wisconsin River. A special thanks to the Natural Heritage Land Trust and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for their support of the project. Thirty-seven acres on the south end of Brigham County Park were also purchased and will be used for a trail that connects the Military Ridge State Trail, Cave of the Mounds, Brigham County Park and Blue Mound State Park. Additional projects in 2008 included the purchase of 26 acres in the Door Creek Wetlands and the authorization to purchase 80 acres in the Fish Lake Natural Resource Area.



*County Executive Kathleen Falk announces the acquisition of 1,097 acres adjacent to Walking Iron County Park*

The Conservation Fund Grant Program was also strong in 2008. The largest grant in program history was awarded to the City of Madison and the Natural Heritage Land Trust for the acquisition of 259 acres in the Cherokee Marsh Natural Resource Area. A grant was also awarded to the Natural Heritage Land Trust for the acquisition of 73 acres within the Westport Drumlin Unit of the Empire Prairies State Natural Area.

The total acreage protected through the Conservation Fund has exceeded 10,000 acres! Approximately 11,160 acres throughout Dane County provide a wide variety of services, from wildlife habitat to active recreation, and help make Dane County a great place to live!

## The Lewis Lunney Fund

The new Lewis-Lunney Parkland Restoration and Development account got off to a successful start in 2008. This annual \$500,000 fund was initiated in the 2008 County Budget and named in honor of two long-time Dane County Parks Commission members, Elizabeth (Libby) Lewis and William (Bill) Lunney. Libby Lewis served on the Park Commission for 25 years (1981-2007) and Bill Lunney, current Chair, has served since 1987.

The goals of the Lewis-Lunney Fund are to enhance the natural resources and recreational amenities on county parklands. The fund included general park facility improvements and the following projects for 2008: Planning for Phase I of the Lower Yahara River Regional Trail and North Mendota Regional Trail, completing a Token Creek Park Improvement Plan.

*“Here is a simple but powerful rule—always give people more than what they expect to get”*

Nelson Boswell, 1740—1795  
British Writer and Journalist

The Dane County Land and Water Resources Department (LWRD) follows this rule in the services and programs it provides its customers, all of which are tied directly to the county’s natural resources. The rich soils in Dane County sustain some of the best agricultural lands found in world. The geographic features of the landscape, including our lakes and streams, have drawn people to this location for centuries.

A little more than four years have passed since the 2005 merger of Land Conservation, Land Acquisition, Parks, and the Office of Lakes and Watersheds. We’ve learned a lot about the integral parts of each division and how they work together. As part of the merger, we developed a strategic plan to better understand the Department’s strengths and weaknesses, and most importantly, to help clarify our customers’ expectations about LWRD services.

In 2008, the Department began to track how well we are performing our basic roles. Each Division developed its own criteria to use for performance measurement, and a commonly used approach is to track numbers of people served.

Although the Parks Division has used its various permit sales as a means of tracking users in the past, this does not tell the whole story. Parks identified several key areas to track how many people it serves. Traffic counters at a number of park entrances and on the County Corridor Trail have been installed, with more being mounted in 2009. Volunteers and volunteer hours have been tallied; Lussier Family Heritage Center visitors counted; camping and shelter permits totaled; Parks information phone-line and website use monitored; and park and community planning projects evaluated.

Similarly, the Land Conservation Division (LCD) uses erosion control permits, conservation plans, and LWRD’s five-year Land and Water Resources Management Plan to gauge usage of services. The LCD tracks many different areas relating to conservation activities and issues in the county, from numbers of landowners served to tons of soils and nutrients prevented from entering our lakes and streams. These

historical records help the LCD identify trends in conservation as well as provide stakeholders and the general public a way to measure our performance of service.

Dane County is one of the top agricultural producing counties, as well as one of the best fishing areas in the state. Although balancing the two is challenging, success in both areas is a measure of how LWRD and the agricultural and urban communities have worked together to implement good conservation practices. For example, the LCD has helped restore more than 50 miles of cold-water streams in the county over the past ten years. Nearly all of these streams have public access easements that offer enjoyment for everyone, providing both economical and quality of life benefits that make Dane County one of the best places to live.

The Land Acquisition Division has set the number of acres preserved in a given year as its benchmark. In 2008, the County purchased 1,450 acres. The Conservation Grant Fund Program assisted local municipalities and non-profit organizations in the preservation of 332 acres, and the Streambank Preservation Program secured four miles of public fishing access.

The Office of Lakes and Watersheds (OLW) tracks a variety of performance measures, such as the number of area residents engaged in Yahara Lakes Legacy Partnership work to date (>375), and the 19 tons of garbage and debris collected during Take a Stake in the Lakes shoreline clean up events.

Other important measures are difficult to quantify, such as how effectively OLW involves our stakeholders in making decisions that affect area waters and wetlands, or the economic and environmental benefits of programs and policies OLW works with elected officials to adopt.

In articles elsewhere in this annual report, you’ll find *Of Note* sections that report on other Division performance measures from 2008. As always, we welcome your feedback on how we measure our progress and report on the value of our work to the people we serve, and to the land and water resources we strive to protect and improve.

The Yahara River's chain of five beautiful lakes defines our region and is integral to everything we are and do. The quality of these lakes deteriorated significantly over time as our population and use increased. Many public and private organizations have dedicated time and resources over decades and have solved many Yahara Lakes problems, yet new challenges have emerged.

We are at a critical moment in the health of the lakes, and in 2008 we took advantage of an unprecedented opportunity to bring together key stakeholders from all sectors. Led by the Office of Lakes and Watersheds, with key contributions from Administration and Land Conservation Divisions, our Department coordinated Dane County's responsibilities within the Yahara Lakes Legacy Partnership (YLLP). YLLP was formed under the invitation of the Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission early in the year to support near-term goals for reducing sediments, nutrients, and beach bacteria as defined by the Yahara CLEAN (Capital Lakes Environmental Assessment and Needs) Memorandum of Understanding between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Dane County, and the City of Madison. Gathering Waters Conservancy and Clean Wisconsin are the other partners. In 2008, YLLP made significant progress toward developing a long-term community-wide visionary plan for protecting and improving the quality of the Yahara chain of lakes by:

- holding over 70 public engagement and technical meetings involving more than 50 organizations and 375 people

- drafting a community vision for the lakes
- working with the UW's Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies to hold the successful October conference, "A Clean Future for the Yahara Lakes: Solutions for Tomorrow, Starting Today," and
- engaging experts from local government, the University of



Wisconsin, state agencies and consultants in planning watershed-wide and practice-specific modeling, developing runoff loading limits, and developing in-lake phosphorus concentration targets.

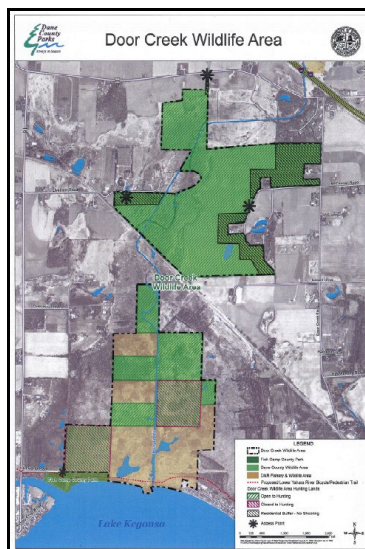
We are fortunate that the County Executive and County Board have allocated significant funds to support development of the plan and implementation of practices.

In 2009, our focus will be in developing a detailed plan and implementation steps that spell out how and when each action will be taken, who is responsible, how it can be funded, and what results can be expected.

Our 2008 status report and other background information is available at [www.danewaters.com/YaharaLakesLegacyPartnership.aspx](http://www.danewaters.com/YaharaLakesLegacyPartnership.aspx)

## Park Commission Designates Second Wildlife Area

The Park Commission continues to expand recreational opportunities within natural resource areas. In October 2008, the Park Commission designated 520 acres of county land within the Door Creek Natural Resource Area as a County Wildlife Area north of Lake Kegonsa. The county lands are adjacent to a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Wildlife and Fishery Area. The county designation allows for similar public use and management for the entire 680 acres of public land within the natural resource area, including public hunting.



The northern area is uplands with wetlands adjacent to Door Creek. The southern area is mostly wetlands buffering Door Creek leading to Lake Kegonsa. The long-term management goals include improved water quality to Lake Kegonsa and improved fish and wildlife habitat. The site will be open for public use starting in the fall of 2009. For additional information on the Door Creek Wildlife Area, visit the County Parks website at

[www.countyofdane.com/lwrp/parks/plandev.asp](http://www.countyofdane.com/lwrp/parks/plandev.asp)

## Managing and Preventing Invasives



The worldwide movement of non-native organisms upsets ecological balance, endangers native species, and has negative economic impacts. The lack of the natural controls on growth and reproduction that would be found where the invader is native means that these species can thrive at the expense of native species.

The Parks Division, with assistance from the Administration Division, is drafting a plan to mitigate the harmful effects of the **emerald ash borer (EAB)**, a small invasive beetle that attacks and kills ash trees. With proactive preparation as its guiding philosophy, *The Dane County Emerald Ash Borer and Wood Utilization Strategic Management Plan* will work to lessen the environmental impacts of the EAB within Dane County, reduce the potential economic and social costs associated with emerald ash borer control efforts and damage, and find ways to put wood formerly considered “waste” to

positive and profitable use. Since an increased volume of waste wood will be among the EAB’s most significant consequences, the plan also outlines various options for dealing with waste wood—from infestations as well as potential storm events—in an economically and environmentally sound manner. Research and plan development are now nearing completion and we expect to open the plan for public review in the near future.

**Aquatic invasive species (AIS)** have long been recognized as a serious problem in Wisconsin and Dane County. The Office of Lakes and Watersheds, with assistance from the Administration Division, is writing a plan for the county’s proactive response to problems associated with AIS. The focus is on limiting AIS impacts by controlling their initial introduction (for species not yet here, such as hydrilla, Asian carp, Quagga mussels) and preventing transfer of AIS already here (such as Eurasian water milfoil, rusty crayfish, and common carp) from water body to water body. Early in 2009, look for opportunities to comment on the draft plan. The Office of Lakes and Watersheds expects the plan to be complete in June.

## Community Manure Digester—Phase 2

There has been significant progress to report from 2008 regarding Phase II of the community manure handling facility. The Waunakee cluster of five farms (6,100 animal units), one of two initial clusters proposed based on farmer needs and interest surveys, was selected for an in-depth feasibility study. Anaerobic digestion with solids separation was chosen as the best technology solution to meet the goals of continued agricultural sustainability, water quality protection, and economic feasibility. In this type of system, manure is heated enough to allow bacteria to break down the manure into two main byproducts: digestate (the liquid and solid portion of the remaining manure) and biogas (which can be burned in a generator to produce electricity). The digestate is run through a solids separator and the liquids sent to a lagoon for land application. Solids are stored onsite for bedding, sale as compost, or land application consistent with a nutrient management plan.



- improved manure management for farmers
- local jobs for construction and operation of the digester
- locally-produced green energy, generating more than 1 megawatt of electricity to power over 1000 homes in Dane County annually
- air quality improvement resulting from eliminating manure storage in lagoons: a

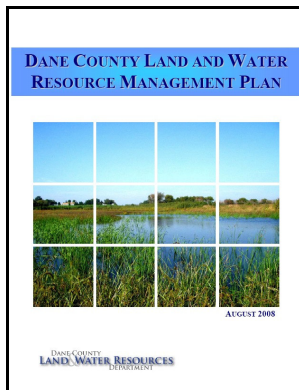
reduction of 19,800 metric tons/year of equivalent carbon dioxide (equivalent to CO2 emissions from driving 50 million miles/year at an average fuel economy of 25 miles/gallon)

The consultant for Dane County, Strand, is now working to develop a detailed business plan for the digester to include ownership and operation details, potential sites for digester location, and possible uses for digestion byproducts. Dane County’s would be the first community digester in Wisconsin. There are 21 digesters in Wisconsin, the most of any state, but all existing digesters are associated with single large dairies. The County Executive has appropriated funds to encourage construction to begin in 2009.

Benefits include:

- the potential for substantial phosphorus removal from the Lake Mendota watershed (1 pound of phosphorus can generate 500 pounds of wet algae), thus improving water quality

## Land & Water Resource Management Plan Approved



The LWRD staff presented the Land & Water Resource Management (LWRM) Plan to the State Land and Water Resources Board for approval in August and the Dane County Board in December. Required by State statutes, the plan addresses a comprehensive list of conservation issues at the local level. The planning process uses a diverse set of

stakeholders to identify concerns while developing a management strategy for addressing them. The group consisted of representatives from local, state, and federal resource agencies in addition to local farmers,

landowners, municipalities, watershed organizations, and the Dane County Board. The result is a workplan for which staff from the LWRD use as a template through the year 2013. The workplan is adjusted on an annual basis to reflect changes in available funding opportunities and conservation priorities.

Significant changes to the current plan resulted from the LWRD merger in 2005. This plan encompasses the many strengths of the Department's five divisions. Water quality, agricultural land conservation, and educating our citizens all remain fundamental priorities in the plan.

To view the plan, please visit the Dane County Land and Water Resource Department's website: [www.countyofdane.com/landconservation/papers/lwrm08/LWRM\\_Plan\\_2008\\_with\\_Maps.pdf](http://www.countyofdane.com/landconservation/papers/lwrm08/LWRM_Plan_2008_with_Maps.pdf)

## Land and Water Legacy Fund

The Land & Water Legacy Fund continued to make an impact in 2008. Established in 2007, this fund seeks to enhance and protect our water resources and the lands that influence them.

### *Streambank Easements*

The purchase of easements for public access along restored streambanks continues to be a popular program. Special thanks to Trout Unlimited, Badger Fly Fishers and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for contributing towards these purchases. A total of six easements were purchased, providing about four miles of access along the West Branch and Primrose Branch of the Sugar River, Gorden Creek and German Valley Branch.

### *Capital Equipment Grant Program*

The Dane County Environmental Council continues to manage this program, and awarded \$25,000 in grants to the Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation, the Aldo Leopold Nature Center, the Prairie Enthusiasts, the Friends of the Brooklyn State Wildlife Area, Capitol Water Trails, Middleton High School Environmental Studies Classes, Environmentally Concerned Oregon Students, the Friends of Troy Gardens and the Town of Berry.

### *Land Acquisition*

Two hundred ten acres were purchased in the Towns of Springfield and Dane. This property was historically wet but the natural drainage patterns have been manipulated. Dane County will restore the property to a functioning wetland, absorbing and cleaning water that had previously drained downstream.

### *Streambank Protection*

Protecting stream corridors in southwest parts of the county was the focus in 2008. Technical and financial resources were used to improve and protect fish and wildlife habitat and stabilize eroding streambanks. Eight landowners completed 22,725 feet of stream protection and habitat improvement with a total of 4.3 miles of public fishing easements.

### *Urban Water Quality Grants (UWQG)*

The goals of the UWQG program include improving the quality of urban stormwater runoff entering Dane County waters and increasing public awareness of urban water quality issues and urban stormwater improvement practices. These goals are achieved through the construction of efficient, cost-effective best management practices in developed urban areas. The county offers cost sharing up to 50% percent to municipalities for construction. Since 2005, 18 practices have been cost shared and constructed in seven municipalities. An additional \$100,000 has been allocated for 2009, bringing the total available funds to \$250,000.

### *Pollution Control*

Dane County implemented Chapter 14, which is administered and enforced by LWRD, to address manure management and water quality issues. In 2008, Dane County allocated \$50,000 to fund the implementation of conservation practices directly related to livestock pollution control. Three landowners have approved cost-share agreements allocating \$46,100 to install practices for water quality improvement.

## New Parks Online Reservation and Permitting

Under a county initiative to improve online services, Parks teamed up with the county’s Information Management Division to bring two new services to our patrons through the county website: online camping and shelter reservations and online purchasing of Parks permits. The goals included improved information delivery, greater utilization of park facilities, and a reduction in paper usage and operation costs for handling and mailing.

In November of 2007, Parks started taking online facility reservations for the 2008 calendar year. Highlights of the new program include 24-hour access, flexibility to investigate personal criteria when making a campsite or shelter reservation, ability to check on facility availability, and cost breakdown of services.

Feedback on the online reservation program has been positive. After one year, there has been increased utilization of park facilities and reduced operational costs.

In November of 2008, Dane County rolled out the online sale of all park permits, with the exception of special events, which continue to be processed directly through the Parks office. Previously, permits sales were handled mainly through the mail. Now patrons are rewarded immediately with a temporary permit until they receive their actual vehicle sticker, dog tag or plastic permit in the mail. Parks staff are also available Monday through Friday, 7:45 AM through 4:30 PM, to assist patrons with making reservations or purchasing permits.



## Turville Bay Research - Year 1 of 5 Complete

In 2008, Lake Monona’s Turville Bay was the focus of the first of a five-year research project coordinated by the Office of Lakes and Watersheds in collaboration with Parks Division. The project, a cooperative effort of LWRD, DNR and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, evaluates two methods to control Eurasian water milfoil and restore native plant communities.

Eurasian water milfoil (an aquatic exotic plant) begins growing early in the year, and creates a dense canopy which shades out native plants. The research premise is that early spring herbicide use and deep harvesting would reduce Eurasian water milfoil before most native plants begin their growth.

Two five-acre plots were treated with 2,4-D herbicide in April. Two other five-acre plots were mechanically harvested. Two control plots received no treatment. All plots were monitored throughout the summer.

Although the 2008 results were confounded by high water throughout the season, researchers documented a

statistically significant decrease in Eurasian water milfoil frequency of occurrence in the chemically treated plots versus the mechanically harvested plots and the untreated controls.

Mechanical and chemical treatments will be repeated soon after ice-out in 2009 and 2010, along with plant and water quality monitoring and analysis. Monitoring will continue for two to three years after the treatments conclude in 2010.



*Marine Biochemists treat two Turville Bay research plots*

The Office of Lakes and Watersheds (OLW) is involved in many efforts within the Department and with many external partners.

In 2008, we welcomed two new LTEs, retired DNR experts, to assist us with project management for the Yahara Lakes Legacy Partnership (YLLP), (see page 4), and to prepare an Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention and Control Plan for Dane County (see page 5).

Twenty-three Plant Dane! Grant Program applications were received in 2008, representing 10 acres planted with native plant species. OLW manages this program for the Madison Area Municipal Storm Water Partnership (MAMSWaP).

OLW also updated the Aquatic Plant Management Plans for Lakes Monona and Waubesa, and is the Department's lead on the county's Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan update.

OLW policy work with the Lakes and Watershed Commission included leaf management, salt use reduction, and water body classification and management. OLW has been working with the Commission to propose actions that will improve individual and municipal leaf management, especially keeping leaves out of the streets. This is important because in the fall, phosphorus loads from residential streets could be reduced by about 25 percent by reducing the amount of leaf litter in the street. To date, OLW and MAMSWaP's role in implementing the Commission's salt use reduction recommendations has focused on presentations to area snowplow drivers about the water quality benefits of reduced road salt application. Efficient deicer application can also save money while maintaining winter roadway safety. OLW staff also continue to serve on the inter-departmental water body classification staff team, and in 2008 focused on revisions (following extensive public input) to the Phase II Shoreland and Riparian Management Plan (available at [www.danewaters.com/management/water\\_body\\_classification.aspx](http://www.danewaters.com/management/water_body_classification.aspx)).

Take a Stake in the Lakes Week became Take a Stake in the Lakes Days in 2008, recognizing that our event had spread to 16 days from the traditional nine. Mad-City Ski Team held its second annual Clean Lakes Festival to kick off the festivities, donating almost \$37,000 in proceeds to the Dane County Lakes and

Watershed Commission for aquatic plant management equipment. The Commission recognized Barbara Borns, Carolyn Betz and the Mad-City Ski Team as the 2008 Dane County Waters Champions.

The Better Lawns and Gutters Tour was again held in August, featuring rain gardens and native plantings in Middleton, with the day's headquarters at our new partner, the Bruce Company.



*OLW staff talked with area snow plow drivers at two Dane County Highway events about the benefit to our waters of reducing salt use on streets and roads*

#### *Of Note...*

- 570 Take a Stake in the Lakes Cleanup Event volunteers
- 41 Take a Stake in the Lakes Days events
- 289 storm drains stenciled/marked (80 during TAS Days)
- 19 tons of garbage and debris collected during TAS clean up events
- 52 groups borrowed water sampling and other equipment from the OLW-supported Water Resources Education Center during 2007-8
- >375 people engaged in YLLP (includes >70 active and 15 leading)
- >80 YLLP meetings involving >50 organizations



This has been another eventful year for the Land Conservation Division (LCD)! Here are a few highlights from 2008:

### *Lake Mendota Priority Lake Project*

Dane County received a one-year extension for 2009 to complete the installation of conservation practices within the Lake Mendota Priority Watershed. Landowners within the watershed have received over \$1.6 million in state and federal cost share funds to install conservation practices. As a result of the project, phosphorus reaching surface water from animal lots has been reduced by 8,328 pounds annually (74% of project goal).

### *Wisconsin Buffer Initiative Pilot Project*

The Pleasant Valley Watershed has been selected to be a pilot project for the Wisconsin Buffer Initiative. The goal is to work with the farmers who have the highest levels of phosphorus loss and apply additional conservation practices, manage manure application or change cropping patterns. A USGS monitoring station will collect data to see if there is a change in the phosphorus level in the stream as these practices are applied.



**Stone weeper and inlet protection  
in the Town of Burke**

### *Soil and Water Resource Management Grant Program*

The LCD signed 53 contracts in the Black Earth Creek Watershed using a \$100,000 grant from DATCP for the development and implementation of 3,576 acres of nutrient management plans. LCD hopes to receive another \$100,000 grant in 2009 to be used in the Lake Mendota and Gordon Creek Watershed.

### *Erosion Control and Stormwater Management*

The LCD administers the county's erosion control and stormwater management ordinance. Builders and developers are required to obtain permits and implement plans designed to reduce soil erosion and manage runoff from impervious surfaces. In 2008, staff completed 4,810 inspections on 460 active sites. Compliance throughout the construction process resulted in an estimated reduction of 9,960 tons of soil erosion. This reduction in erosion significantly reduced the amount of sediment and associated pollutants delivered to lakes, rivers and streams.

### *Of Note...*

- Landowners assisted 941
- Acreage under winter spreading plans 60,411
- Acreage of nutrient management plans developed 32,351
- Streambank protection & restoration 22,725 ft
- Erosion control & stormwater management
  - inspections 4,810
  - plan reviews 958
  - permits 460

Community	Permit Related Submittals Reviewed*	Construction Sites Permitted	Inspections Performed	Follow-up Contacts Initiated	Written Notices of Noncompliance Issued	Enforcement Actions Taken
#DeForest	15	8	257	17	0	0
#Middleton	107	40	1110	117	1	13
#Stoughton	29	13	251	129	9	1
#Sun Prairie	60	22	884	182	13	3
#Waunakee	18	12	368	47	1	0
<b>Contracted Communities (Listed Above) Subtotal</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>2870</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Dane County (Unincorporated Areas)</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>1940</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>958</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>4810</b>	<b>1299</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>38</b>

#Community under contract with Dane County for erosion control and/or stormwater management plan review and inspection services

\*Submittals include permit applications, application amendments, permit revisions, and as-built plans

The Land Acquisition Division continues to provide real estate support for most county departments, including the Land & Water Resources Department, and also helps incorporate newly acquired properties into the Dane County Parks System.

***Restoration of approximately 60 acres of wetlands***

This work was done in partnership with the US Fish & Wildlife Service with financial assistance from a North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grant. The restoration work included everything from closing ditches, breaking drainage tiles, and excavating siltation from basins to removing woody brush and other invasives from sedge meadows. Twenty-three open water ponds, varying in size from one half acre to 3 acres, were created.

***The North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grant***

This program helped fund the conversion of old fields, often covered with woody brush, to restored prairie. Prairie restoration often includes the return of the fields to crop production for two to three years, which reduces the weed seeds in the soil and helps prepare the ground for the prairie planting.

***Lease and relocation negotiations***

This was used for various projects.



***Restored wet prairie at McCarthy County Park***

***Of Note...***

**Lands protected in 2008—**

- purchased by Dane County 1,450 acres
- Conservation Fund Grant Program 332 acres
- permanent streambank fishing access 4 miles

***Demolition of old buildings on a recently acquired property in the Lower Mud Lake Natural Resource Area in the Town of Dunn***

This work included the burning of the farmhouse by the McFarland Fire Department. Whenever possible, fire departments are called to assist with demolition projects, which provides training opportunities for firefighters. Several more demolition projects are scheduled for 2009.

***The sale of surplus property for Dane County***

Six acres adjacent to Badger Prairie County Park and the Badger Prairie Health Care Center were sold in 2008. This land is immediately east of the new Farm & Fleet and has been annexed into the City of Verona. The Sun Prairie highway garage was sold to the City of Sun Prairie, which included the property in a TIF project that will help redevelop and revitalize downtown Sun Prairie. Marketing the four-acre county property in the City of Madison, known as Badger School, is on-going and may close in 2009.

***Closing occurred for two property donations that were pledged in 2007***

George Socha Sr. and Joyce Baehr donated their farm with a retained life estate along the Maunasha River. Bea Wencel donated a conservation easement on her farm adjacent to Stewart Lake County Park.

***Several streambank easements, restoration sites, and recreational properties were purchased***

Please see the articles on the Conservation Fund (page 2) and the Land & Water Legacy Fund (page 6) for more information on these exciting projects!

In 2008, Parks installed vehicle counters at eight parks to monitor user numbers. The eight parks represent 31% of the parks in the system. Samples include estimated counts and daily averages: Mendota Park, 31,318 patrons (293 daily average); Prairie Moraine Park Dog Exercise/Ice Age Trail, 64,414 patrons (602); Token Creek Park, 103,242 patrons (965); Vallarta-Ast Disc Golf Course, 20,983 patrons (196); Lake Farm Park, 136,616 patrons (1,277). The five county campgrounds had a total of 7,456 camping nights, down 3.54% from 2007.

**Lussier Family Heritage Center**

The Center’s utilization rate was 81% in 2008. A new digital screen was installed in the lobby area to provide park information and education.

**Adult Conservation Team – Volunteer Program**

Projects included research, maintenance, development, fund raising, prairie restoration and education. Many Dane County Parks have official Friends groups, who continue to make up the highest percentage of volunteers, with over 8,265 volunteer hours.

**Natural Areas Restoration Program**

The park naturalist, along with a contingency of dedicated volunteers, provided outdoor skill days for approximately 1,200 school children. The children learned about native habitats as they collected prairie seed. Over 300 adult volunteers participated in Fall Field Days, collecting over 99 different types of native prairie plant seeds, which is used for county restoration projects.

**Parks Lake Management Program**

Parks partnered with the City of Madison on the barge crew cleanup program. Program goals included the cleanup of public shorelines and regular pickup of lake-

generated debris within the City of Madison. Harvesting removed a total of 1,394 truckloads of aquatic vegetation. Information on the harvesting done for each water body is available at [www.countyofdane.com/lwrp/parks/](http://www.countyofdane.com/lwrp/parks/).

**Park Planning and Development**

In 2008, Park Planning and Development:

- partnered with Dane County Highway Department to relocate the Babcock Park boat launch overflow parking lot along US Hwy 51 in the Village of McFarland
- partnered with the Madison Community Foundation and the City of Verona to create a bicycle pedestrian underpass under East Verona Avenue at Badger Prairie County Park
- developed interpretive signs to be installed in 2009 for Fish Camp County Park with descriptions and photographs of the area when it operated as a fish camp from 1932 to 1969
- partnered with Dane County Public Works to complete lead remediation at the former shooting range in the Town of Verona, now called Scheidegger Forest in memory of a very generous donation from the Walter Scheidegger estate
- prepared the final stages of the master plan for Lake View Hill, which will increase identity and visibility of the park, highlight site history, expand vegetation restoration, improve connectivity to surrounding areas, improve stormwater management and erosion control implementation
- installed two new trail bridges over Fryes Feeder Creek at Donald Park to provide connection to a woodlot north of the park and add nearly three miles of equestrian, hiking, and cross-country ski trails
- completed nearly one mile of bicycle pedestrian trail at CamRock County Park with state stewardship funds earmarked to assist with trail development

**Of Note...**

• traffic counters in 8 parks from Memorial Day to Labor Day (2.5 people on average per vehicle)	503,032
• corridor trail counters (Capital City Trail at Lake Farm Park)	161,740
• volunteers—Adult Conservation Team	1,478
• volunteer hours	24,123
• Lussier Family Heritage Center events	348
• Lussier Family Heritage Center visitors	23,000
• camping reservations	805
• shelter reservations	518
• website hits	61,791
• trail passes sold (mountain bike, horse, ski, and State Trail)	1,075
• lake access permits sold	8,020
• dog permits sold	4,250
• disc golf permits sold	530
• park and community planning projects	16

## Administration Division

The Administration Division provides technical and administrative support to all divisions within the Land & Water Resources Department. Our goal is to offer diverse expertise and management skills aimed at sustaining Dane County's land and water resources.

In 2008, we supported projects across all divisions, including:

- managing grants and preparing the Single Audit
- preparing Department budget
- reorganizing the Administration Division
- consolidating Department payroll
- developing Stewart Lake restoration plan
- designing and preparing Department newsletter and annual report
- maintaining and updating Department website information
- processing and distributing press releases to media and public
- organizing and maintaining reservation calendars for Departmental facilities & equipment
- inputting Farm Reconstitution information into Conservation Planning System
- compiling baseline documents for streambank easements
- updating and printing brochures and other departmental materials
- assisting with the migration of Land Conservation Division from ArcView 3x to ArcGIS technology

### Of Note...

- reviewed and evaluated Parks online reservation and permitting system
- helped develop the Dane County Emerald Ash Borer & Wood Utilization Strategic Management Plan
- worked with Parks Division to complete a GPS inventory of county landscape trees

## Awards

- **Parks Operations Crew**  
Land & Water Resources Department—*Making a Difference Award*
- **Parks Division—Delma's Shelter at Donald County Park**  
Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association—*2008 Park Design Award of Excellence*
- **Sue Jones and Marcia Hartwig**  
Wisconsin Lakes Partnership—*2008 Wisconsin Lakes Stewardship Award*
- **Yahara Waterways Trail Guide Steering Committee Team (Sue Jones)**  
National Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals—*2008 Outstanding Team—Bronze Award*
- **Dane County (Kathleen Falk, Brett Hulsey, Sue Jones)**  
Yahara Lakes Association—*Award of Appreciation for Initiating the Yahara CLEAN Agreement*

## Staff Changes

### Retirements—

- Ken Clayton—*Parks, Park Specialist* • Bruce Pedrick—*Parks, Park Laborer (Forestry)*

## Contact Us

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