



Land & Water Resources Department

2019 Annual Report



Photo credits: Kelsey Offerman (Capital Springs Dog Park); Kalscheur family (fishing); Joshua Hastings (playground)

Greetings from the County Executive

Dane County's scenic parks, winding trails, and tranquil lakes are some of the best natural resources in the country. With more than two dozen recreational parks and over 100 miles of trails, the Dane County Department of Land & Water Resources works hard to protect and enhance our outdoor spaces for future generations.

2019 was a busy year for the Land & Water Resources Department. We continued to clean up area streams through our award-winning "Suck the Muck" initiative, and finished another phase of the Capital City Trail restoration project. We also launched new efforts, including the incredibly popular Continuous Cover Program to help small family farms preserve the character of their land, make their fields less vulnerable to flooding, and promote the growth of new prairies for pollinators.

Our natural resources enhance Dane County residents' quality of life, and we're committed to ensuring these outdoor treasures can be enjoyed for future generations. I want to thank the Dane County Department of Land & Water Resources staff for their efforts to protect and maintain our lakes and lands. I look forward to another successful year in 2020.

Joe Parisi

County Executive



Greetings from the Land & Water Resources Department Director

When the Department was created in 2005, there were a lot of good ideas and reasoning behind the merger of lakes and watersheds, land conservation, parks, and real estate. Those ideas have grown and matured over time and today the Department is a powerhouse that is ready to help protect and manage our natural resources in a new climate, both literal and figurative.

One big change in 2019 was the retirement of esteemed Park Commission Chair, Bill Lunney. Bill and his wife, Judie Pfeifer, have spent several decades working together to promote and protect parks. Each is accomplished in their own right and together they are an inspiring team that has been a friend and champion of Dane County Parks and the Department. New interpretive panels at the William G. Lunney Lake Farm County Park describe Bill and Judie's many contributions.

We continue to implement cornerstone initiatives and programs such as legacy sediment removal, prairie restoration on County-owned lands, landowner incentive programs, such as harvestable buffers and continuous cover, Yahara CLEAN, urban water quality grants, and management of Dane County Parks. We're also embarking on exciting new initiatives such as Yahara River sediment removal to improve water flow through the Yahara chain of lakes and expanded youth engagement to ensure that everyone in our community is connected to the outdoors. The full benefit of the merged department is very apparent as we plan and implement land restoration projects, such as the new 160-acre addition to Pheasant Branch Conservancy, where staff from every program area have come together to optimize and monitor the restoration work.

We are fortunate to have so many natural resources to protect, restore, and make available to the public for outdoor recreation. Please reach out to share your own ideas for how we can best serve our community.

Laura Hicklin

Director



The Dane County Land & Water Resources Department works to:

- Protect and enhance** Dane County’s natural, cultural, and historic resources (Pages 5-9)
- Provide** the county’s residents with a broad array of accessible, high quality resource-based recreational services and facilities (Pages 10-12)
- Support** residents, communities, local governments, and other agencies and organizations in their resource management and protection activities (Page 13)

The following programs help carry out the department’s mission:



Agricultural Planning and Technical Services



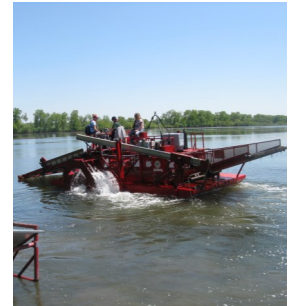
Watershed Coordination



Dane County Parks Planning and Management



Stormwater Management and Erosion Control



Lake Management

Thank you to all of the generous donors and event sponsors that have supported our department and the Foundation for Dane County Parks over the past year, including:

The Cap Times
Carlson Black
Dane County Conservation League
Doug and Sherry Caves
Fish and Wildlife Service
Liliana’s
Mad City Dream Homes
Madison Fishing Expo
Madison Audubon Society
Pheasants Forever

Rock River Coalition
Sally Wilmeth and Terry Geurkink
Steve Morton
Sustainable Wildlife Habitat
Tree Stuff
Trout Unlimited
Walter A. and Jean Meanwell

All of our government agency partners

A special thank you to the **Foundation for Dane County Parks** and the nineteen friends groups that have adopted specific parks. The dedication of these groups and individuals is what brings the parks to life.

Friends of Anderson Farm County Park
Badger Prairie Community Garden
Friends of Brigham County Park
Friends of CamRock County Park
Friends of Capital Springs Recreation Area
Friends of Cherokee Marsh
Friends of Donald County Park
Friends of Festge County Park
Friends of Indian Lake County Park
Friends of Lake View Hill Park

Friends of Old Halfway Prairie School
Friends of Mazo Marsh and Walking Iron Prairie
Friends of McCarthy Youth & Conservation County Park
Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy
Friends of Prairie Moraine County Park
Friends of Schumacher Farm
Friends of Stewart Lake County Park
Friends of Silverwood County Park
Friends of Viking County Park

Department Updates

Solar Power at Fen Oak

In 2018, **128 solar panels** were installed on the roof of the Lyman F. Anderson Agriculture & Conservation Center at 5201 Fen Oak Drive in Madison. This is part of Dane County's larger effort to incorporate renewable energy into operations to benefit taxpayers and improve the health of our environment.

In 2019, the solar panels at Fen Oak produced 36.47 megawatt hour (MWh). This is the equivalent of over **117,000 lbs of CO₂** saved or 2,966 trees planted.



Dane County currently owns more solar than any other county in the state, generating more than 600 kW of power at 16 county-owned facilities. This will grow in 2020 with the installation of more than **31,000 solar panels** by MGE at the Dane County Regional Airport. This project will be one of the largest solar installations in Wisconsin supplying approximately 40% of the county's electricity needs to power county-owned facilities.

Continued Focus on Equity and Inclusion

In 2018, the Department developed an **Equity and Inclusion plan** that identifies actions to increase the diversity of our workforce and also remove barriers so that all county residents have equal access to our programs and services. A few examples of actions implemented in 2019 include:

Lussier Family Heritage Center Vendor Policies

The Lussier Family Heritage Center is a Dane County Parks facility that hosts public events and can be booked for private events. Creating a safe, inclusive space is a top priority for the Center as well as the Department. This year, staff worked with all vendors on the facility's "approved vendors" list to ensure that they do not discriminate based on sexual orientation, gender, religion, ethnicity or other factors. Vendors that wish to be included on the "approved vendors" list must have a nondiscrimination policy in place. Staff will continue to examine and improve the Center's policies and the facility to ensure it is a welcoming environment for all.

Staff Training

Part of the Equity and Inclusion plan includes providing training and learning opportunities for staff. This year, the Department held an all-staff training with James Mills, a local journalist, media producer, and founder of the Joy Trip Project. James talked to staff about his experience exploring the outdoors as a child and then showed his film, an American Ascent. After the training, staff were given additional resources and encouraged to continue to learn about the topic of equity and inclusion broadly and as it relates to natural resources. A few staff members also participated in additional trainings, such as the YWCA Racial Justice Summit. The Department's Equity and Inclusion team will continue to identify training opportunities for staff.



Permit Assistance Program

Dane County Parks offers permit assistance to Dane County residents with financial limitations that prevent them from purchasing a permit. Staff created a new **webpage** to better advertise this assistance and make it easier for people to understand how to access this resource.



Protect and Enhance

Keeping soil and nutrients on the land and out of our waterways

Continuous Cover Program

The Continuous Cover Program provided over **\$750,000** to 22 landowners to help them establish and maintain a continuous plant cover on agricultural lands. Maintaining continuous cover helps to increase water infiltration, reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat practices, and diversify production practices.

This program helped farmers and landowners to convert over **500 acres** of land previously in an annual crop into a perennial cool-season grass mix, native prairie mix, or grazing mix.



Chapter 49: Agricultural Performance Standards and Manure Management

Dane County enacted Chapter 49: Agricultural Performance Standards and Manure Management in July 2019. The new ordinance addresses manure management and agricultural performance standards to protect human health and safety as well as protect surface water and groundwater resources. The previous ordinance, Subchapter 1 of Chapter 14, had not been updated since 2006 so a number of updates were required to reflect current technical standards, updated language, county recommendations, and state administrative rules. Land conservation staff provided education, planning assistance, technical services, and funding opportunities for farmers and landowners to address compliance and implement conservation practices to meet new ordinance requirements. More information regarding the ordinance, factsheets, and application materials are available on our [website](#).

Grazing Initiative

This year, land conservation staff partnered with five farms on a new grazing project to help reduce phosphorus runoff in the Yahara Watershed by planting and utilizing cover crops. In addition to reducing livestock feed costs, cover crops reduce soil erosion, improve soil microbiology, increase infiltration, and sequester carbon. The project paired farmers in Dane County with farmers in other areas of the state already experienced in using cover crops for grazing to learn and be successful. This project is expected to reduce phosphorus by **332 pounds** per year and provide benefits for wildlife habitat, soil health, and profitability on livestock operations. To help showcase the project, Dane County partnered with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and Glacierland RC&D to hold a field day on July 30th at Highland Springs Farm in Fitchburg. Over 90 people attended the field day, including the Undersecretary of the WDNR. This project is funded by a Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) grant.



Adaptive Management and Water Quality Trading

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has numeric water quality standards for phosphorus in surface waters. Facilities that have a permit to discharge phosphorus (known as point sources) can upgrade their facility to comply with the phosphorus limits, which can be very costly, or they can offset their pollution through Water Quality Trading (NR 283) and Adaptive Management (NR 217). These programs allow the facility to fund conservation practices in the watershed that reduce phosphorus which is typically a more cost-effective alternative to facility upgrades.

The Department has been collaborating with permitted facilities to explore permit compliance options with the goal of bringing both point and nonpoint sources together to create a holistic watershed approach to improve water quality. This year marked the first year in which the Department has provided services to permittees outside the Yahara River Watershed, including the Dane-Iowa Wastewater Commission and Village of Cross Plains. The long standing relationships that staff have with landowners, communities, agencies, and organizations has resulted in the ongoing successes of these projects. Projects include:

Yahara Watershed Improvement Network (WINS) | 21,570 lbs phosphorus reduced

Project Area: Yahara River Watershed - 536 square miles (344,000 acres)

Assisted agricultural producers with over 600 conservation practices.

Dane-Iowa Wastewater Treatment Facility | Projects starting in 2020

Project Area: Black Earth Creek Watershed - 100 square miles (65,000 acres)

Continue to work with Dane-Iowa to identify projects and conservation practices to improve water quality.

Springfield Clean Water, LLC | 148 lbs phosphorus reduced

Project Area: 4.8 square miles (3,100 acres)

Installed three grassed waterways to address gully erosion.

Cross Plains Wastewater Treatment Facility | 150 lbs phosphorus reduced

Project Area: Upper Black Earth Creek Watershed - 25 square miles (16,225 acres)

Barnyard abandonment project.

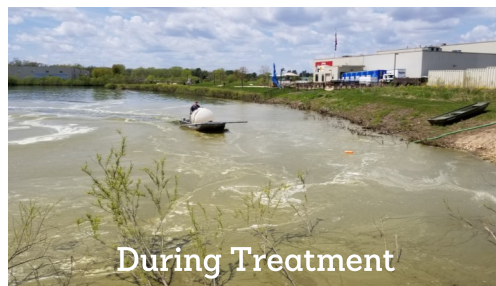
Urban Water Quality Grant Program

This year, two municipalities were approved to receive funding for two different projects that once constructed, will result in the removal of an estimated: **13,000 pounds** of sediment and **42 pounds** of phosphorus annually.

Spotlight: The initial phase of American Way Project in Verona, funded in 2018, was completed in May 2019. This goal of this innovative project is to demonstrate the effectiveness of treating an eight acre regional stormwater management pond with alum (aluminum sulfate) to bind excess phosphorus. The initial results have been promising with re-evaluation of water quality set for 2020.



Before



During Treatment



After

Aquatic Plant Management Program

The Department manages an aquatic plant harvesting program to help provide for reasonable recreational use of the lakes and lake level management, while preserving the health and balance of the lake ecosystem. Harvested plants are hauled by truck to remote compost sites.

Each waterbody in the program has a management plan that guides where and how the plants are cut. Staff go out on the lakes to monitor aquatic plant growth and guide the harvesting crews. Dane County's policy is to cut and harvest Eurasian water milfoil and other invasive species and try to preserve native plants that are essential for lake ecology. Aquatic plants cause friction and reduce water flow so to help with lake level management and flood relief, harvesters spent about 50% of the time in the Yahara River this year.



The program consists of five full-time staff that oversee and guide the operations, 24 seasonal staff, and a fleet of 12 harvesters and two barges. This year, a new transport barge (see photo) was added to the fleet, allowing the harvesters to offload plant material on the water without having to return to the landing. This helped increase harvested material by **50%** compared to 2018. All of the approved plans and cutting maps are available on the [Aquatic Plant Management program](#) website.

Legacy Sediment Removal Project Underway

In 2018, Dane County completed the first phase of "Suck the Muck," an innovative project to remove phosphorus-laden legacy sediments from streambeds within the Yahara Watershed. The first phase removed **11,000 tons of sediment** (about 800 dump truck loads) containing 75,000 pounds of phosphorus from a 2.3 mile stretch of Dorn Creek. In addition to improving water quality, the project returned the stream to its original channel, improved streambed habitat and reconnected the stream to the wetland. This year, **20,000 tons of sediment** (about 1,500 dump truck loads) was removed from a mile-long stretch of Token Creek and habitat enhancement and bank stabilization are currently underway. The County has completed stream and sediment assessments on 22 of the 33 total miles proposed for the project. Visit the [Legacy Sediment Removal Project](#) webpage to learn more about the project, timeline, and access project update videos.



Erosion Control and Stormwater Management

Department staff issue erosion control and stormwater management permits and perform site inspections to ensure that these permits are being followed. This year, staff performed **4,169** site inspections and took **69** enforcement actions.

Reducing Flooding and Improving Water Flow in the Yahara Lakes

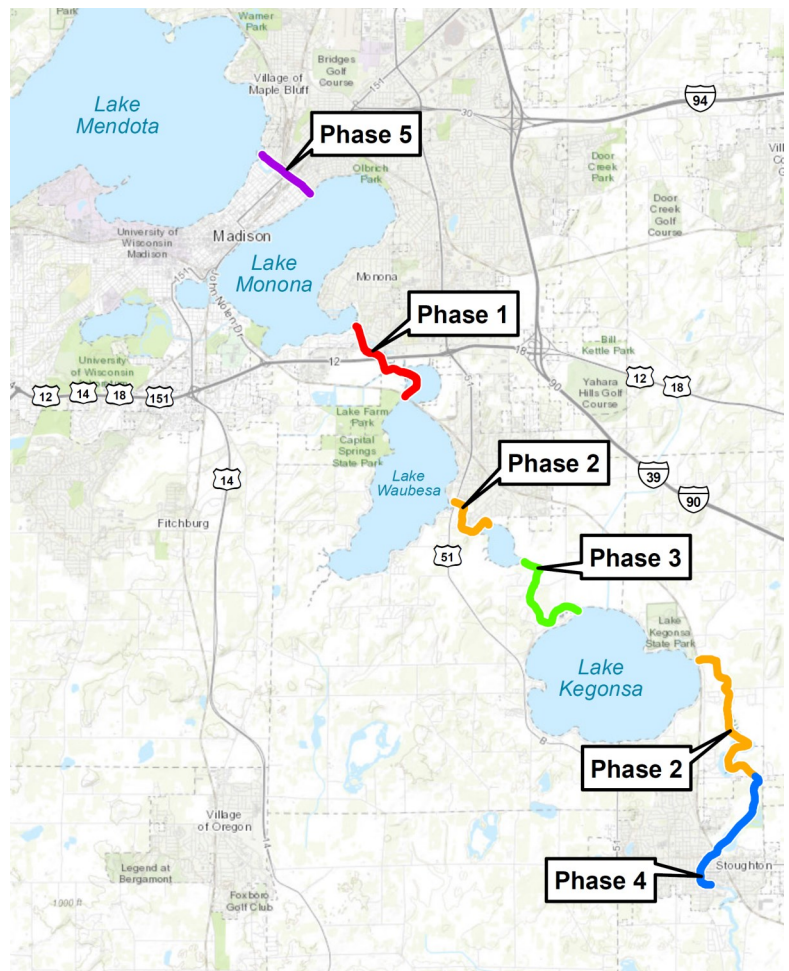
Currently, water enters the Yahara Lakes faster than it goes out. This, in combination with repetitive and heavy rainfall events, can cause lake levels to increase. Water movement through each lake is slowed by accumulated sediments in the Yahara River, in addition to other factors which are described on the Department [website](#). While sediment movement is a naturally occurring process, accumulation of sediment is greatly increased by human activity, including agriculture, urban development, and winter sand use. It is estimated that over **8.5 million pounds** of sediment enters the Yahara River and Lakes each year from urban runoff.

Dane County has begun implementation of a multi-year sediment removal project in the Yahara Lakes to remove accumulated sediments and improve water flow. The project is organized into five phases, with each phase carried out as Dane County secures permitting. Timely implementation of these phases is critical to reduce flooding. Several factors were used to determine the locations and order of the five phase plan including:

1. readily available sediment and bathymetry data for developing engineering plans,
2. contaminated sediments that will impact permitting timelines,
3. proximity of dewatering locations to let removed sediments dry, and
4. culturally sensitive features.

Phase 1 is located between Lakes Monona and Waubesa and is expected to be completed in 2020. The project will remove approximately **40,000 cubic yards** of sediment, which is equivalent to over 3,000 dump truck loads. The sediment removal will be performed hydraulically by suctioning it from the river bottom and transferring it through a pipeline to a dewatering basin. At the dewatering basin, the sediment will be separated from the water and reused for other projects, such as roadways.

To ensure the sediment removal does not result in water toxicity issues, data on sediment contamination must be collected before the work can begin. Dane County has taken sediment cores and completed laboratory testing for the first 4 phases. Data is also being obtained which will be used in phases 2 through 5 to develop plans for construction and to confirm that an adequate volume of sediment is removed at the proper location in the river. Follow the implementation of this multiphase project on the [Yahara Lake Level Recommendations](#) website.





594 permanently protected
Acres in 2019



Token Creek County Park and Natural Resource Area (25 acres)

Creek frontage, wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities.



Lower Yahara River Trail (0.23 acres)

Access point allowing trail to bypass designated wetlands



Pheasant Branch Conservancy (160 acres) - see project spotlight below

Water quality protection, stormwater volume reduction and improved infiltration.



Babcock County Park (1.3 acres)

Manage water flow, expanded recreational opportunities including ADA accessible shore fishing.



Indian Lake County Park (23 acres)

Connects the Ice Age National Scenic Trail to the park from the south.



Floodwater Storage Area in the Town of Vienna (82 acres)

Wetland provides floodwater storage, groundwater protection, habitat and public recreation.



Streambank Easement on Milum Creek (3.3 acres)

Streambank enhancement and protection, water quality and public fishing.



Conservation Easement in the Town of Springfield (211 acres)

Protection of agricultural land and reduction of sediment and nutrient runoff.

Dane County Conservation Fund Grant Projects



Six Mile Creek (84 acres)

Groundswell Conservancy



Blue Mounds Natural Resource Area (4.3 acres)

The Prairie Enthusiasts

Spotlight: Pheasant Branch Restoration Project

Dane County purchased a 160-acre property in 2019 adjacent to the existing Pheasant Branch Conservancy. The County is partnering with community organizations to plan and implement restoration projects on the property. Restoration will significantly reduce stormwater volume by increasing water infiltration into the ground. It will also improve water quality by reducing sediment and phosphorus runoff within the Pheasant Branch Watershed, positively impacting Lake Mendota. The property will be used for a future regional bicycle trail connection to Governor Nelson State Park.

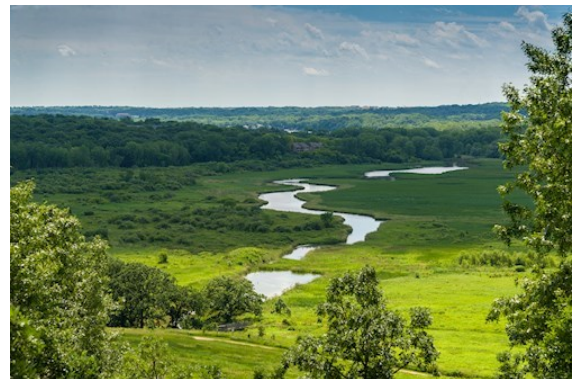


Photo credit: Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy

Provide

Clean, safe, and accessible natural areas to play and recreate

New and Expanding Youth Initiatives

A growing initiative of the Department is to get more young people engaged with the natural world around them. This is the third year the Department has hosted student writers from the Simpson Street Free Press, a nonprofit newspaper and youth center that teaches critical thinking and writing skills. Students wrote **articles** about a wide range of topics, including parks events, invasive species, and the Urban Water Quality Grant Program, among others. The Department also hosted four Boys and Girls Club Interns over the summer. In addition to helping out with projects in the office and in the field, these students learned about many different conservation careers.

This year the Department also partnered with the Bridge-Lakepoint-Waunona Neighborhood Center. Kids, from ages six to 12, from the center visited the Lussier Family Heritage Center one to two times monthly for outdoor and environmental education programming. This model will be expanded to other community centers in 2020 through a new **Get Outside!** initiative.

The Department also launched a new Youth Environmental Leadership Experience program with local high school students. This seven-week program helped students explore community and environmental issues through a series of field trips and hands-on activities with environmental professionals and community leaders. The students gained experience stream monitoring, trapping small mammals, canoeing, and gained a better awareness of how culture and nature intersect. They created video blogs about their experience which are available on our **website**.



Top: Simpson Street Free Press writers.
Middle: Get Outside students (credit: John Adams).
Bottom: Youth Environmental Leadership Experience students.



Indian Lake Wayfinding

Hikers and cross-country skiers at Indian Lake County Park will now have an easier time navigating the trails thanks to new wayfinding signage. Previously, there was no uniform wayfinding system making it difficult for visitors to feel confident and safe while exploring the park. The new wayfinding signs consist of trail markers and “You Are Here” maps located at trail intersections. A new kiosk with a large locator map will also be installed at the main trailhead.

The new wayfinding signage at Indian Lake is a pilot project that could eventually be expanded to the entire park system, starting with more heavily used parks and recreation areas, and locations with confusing or multi-use trail systems. Visitors at Indian Lake County Park can submit feedback about the new signage to: dane-parks@countyofdane.com.

Provide

Clean, safe, and accessible natural areas to play and recreate

Dane County Parks Land Restoration Efforts

Park staff continue to expand land restoration efforts within the growing Dane County Park System. Highlighted below are a few of this year's accomplishments.

Seed Collection Program | 1,800 lbs. seed collected

This year, volunteers, staff, partners, and Operation Fresh Start participants collected and processed over **1,800 lbs.** of prairie, savanna, wetland, and woodland seed - a **950 lb. increase** over the previous year. Seed was collected from **190 native species** with an estimated worth of approximately **\$600,000**. This seed will be used to help restore over 144 acres of County-owned lands and 30 acres of partner lands. Seed collection efforts included 32 seed collection events hosted by staff totaling **1,684 hours** of volunteer service. Several other collection days hosted by Friends and partner groups helped contribute to a record seed harvest. Volunteers contributed an additional 432 hours across 32 events to clean, weigh, and package seeds for planting.

Controlled Burn Program | 850 acres burned

Natural habitats rely upon regular and reoccurring fire to remain diverse, resilient, and capable of providing an array of ecological functions that we depend on. With the addition of two support staff and improved equipment, prescribed fire operations grew by leaps and bounds this year resulting in a total of **650 acres** burned to help combat brush, manage invasive species, and maintain healthy native habitats. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and contractors helped to burn an additional **207 acres** of County lands in the Walking Iron Wildlife Area, which is the largest single burn day for County parks on record.

Forestry Program | 4,000 trees and native shrubs planted

This year, Dane County planted over 4,000 trees and native shrubs on County lands with the help of volunteers and partner groups. This included **300 trees** planted in the newest fruit orchard at Prairie Moraine County Park. Another accomplishment was the expansion of Dane County's forestry career pathway partnership with Operation Fresh Start. Students taking part in the program will now be eligible for College Credits in Madison College's new Urban Forestry Program. Staff also hosted **17 volunteer workdays**, removing trees and brush, contributing **531 hours** of volunteer service.

Spotlight: Native Planting at CamRock County Park

A six-acre former crop field next to Koshkonong Creek at CamRock County Park has been restored to prairie. The land was seeded with native prairie seeds in February 2019 to help reduce erosion, protect water quality, and provide habitat. The planting was a huge success! After only one growing season, the prairie was incredibly diverse with over 75 species present.



Park Renamed to Honor Bill Lunney

In June, Lake Farm County Park was renamed the **William G. Lunney Lake Farm County Park** to honor Dane County Park Commission Chair William G. Lunney. Lunney served in Dane County government for 50 years, starting as a County Board Supervisor in 1969 and culminating as Park Commission Chair this summer. He served on the Dane County Park Commission for 32 years, including 30 years as Chair. As Chair, Lunney helped advance the development of a park classification system to organize and define park uses and types, oversee parks and open space committees that led to the adoption of six Dane County Parks and Open Space Plans, create some of the first dog parks in the nation, and advocate for the important role of volunteers, friends groups, and partner organizations in the park system. Under Lunney's leadership, Dane County park land and natural resource areas have increased in size from 3,500 acres to over 15,000 acres.



Together with his wife, Judie Pfeifer, Lunney co-founded the Foundation for Dane County Park to support the Dane County Parks System. They also helped co-found the Friends of Capital Springs State Recreation Area. Along with the renaming of the park, a kiosk was installed that includes panels to describe both Bill Lunney and Judie Pfeifer's contributions.

“Naming this park in Bill’s honor recognizes his commitment to preserve Dane County’s natural spaces and passion to provide so many great recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.”

– Joe Parisi, Dane County Executive –

Lussier Family Heritage Center

The **Lussier Family Heritage Center** is a Dane County Parks facility that provides opportunities for learning, volunteerism, outdoor recreation and special events. This year the center welcomed:



27,000+
Visitors



232
Events



43
Educational Programs



Photo credit: John Adams



New Electronic Pay Stations

Visitors at the Capital Springs Dog Park and William G. Lunney Lake Farm County Park boat launch will see new electronic pay stations being tested at these sites. The stations provide a convenient way to purchase permits via credit card and are more secure than the self registration stations with envelopes and metal collection boxes that have been targeted by thieves resulting in lost revenue, costly repairs, and lost permit receipts. The new stations are relatively inexpensive, can be moved from facility to facility as needed, and hold no electronic information or cash. In addition, the new kiosks will greatly reduce the amount of staff time spent collecting and handling permit fees. Staff will collect feedback from park users to determine if this is a good way to offer permits. Park users can also continue to **purchase permits** online or at the parks office.

Support

Assisting local partners with resource management and protection

Supporting Land and Water Volunteers

Dane County Parks Volunteers and Events

Staff work with 19 friends groups that have adopted specific parks. These groups advocate for park properties, fundraise, provide maintenance, and host a variety of exciting public events. We depend on their dedication to help bring our parks to life! In 2019, over **4,200 volunteers** supported our parks by donating more than **66,700 volunteer hours**. Park Friends and partner groups hosted over **400 special events and volunteer work days** for the public to attend on a variety of subjects, including nature hikes, trail runs, festivals, demonstrations, and other educational events.

Trainings and Support

The Department offers a number of trainings and workshops throughout the year to help build capacity of volunteers working on protecting and improving Dane County Parks and other land and water resources. This year, staff hosted **20 trainings and workshops**, including prescribed burning, chainsaw safety, saw and brush cutter maintenance, and others.

The Foundation for Dane County Parks, Inc.

Staff support the Foundation for Dane County Parks in their work to support the County park system and fundraise for the Dane County Parks Endowment Fund held by the Madison Community Foundation. The Endowment is now over **\$618,000** and has awarded over **\$17,000** in grants to 11 local nonprofit conservation organizations to help them provide educational programming, interpretation and enhance volunteerism in parks.



To find trainings, volunteer opportunities, and other events, visit our [event calendar](#).

Photo credits: John Kalson (bottom middle)



We welcomed seven new full-time staff members in 2019!



Theresa Nelson
Stormwater Engineer



Justin Schmelzer
Mechanic



Matt Diebel
Watershed Management
Coordinator



Jon Ernst
Park Ranger



Gabe Okins
Conservation Technician



Vince Schmitz
Park Laborer



Eric Eisele
Park Maintenance
Technician

Retirements

Dick Black
Parks Operations Manager

Joe Taylor
Mechanic

Dave Horne
Park Maintenance
Technician

*Thank you for your
many years of
service!*

Awards

- 🍃 **Lower Yahara River Trail Phase 1** won the American Council of Engineering Companies 2019 Engineering Excellence Awards Competition “Best of State” award and “National Recognition” award, as well as the APWA WI chapter “2019 Project of the Year” award.
- 🍃 **Dane County Dog Parks** won several awards. Dane County Dog Parks won all three spots in the Isthmus Mad Faves Reader’s Choice Award (1st Prairie Moraine, 2nd Capital Springs, 3rd Yahara Heights). Dane County Dog Parks also won all three spots in Madison Magazine’s Best of Madison reader poll (1st Prairie Moraine, 2nd Badger Prairie, 3rd Token Creek).
- 🍃 **Sara Rigelman** (Acquisition & Planning Specialist) won the Wisconsin State Council of Trout Unlimited “Robert Hunt Resource Professional” award.”
- 🍃 **John Reimer** (Assistant Director) won the Yahara Lakes Association “Public Official of the Year” award.
- 🍃 **Joe Parisi** (County Executive) won the Wisconsin Parks and Recreation Association “Elected Official” award.
- 🍃 **Bill Lunney** (Dane County Parks Commission Chair, retired) won the Wisconsin Parks and Recreation Association “Fellowship” award.



Dane County staff with Bill Lunney and Joe Parisi at Wisconsin Parks and Recreation Association awards ceremony.