

# Dane County Land & Water Resources Annual Report



*Sunset Swim at Stricker's Pond—photo courtesy of Michael Knapstein*



*Canoeing on the new Sugar River Wildlife Area—page 8*



*Wood utilization workshop—page 3*



*Volunteers during Take a Stake in Our Waters—page 10*



*Cow Power Part 2! Groundbreaking at the Middleton digester*



*Aquatic plant harvester on Monona Bay —page 6  
photo courtesy of David Thompson*



*An Evening at the Lake—  
photo courtesy of Eloisa Callender*

# 2013

# Greetings from County Executive Joe Parisi

Dane County is celebrating the many exciting accomplishments in 2013 that helped make the county's lakes healthier and our natural resources more accessible for families and visitors.

2013 marked the completion of the county's second Cow Power community manure digester in the Town of Springfield. The new facility has the ability to safely store millions of gallons of manure and generate electricity to power approximately 2,500 homes.

The county also reached an agreement with the Bruce Company to acquire and preserve 466 acres of prime riverfront along the Sugar River in SW Dane County. This new area holds great promise as a regional camping, hiking, fishing, and canoe destination.

We also announced a new public/private partnership with the Madison Community Foundation to create a private endowment for our parks. "The Friends of Dane County Parks Endowment" will create more fun activities for families who visit our parks.

As great as 2013 was, 2014 will be even better. My 2014 county budget included the largest investment in lakes and lands in Dane County's history.

In 2014 we fund exciting new technology to be applied to our second Cow Power digester that will eliminate 100% of the phosphorus in the manure the facility processes. Also included is an unprecedented \$1.3 million investment in new trails, including \$600,000 for the next steps to develop the much anticipated Lower Yahara Trail between Stoughton and Madison. Your Dane County parks will be better than ever with new shelters and trails, and additional resources for park upkeep.

My budget also created the "Dane County Youth Conservation Corps," a life-skill development partnership with Operation Fresh Start, that will put young people to work keeping county parks and their amenities clean, accessible, and family friendly.

Our lakes and lands are amazing assets – and so are the incredible community support and input we receive from our partner organizations, volunteers, and the public. Thank you for all that you do to support our mission.

## A Note from the Director

I'm pleased to present the eighth Land & Water Resources Department (LWRD) annual report. There's a sense of deep satisfaction to be able to look back on the previous year and tangibly see the objectives we have attained. Each and every LWRD employee has a story to tell of how their particular accomplishments have benefitted the natural resources of Dane County, and consequently its citizens. Their stories would fill volumes. Unfortunately, that's not possible in an Annual Report. Here are just a few of the highlights:

- *Aquatic plant management/invasive species program advances*
- *Strategic volunteer efforts*
- *A new focus on food systems on Dane County Park lands*
- *Continued success in improving water quality in our lakes and streams*
- *Over two million visitors to Dane County Parks in 2013*

Thank you to all LWRD employees for your professionalism and dedication. You continue to meet the challenges we face with skilled know-how, deep local knowledge, and creativity.

I also want to thank our many partners who offer up their time, expertise and support. We could not do the work we do without you!

To you, our readers, policy-makers, partners and customers, I hope you find this annual report not only informative, but also encouraging. In the end, we're all working together to bring about a better Dane County; for its land, its water, its wildlife, and its citizens.

As always, if you have any questions, comments and/or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [connors.kevin@countyofdane.com](mailto:connors.kevin@countyofdane.com).

*Kevin Connors, Director*

## Turville Bay Study Shows Positive Results

In 2013, Dane County, Wisconsin DNR, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed their Turville Bay (southwestern Lake Monona) research project. These partners held public meetings throughout the project, and shared results in a fact sheet and full report at the Office of Lakes and Watersheds website: [www.danewaters.com](http://www.danewaters.com). This 2008-2013 research evaluated the response of selective early-season herbicide application and mechanical harvesting of aquatic plants on Eurasian water milfoil (EWM, an invasive aquatic exotic plant) and on native plant communities.

EWM begins growing early in the year, and creates a dense growth canopy which shades out native plant species. Cooperating scientists and managers wondered if controlling

EWM early in the season would give an advantage to native plants. The research found that both herbicide and harvested early-season treatment resulted in significant decreases in EWM. Mechanical harvesting produced more variable results, but better protected native coontail plants. The herbicide treatment resulted in longer control of EWM than mechanical harvesting.



# Lakes and Watershed Commission Celebrates 25 Years with Creativity & Service

For 25 years, the Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission has protected and improved water quality, as well as the scenic, economic, recreational, and environmental value of Dane County's water resources.

Remarks from former County Executive Rick Phelps, the first Lakes and Watershed Commission Coordinator Lloyd Eagan, and current Office of Lakes and Watersheds staff, highlighted a **celebratory program held on October 10th**. That well-attended event provided an opportunity for current and former Commission members, staff, and the public to interact about how Commission accomplishments over the last 25 years have protected and improved water quality and the quality of life for Dane County residents. A handout and presentation about these accomplishments is available at [www.danewaters.com](http://www.danewaters.com).

Winning photographs and accompanying poetry from **"Beyond the Water's Edge,"** a creative investigation of Dane County lakes, rivers and wetlands, were exhibited during the months of November and December at the Goodman South Madison Branch of the Madison Public Library. Beyond the Water's Edge will be exhibited at several other venues throughout the

county in 2014. This contest, exhibition, and opening reception were developed by Dane County Lakes and Watersheds and its partners from the Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission, Center for Photography at Madison, and Verse Wisconsin.

Many of the photographers responded to **25 special water places in Dane County** compiled by the Office of Lakes and Watersheds here: <http://tinyurl.com/dc25special>.



## Emerald Ash Borer and New Zealand Mud Snails found in Dane County

There are two firsts you don't want: The discovery of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in the City of Madison, and the New Zealand mud snail in Black Earth Creek. Both happened in 2013.

LWRD has been proactively planning for EAB's likely arrival since 2008. Recent initiatives include under planting and removal of existing ash trees on various Dane County properties. As part of an Urban Forestry Grant through the WDNR, staff have prepared guidance on the establishment of wood utilization yards, where damaged or diseased trees could be temporarily stored for use as a commodity instead of chipping or burning. Staff conducted a workshop for Dane County municipalities in November which detailed regulatory requirements for utilization yards. Participants learned about the value and proper grading of urban timber and saw firsthand how logs are milled.

In 2013, approximately 1,080 specimens of the New Zealand mud snail, an aquatic invasive species, were documented for the first time from the Black Earth Creek, a popular trout stream in Dane County.

The snails were collected at South Valley Road, possibly the most popular stretch of the Black Earth Creek with anglers. The snails are extremely small (often just a few millimeters long), which makes them easy to transport on boats and wading equipment. Dane County aquatic invasive species (AIS) staff are currently working with our partners to determine the extent of the infestation and to draft monitoring plans for other county streams.

The Clean Boats Clean Waters AIS boat inspection program continued to grow in 2013. Staff inspected 2,900 watercraft and made contact with over 6,900 people.

By following these standard protocols, we can minimize the spread of aquatic invasives. These guidelines work for both boating and wading equipment.

**BEFORE** leaving the water:

**INSPECT** equipment and **REMOVE** sediments, plants and animals

**SCRUB** equipment with a stiff brush (including crevices)

**RINSE** equipment with tap water (keep wash tub, five-gallon bucket or spray bottle in car)

**DRAIN** all water from equipment

New Zealand Mud Snails

Photo courtesy of Paul Skawinski



## Dane County Dedicates Newly-Named Lewis Nine Springs E-Way



Joe Parisi, Bill Lunney, Phil Lewis, Andy Lewis and Bob Sorge

Dane County Executive Joe Parisi, Madison Community Foundation President Bob Sorge, and Park Commission Chair Bill Lunney welcomed a large crowd at the Lussier Family Heritage Center to commemorate the dedication of the Lewis Nine Springs E-Way in September of 2013. The Lewis name was added to the E-Way in recognition of Phil and Elizabeth “Libby” Lewis.

Through the teachings and advocacy of both Phil Lewis and his wife Libby Lewis, Dane County adopted the Nine Springs E-Way project area, which extends from Dunn’s Marsh at Seminole Highway east to Lake Waubesa and includes more than 1,300 acres under county ownership. The Nine Springs E-Way is the

world’s first “E-Way” and was recognized by the State of Wisconsin as a significant resource through the designation of the Capital Springs State Recreation Area, which contains a large part of the Lewis Nine Springs E-Way. The “E” represents educational, environmental, esthetic and ecological resources that are linked through a shared corridor. The Lewis Nine Springs E-Way is a resource that residents throughout Dane County identify with. A significant trail system traverses through the Nine Springs E-Way, bringing what may be considered the fifth “E” to the corridor: exercise.

In addition to the development of the E-Way, Phil and Libby founded the Friends of Dane County Parks Foundation and were tireless supporters of the Lussier Family Heritage Center. Libby served with great distinction on the Dane County Park Commission for 26 years and passed away in 2012. Phil is a Professor Emeritus with the University of Wisconsin and resides in Middleton. Phil and his family, including son Andy and daughter Lisa, attended the dedication event.



## PARC Grants—the Gift that Keeps On Giving!

The Partners for Recreation and Conservation (PARC) grant program continued to be popular and successful in 2013. Municipalities and non-profit organizations brought forward projects that offered multiple outdoor recreational and natural resource benefits. Matching grants totaling \$1 million in county funds were provided as follows:

**Village of DeForest** - \$225,000 to construct Phase 3 of a 3.35 mile bicycle/pedestrian trail along the Upper Yahara River.

**Aldo Leopold Nature Center** - \$25,240 to increase recreational opportunities and accessibility, and restore native habitats at the Aldo Leopold Nature Center in Monona.

**Village of Shorewood Hills** - \$114,965 to construct Phase I of a bicycle/pedestrian path.

**City of Monona** - \$150,000 for a major upgrade of the boat launch and riverwalk at Lottes Park.

**Village of Cambridge** - \$73,015 to develop Phase I of a proposed bicycle/pedestrian trail connection between Cam-Rock County Park and the Glacial Drumlin State Trail.

**Village of McFarland** - \$9,876 to construct a segment of the Lower Yahara River Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail in the Village’s Arnold Larson Park.

**City of Middleton** - \$13,337 for fishing enhancements on a pond at the City of Middleton’s Lakeview Park.

**City of Fitchburg** - \$37,179 to construct a boardwalk through the Apache Pond for a bicycle/pedestrian trail connection to the Cannonball Path.

**Town of Dunn** - \$15,225 for recreation and natural resource enhancements at Heritage Park on the shore of Lake Waubesa.

**City of Madison/Madison Skatepark Fund** - \$200,000 to develop a 20,000 sq.ft. plaza-style skatepark at Central Park.

**City of Middleton** - \$23,663 to install a stormwater wetland system and improve trails at the City’s Tiedeman Pond.

**Town of Pleasant Springs** - \$112,500 to upgrade the Town’s boat launch on the north shore of Lake Kegonsa across from Lake Kegonsa State Park.

## Where'd You Get That Tomato?

The ability to grow and harvest food is an excellent way to get people outdoors and connected with the land. As such, Dane County Parks is expanding agriculture, gardening and foraging on parkland.

Blackberries, black raspberries, blueberries, morel mushrooms, black walnuts, hickory nuts, and wild apples can all be found throughout the park system. Foraging for these edible plants is allowed on Dane County parkland, is a fun way for parents to introduce their children to the outdoors, and is an adventurous way for everyone to add local foods to their diet.

Dane County Parks is also connecting with area farmers and gardeners to establish community gardens, food pantry gardens, incubator farms, demonstration plots and more. The Dane County Executive's 2013 Budget included funds to develop a community garden at Badger Prairie County Park. A dedicated group of volunteers emerged to support the effort. A well was installed in 2013 along with a water distribution system. Site improvements to improve drainage were also made. The site should be up and running as both a community garden and food pantry garden in 2014.

Agricultural planning for Silverwood County Park also took place in 2013 and the Edgerton School District planted an

incredible school garden that was well-maintained by teachers and students throughout the growing season. The University of Wisconsin also established a biofuel demonstration plot at Silverwood and has begun offering field days to anyone interested in learning about biofuel crop production.

Agricultural planning for Silverwood County Park will continue in 2014 and will be incorporated in the master plan.

Other sites that have been identified for potential long-term agricultural use include Anderson Farm County Park, Yahara Heights County Park, Capital Springs Recreation Area and CamRock County Park.



*Students from the Edgerton School District tour Silverwood County Park*

## People Making a Difference

Volunteers, friends groups, and partners are valuable resources for the Dane County Parks System. These individuals and groups are vital to fulfilling the department's mission and goals. Each year they give generously of their time, expertise and resources to help Dane County Parks provide recreational opportunities for the Dane County community. In 2013, 3,429 volunteers dedicated approximately 46,015 hours of service. More than 18 friends groups, various organizations, and many local partners supported the efforts of our department.

In 2013, we had three new friends groups (Festge County Park, Anderson Farm County Park, Silverwood County Park) join the ranks as partners with Dane County Parks. Two of the friends groups, Anderson and Silverwood, have an agriculture component in their mission. This is a new endeavor to develop agriculture/gardening resources in our system.



The Friends of Festge volunteers, a small yet extremely hard-working group, have labored tirelessly on land management restoration efforts to reclaim large land areas that had been overrun by invasives. They have helped uncover mighty bur oaks and planted many native prairie plants, seeds, and a young crop of native trees. The group was instrumental in advocating for updates made at the scenic overlook and are fundraising for new playground equipment.

Friends of Anderson Farm County Park are a group of individuals in the Oregon community who are interested in the development and restoration of this newly acquired park. The group is organizing and educating themselves to move forward with land restoration projects in the spring of 2014. Although the county's plans for development are a few years out, the friends group is recruiting volunteer groups and individuals to start restoration of the Arthur Scholz Memorial Forest. They are working diligently on recruiting community involvement.

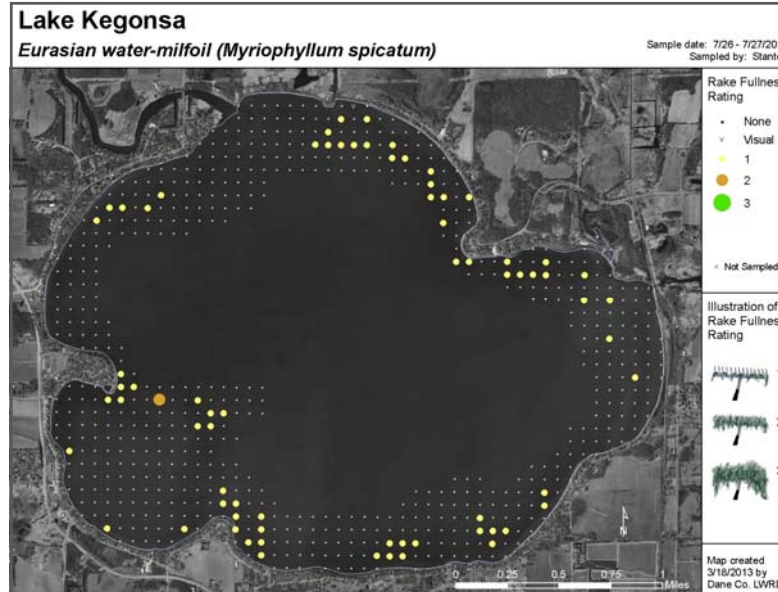
Silverwood County Park, in the Town of Albion, was donated to Dane County approximately ten years ago and Parks is now developing a master plan for the park. Many partners are involved with the friends group, from individuals to the Edgerton School System to the Dane County Food Council. Last year the community FFA program planted pumpkins and built benches. This year Operation Fresh Start has a contract to restore the various buildings on the farmstead site.

Exciting new programs are moving forward in our parks and many are due to the partnerships of individuals and friends groups who are "People Making a Difference."

# Eight Aquatic Plant Management Plan Updates Completed in 2013

The Dane County Office of Lakes and Watersheds, working with Parks, Lakes Management, Administration staff and external partners, completed eight updated aquatic plant management plans in 2013 for 16 water bodies where county staff use mechanical harvesters to provide navigational access and improve water flow. Aquatic plant management plans provide an inventory of existing plants in a lake or stream, and describe how native plants will be protected for their role as the foundation of healthy ecosystems, while controlling nuisance non-native species and providing recreational access. These plans are required by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) in order for them to permit aquatic plant harvesting programs under NR 109 Wis. Admin. Code.

In 2013, county staff held several public meetings where they presented information about 2011 and 2012 plant survey results, reviewed the goals and recommendations of current aquatic plant management plans and invited public comment on



ideas for changes to existing plan goals and objectives.

Office of Lakes and Watersheds staff then wrote the plan updates and posted them on the web for comment, and largely completed these extensive plan amendments. WDNR five-year harvesting permits have been reissued to Dane County based on this work. The updated plans and information about the harvesting program are available at <http://danewaters.com/management/>

[AquaticPlantManagement.aspx](http://danewaters.com/management/AquaticPlantManagement.aspx).

Lakes Management staff accomplishments in 2013 included launching a new 10-foot by 24-foot barge and constructing a new harvester (fabricated by skilled staff at our Robertson Road facility) to replace a 30-year old harvester; restoring the full fleet of 10 harvesters to optimal operational condition. Lakes Management staff also added a new haul truck for greater efficiency in transporting vegetation to compost sites.

## LWRD Goes Touring!

Dane County Parks and the City of Madison Parks hosted the 2014 Wisconsin Parks and Recreation Association's Summer Tour, July 17—19. Even though there was a "small" heat wave from July 16-19 (heat indices around the state reached above 100° F), it did not interfere with any of the planned activities.

More than 75 parks and recreation professionals from around the state participated in the three-day event. Tour highlights included several of the county's PARC grant projects, connections between municipalities through trail development, and the work of volunteers.

In October 2013, Land Conservation Division was host to the Southern Area Association of Land Conservation Committees. Land Conservation Committee representatives from the surrounding 10 counties visited the Tenney Park lock and dam, the Waunakee manure digester, and innovative stormwater management practices to infiltrate runoff from a large impervious area in the City of Middleton.

In May, the Land and Water Resources Department sponsored a tour for committees and commissions that provide oversight to the department. Members from the Environment, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Committee, the Park

Commission, the Land Conservation Committee, and the Lakes and Watershed Commission, viewed department projects at Festge Park, observed a WDNR fish shocking demonstration at a PARC grant project on Vermont Creek, inspected an accessible fishing pier at Stewart Lake County Park, and a shelter constructed from trees harvested on-site at Scheidegger County Forest.



# An Innovative Approach to Water Quality

The Yahara WINs Adaptive Management Pilot project completed its second year in 2013. The purpose of the pilot project is to test and evaluate the adaptive management concept. Adaptive management is an innovative regulatory approach designed to achieve compliance with phosphorus water quality criteria in an efficient and cost-effective manner. This new approach calls for agricultural producers, municipalities, and the Madison Metropolitan Sewage District (MMSD) to work together in order achieve water quality improvements in both the Yahara Lakes and Dane County streams.



Barnyard roof over animal feeding lot

The role of the Dane County Land Conservation Division (LCD) within the adaptive management pilot project is to define the procedures that will be used to inventory nonpoint sources of phosphorus in the pilot project area, determine baseline phosphorus loads, identify and place conservation practices on the land in priority areas, implement phosphorus reduction practices, and verify the effectiveness and phosphorus reductions of those practices.

In 2013, LCD implemented its work plan and began collecting inventory information on nonpoint sources of phosphorus within the Six Mile Creek Watershed (pilot area). This inventory information was and will continue to be evaluated to determine potential phosphorus reductions as well as the strategic placement of conservation practices. Staff also assisted land owners and producers in implementing

conservation practices that reduce the amount of phosphorus reaching nearby surface waters. Lastly, in 2013, staff worked diligently on verifying implemented conservation practices and corresponding phosphorus reductions.

All totaled, 48 land owner/producers (100%) were contacted and invited to an informational meeting held in Waunakee. Of those invited, 28 attended (58%). As of December 31, 2013, inventory information has been collected on 7,625 acres which is approximately 70% of the rural land

base within the pilot area. Phosphorus reducing conservation practices that have been implemented by land owners/producers within the pilot area this past year include: nutrient management plans, barnyard roofs, wetland restorations, and feedlot relocations. Over 1,200 pounds of phosphorus per year was prevented from reaching nearby surface waters when combining all of the conservation practices implemented in the pilot area in 2013.

Staff anticipates 2014 to be a busy year within the pilot area. Goals include: completing inventories on the remaining 3,375 acres (30%) of rural land, implementing conservation practices that will result in the reduction of 3,500 pounds of phosphorus per year, assist MMSD with developing a finalized cost model that can be used in a full-scale adaptive management plan, and continue to verify conservation practice implementation and corresponding phosphorus reductions.

## Parks Outdoor Skills Program for Youth Completes Its First Year

Expanding *outdoor skills and a land ethic in our youth* is a goal of the 2012-2017 Park and Open Space Plan. The Parks Division, in partnership with the UW—Madison Office of Learning and Community Based Research, the Nelson Institute's Community Environmental Scholars Program, and the Friends of Capital Springs Recreation Area, developed a trial outdoor youth program for the summer of 2013 called the Mother Earth Explorers Club. The summer camp program was designed to build outdoor skills geared towards fifth to 9th graders in the Title VII Indian Education program, and other interested middle school children in the Madison area. Twenty-two youth participated in the Club. Activities included camping, fishing, archery, orienteering, cooking, storytelling, and environmental awareness issues.



Foraging for apples

Photo courtesy of Bobbi Skenandore



Parks staff member (at right) talks about native plants at Anderson Farm County Park

Dane County is committed to partnerships that protect land and water resources and provide recreational resources for its residents. Our 2013 accomplishments include:

- **Anderson Farm County Park:** Purchased approximately 135 acres that will be added to the existing park, bringing the total park acreage to approximately 262 acres.
- **Blue Mounds Natural Resource Area:** Awarded a grant to the Prairie Enthusiasts to protect 29 acres in the Town of Vermont within the Blue Mounds Natural Resource Area. The property abuts significant acreage already protected by Dane County and the Prairie Enthusiasts. The site consists of a native oak savanna/woodland ecosystem and features rugged topography and sandstone outcroppings. There are 10 or more rare and declining species found on the property.
- **CamRock County Park:** Purchased a conservation easement from the Village of Cambridge on a property that is adjacent to CamRock County Park. The property will be maintained by the Village and utilized as public parkland.
- **CamRock County Park:** Purchased a small residential lot in the Village of Cambridge. The lot is on the far north end of the park and expands the trailhead.
- **Capital Springs Recreation Area:** Purchased a small residential lot that strengthens the connection between Lake Farm County Park and Capital Springs State Recreation Area. The lot is already part of a planned trail that will run between the Lake Farm campground, the dog exercise area, and the disc golf course.
- **Capital Springs Recreation Area:** Purchased approximately five acres that provide public access to Upper Mud Lake. This property created the first public access site to the lake and has already proven to be incredibly popular for the ice fishing season.
- **Dorn Creek Wildlife Area:** Purchased 40 acres that will be added to the Dorn Creek Wildlife Area. The property includes a stretch of Dorn Creek and is adjacent to other Dane County and DNR lands.
- **North Mendota Watershed:** Purchased almost 80 acres of beautifully restored prairie. The site discharges directly into Lake Mendota and is a demonstration site for best management practices that target erosion and other problems that historically occurred at the site.
- **Streambank Easements:** Purchased two streambank easements to protect and secure public fishing access along one mile of cold water trout streams (Syftestad Creek and Kittleson Valley Creek). Since 2007, the county has purchased 29 streambank easements covering 18 miles of trout streams.
- **Sugar River Wildlife Area:** Awarded a grant to the Natural Heritage Land Trust and the City of Belleville to protect 37 acres within the Sugar River Natural Resource Area. The property is adjacent to the Village of Belleville's Community Park and includes frontage along the Sugar River and Lake Belle View.
- **Sugar River Wildlife Area:** Purchased over 300 acres and placed a conservation easement on an additional 92 acres along the Sugar River. The purchase protected nearly 2.5 miles of the River and the property will prove to be an incredible recreational destination for everything from canoeing, to hiking to hunting. The Natural Heritage Land Trust assisted the county with the purchase by securing state grant funding to offset the acquisition cost.

## FRIENDS OF DANE COUNTY PARKS ENDOWMENT FUND

In September 2013, Dane County Executive Joe Parisi announced the establishment of "The Friends of Dane County Parks Endowment" to help strengthen and enhance the Dane County Parks System for generations to come. The new fund, managed by the Madison Community Foundation, will support education programming, interpretation and volunteer opportunities in the county parks system. Visit the endowment page at [www.countyofdane.com/lwrd/parks/](http://www.countyofdane.com/lwrd/parks/) to learn more.



## Urban

The Land Conservation Division (LCD) administers the county Erosion Control (EC) and Stormwater Management (SM) ordinance. Staff provided four professional training opportunities to county officials, developers and the construction industry. In addition, the division gained a new Stormwater Engineer, who will be responsible for watershed, river, and lake modeling for quality and quantity, stormwater facility maintenance, permit review, and stormwater design.

2013 marked the ninth year of the Urban Water Quality Grant (UWQG) Program. The goals of the program are to improve the quality of urban stormwater runoff entering Dane County lakes, rivers and streams, increase public awareness of urban water quality issues, and provide public education for urban

stormwater quality improvement practices. This program provides incentives to municipalities to install best management practices that will provide efficient, cost-effective treatment of urban runoff. Financial assistance is available in the form of cost sharing up to 50 percent of the total project cost, not to exceed \$100,000. In 2013, the county awarded seven UWQG projects: \$1,403,768 in cost-shared dollars, which will result in the removal of 70,557 pounds of sediment and 1,231 pounds of phosphorus, once constructed.

In 2013, LCD Urban Staff reviewed 952 permit applications and conducted 2,086 inspections on 605 active sites. See table below for additional statistics.

Sites	Submittals Reviewed	Active Sites	Inspections Performed	Contacts Initiated	Noncompliance Notices Issued	Stop Work Orders Issued	Citations Issued
County Administration	775	518	1,016	585	8	11	2
Local Administration with Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreements <sup>1</sup>	177	87	1,070	192	1	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>2,086</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>

1. Municipalities with intergovernmental cooperative agreements with Dane County to provide plan review and site inspection services include: the villages of Cambridge, Deerfield, DeForest and Waunakee and the cities of Middleton, Stoughton, and Sun Prairie.



Example of bioretention device near apartment building

Fifteen landowners and operators attended educational workshops on the development of nutrient management plans for their farming operations.

### Pleasant Valley

Farmers in the Pleasant Valley Watershed continue to implement nutrient management plans and no-till planting practices reducing sediment and nutrients to surface water as part of the Wisconsin Buffer Initiative. Conservation practices installed include barnyard runoff systems and stream bank protection projects. Stream data collected by US Geological Survey is being analyzed to identify nutrient reductions accomplished as part of the pilot project.

## Agriculture

### Conservation Compliance

Land Conservation staff met with 970 landowners and operators in 2013 to review their conservation plans for compliance with current state and federal environmental standards. Staff assisted these landowners with various county, state, and federal cost share programs to improve the environment by implementing best management practices as part of their farming operation. In 2013, conservation plans were updated on 31,864 acres of farmland.

### Nutrient Management

Educational efforts in 2013 have assisted farmers to complete 90,755 acres of nutrient management plans covering about 25 percent of the cropland in Dane County. Nutrient management planning is the application of manure and fertilizer to meet crop needs while minimizing nutrient losses to the environment.

Landowners assisted	970
Acreage under winter spreading plans	69,197 acres (111 permits)
Acreage under a nutrient management plan	90,624
Streambank protections & restoration	1,358 feet
<b>NRCS Programs</b>	
• CRP	1,297 acres
• EQIP	55 contracts for \$444,148
• CREP	95.5 acres (2.6 miles) of streams buffered

# Office of Lakes and Watersheds

Several significant Office of Lakes and Watersheds (OLW) accomplishments for 2013 are featured elsewhere in this annual report: the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lakes & Watershed Commission (*page 3*), Turville Bay research (*page 2*), aquatic plant management (*page 6*) and aquatic invasive species (*page 3*).

Back by popular demand from local groups, OLW reconvened meetings, called Watershed Network Gatherings, with and for local, water-focused non-profit groups. For over a decade, OLW staff have coordinated opportunities between and among volunteers working to improve and protect Dane County's lakes and streams. In 2013, staff convened three gatherings focused on networking, partnering, and volunteer monitoring; all well-attended by groups from watersheds across the county.

Take a Stake—now in its 26<sup>th</sup> year—grew bigger and better than ever in 2013, expanding from a few weeks in June to promotion of activities every month throughout the year. The name change from “Take a Stake in the Lakes” to “Take a Stake in Our Waters” emphasizes that projects take place throughout the county on all water bodies. Thousands of volunteers continue to donate their time to help improve and protect Dane County's waters. Partnering with Parks' Volunteer Coordinator, OLW again engaged Lands' End volunteers to remove an enormous amount of invasives from Lake Farm County Park, opening up a wonderful view to Lake Waubesa. Events are listed at the new [www.takeastake.org](http://www.takeastake.org) year round.

OLW's water recreation study of Dane County lakes and streams wrapped up with a final mailed survey of boaters and anglers. Results are expected to provide economic data from the opportunities that Dane County lakes and streams provide, and will help guide department management decisions.

Other OLW support to the Lakes and Watershed Commission (LWC) that is not addressed on other pages of this report include development of recommendations to minimize negative environmental and public health effects with the move of the annual Rhythm and Booms fireworks display from Warner Park to Lake Monona, and developing OLW and LWC priority actions for reducing chlorides in county lakes, streams and wetlands.

A half-time storm water education coordinator (SWEC) working within OLW, coordinates outreach activities for the Madison Area Municipal Storm Water Partnership (MAMSWaP), a consortium of 21 central Dane County municipalities. In addition to managing ongoing programs (e.g., Plant Dane! Cost-Share Program, Retain the Rain Workshop, Love Your Lakes, Don't Leaf Them and Love Your Lakes, Don't Salt Them), the SWEC coordinated updates to MAMSWaP's five-year inter-governmental agreement, implemented a community-wide survey of storm water behavior and knowledge, and developed multiple-year work plans. Further information is at [www.myfairlakes.com](http://www.myfairlakes.com).

With only 1.6 staff (a full-time watershed management coordinator, a half-time public information officer and a limited-term employee), OLW owes much of its success to enthusiastic collaborations within LWRD and with external

agencies, municipalities, friends groups, watershed associations and other nonprofits. Much more information is available at [www.danewaters.com](http://www.danewaters.com) and [www.yaharaportal.com](http://www.yaharaportal.com).



2012	2013	Office of Lakes & Watersheds Accomplishments
8	6	Grant-funded projects & contracts managed
13,062	19,786	Visits to <a href="http://www.danewaters.com">www.danewaters.com</a>
306	363	DaneWaters fans on Facebook
343	534	DaneWaters followers on Twitter
1,152	1,563	Take a Stake in the Lakes (TAS) clean-up volunteers
42	192	TAS Days events
12	14	Tons of trash collected from piers during TAS
26	21	Groups borrowing equipment from OLW-supported Water Education Resource Center
55	378	Storm drains stenciled/marked
39	38	Legally noticed LWC meetings staffed
4,690	6,920	Boater contacts by Clean Boats Clean Water staff in Dane County
	20,000	Acres of water covered by updated aquatic plant management plans
	130	Entries in the Beyond the Water's Edge photography contest
	27	Winning photos exhibited in November & December (and 20 accompanying poems)

2012	2013	Madison Area Municipal Storm Water Partnership Accomplishments
12,096	10,226	Visits to <a href="http://www.myfairlakes.com">www.myfairlakes.com</a>
74	91	Fans on Facebook
35	32	Retain the Rain workshop attendees
132	77	PlantDane! cost-share participants
7,260	5,772	PlantDane! cost-share plants sold

Dane County is one of the fastest growing counties within the State of Wisconsin. Correspondingly, the county parks system has more than doubled in size in the last 18 years, from approximately 5,200 acres in 1995 to more than 12,000 acres in 2013. The parks system has expanded to meet the growing recreational demands while still working to preserve and restore the most significant and important natural resource areas within the county. A few of the 2013 accomplishments include:

## Restoration Projects

- Walking Iron Wildlife Area—Completion of a three-year, 300-acre wetland/prairie restoration project. Partners included US Fish and Wildlife Service, Pheasants Forever and Dane County Conservation League.
- Door Creek Wildlife Area—Completed a 15-acre wetland restoration project – partnering with US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Various Volunteers Restoration Projects—Over 20 projects comprising more than 50 acres restored.

## Development Projects

- Sweet and Rice Lake Walk-in Lake Access Site—Helped the Town of Albion remove three building and restored site to provide a new public access.
- Brigham—Cave of the Mounds—Military Ridge Connection Trail—Cleared trees to create trail corridor; trees to be used to construct green-built shelters at Brigham and Stewart County Parks.
- Waunakee (North Mendota) Wetland Delineation Trail—Constructed 1,900 foot multi-use crushed limestone trail adjacent to the village.
- Capital Springs 18-Hole Disc Golf Course
- Gillman Mound Trail Access—Capital City Trail (Frederick Memorial Donation)—Capital Springs Recreation Area
- Sugar River Parking Lot—New walk-in access parking lot near the community of Paoli.
- Four New Accessible Fishing Stations on Black Earth Creek—Operation Fresh Start teamed up with Dane County Parks to construct. Funding provided by Madison Community Foundation, Trout Unlimited, Madison Fishing Expo and the Dane County PARC Grant Program.
- Lakes Management constructed a new harvester—Replacing 30+ year-old harvester.
- New Lakes Management maintenance barge—Launched in the spring.

## Volunteer Activities

- Three New Friends Groups—Anderson Farm Park (Town of Oregon), Festge Park (Town of Cross Plains) and Silverwood Park (Town of Albion) have incorporated as 501(3)(c) Non-Profit Groups.



## Lussier Family Heritage Center

- Installed new windows to provide viewing of the large wetland within the Lewis Nine Springs E-Way.

## Education

- Dane County Parks sponsored an Outdoor Skills Camp at Lake Farm Park (three sessions, 22 total participants) with assistance from the Nelson Institute/UW Office of Service Learning & Community Based Research.
- Emerald Ash Borer Planning - Wood Utilization and Demonstration Workshop.

## Events

- Lewis Nine Springs E-Way dedication honoring the work of Professor Phil Lewis and former long-term Parks Commission member Libby Lewis.
- Friends of Dane County Parks Endowment – partnered with Madison Community Foundation.
- Wisconsin Parks and Recreation Summer Tour - Dane County/ City of Madison Parks.

## Retirements

- Retirement – Mike Ratkowski, Park Ranger, 13 years of service with Dane County Parks.

Park users	2,009,000
Trail users	72,000
Volunteers	3,429
Volunteer hours	46,015
Visitors to the Lussier Family Heritage Center	21,460
Visits to Parks website	150,500
Visits to reservedane.com	39,500
Special events held in Parks	111
Number of boats locked through Tenney Lock	4,105

# Administration Division

The Administration Division is committed to providing efficient, knowledgeable and courteous service to the department and the community.

Projects in 2013 included:

- Mapping for manure digester and Farm Tech Days
- New website redesign
- Design of Park Endowment Fund promotional materials
- Aquatic and terrestrial invasive species management
- Annual audit for state and federal grants
- 2014 departmental budget
- ArcGIS 10.2 migration
- Parks online reservation/permit system updates
- Annual report coordination and publication



Grant projects managed	38
Park permits issued	13,433
Number of camping reservations	1,552
Number of Special Events coordinated	123

## Welcome and Farewell

**Welcome:**  
 Dawn Gray—Ranger, Parks Division  
 Dave Horne—Maintenance Technician, Parks Division  
 John Reimer—Stormwater Engineer, Land Conservation Division  
 Jan Zimmermann—Real Estate Coordinator, Real Estate Division

**Farewell:**  
 Gaylord Plummer—Real Estate Coordinator, Real Estate Division (Retired)  
 Mike Ratkowski—Ranger, Parks Division (Retired)

## Contact Us

### *Dane County Land & Water Resources Department*

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### *Dane County Land & Water Resources Department Mission Statement*

Dane County citizens value the quality of the county’s natural, historic, and cultural resources, recognize the connection between these resources and their own quality of life, and expect these resources to be improved and sustained for present and future generations.

The Dane County Land & Water Resources Department exists to ensure the protection and enhancement of Dane County’s natural, cultural, and historic resources; to provide the county’s citizens with a broad array of accessible, high quality resource-based recreational services and facilities; and to support citizens, communities, local governments and other agencies and organizations in their resource management and protection activities.

The Department pursues its mission, alone and in collaboration with other agencies and organizations, through a mix of strategies that includes and combines resource management, program delivery, education and outreach, policy development, oversight, data management, technical assistance, responsiveness, and excellent customer service.