



friends of DODGE COUNTY PARKS, INC.

FALL 2024 VOL 28, ISSUE 2

A
message
FROM
GLENN DAILY
PRESIDENT
FRIENDS OF DODGE
COUNTY PARKS, INC.

What an AMAZING year 2024 has been. We have been blessed with wonderful weather throughout this year including an extended Indian Summer this Fall, allowing everyone the chance to get out and enjoy all of Dodge County's parks and trails. This edition of our newsletter is full of success stories on all of the many different fundraisers in 2024 by the Friends of Dodge County Parks, Inc. (FODCPI).

None of our successes would be possible without the loyal support of you, the Membership of FODCPI. We greatly appreciate you continually showing up, attending the functions and supporting the many causes. Your membership and additional donations to your favorite park or trail go a long way in helping us achieve many improvements to the parks and trails.

It takes more than just money to achieve our success. Volunteers are the life blood of organizing and running these events. FODCPI has been fortunate this year to have willing people young and old step up to the tasks. However, we are slowly losing our volunteers through natural attrition. On average, for every new volunteer we manage to recruit, our organization is losing two volunteers to age and or health issues.

This is where I close as always with my shameless plea for help in any capacity you can provide. Please give thought to volunteering some of your time to our cause. The opportunities are endless, and I am sure that we have something for whatever your skill sets may be. I am reachable by phone or text at (262) 370-3224, or Email: gpdaily57@gmail.com. If I am unavailable when you call, please be sure to leave a message on my voicemail so that I can return your call.

Our Monthly Board meetings are typically the first Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m. in the first-floor Auditorium of the County Administration Building in Juneau. The meeting is open to the general membership and public. Stop in and find out what we are all about. Please call ahead first to be sure that the meeting for the month you are planning to attend is on as scheduled.

THANKS, See You at The Parks!

Glenn

GOLD STAR FAMILIES MEMORIAL MONUMENT BEING PLANNED



Recently the Gold Star Trail project connected with the Woody Williams Foundation in Kentucky to promote installation of the national Gold Star Families Monument along the Gold Star Trail. Wisconsin is one of only 2 States that do not have this national monument yet, thus the Foundation is extremely interested in seeing that we pursue this it. To bring the monument to Dodge County will take about \$100,000. The effort is currently in the discussion phase, but more information and a plan moving forward should be released in Spring.



After a vintage potato digger turned potato mounds, people were allowed to go on the field and gather potatoes to take home.

PHOTO CREDIT TO
LEAH DIEBALL

FALLFEST 2024 - WHAT A DAY!

by Glenn Daily

With mostly sunny skies and a high temperature of 77 degrees, the 18th Annual FallFest was another resounding success. Throughout the day, more than a thousand people stopped out to see what FallFest was all about. People came from 58 different towns and cities in Wisconsin as well as five different States, Florida being the farthest. Tractor pulled wagon rides moved people throughout the 132-acre park to see all of the exhibits and demonstrations. The north field provided a bumper crop of potatoes this year and there were smiling faces a plenty carrying bags of those potatoes to their cars. FallFest had all of the usual favorite activities going on and everyone found something to enjoy. FallFest netted over \$9,600.00 in profits to be used to make continuous improvements to Harnischfeger County Park. Our main focus right now is residing and roofing the north barn. Sadly, future FallFests are in jeopardy. Our volunteer team grows smaller every year, and we are now to the point where next year will not happen without some people who have the drive to see it continue. The date is always the last Saturday of September, next year being Saturday, September 27, 2025. We have a meeting scheduled in February to discuss what the possibilities are of this event continuing in 2025. If interested, please see my contact info on the front-page President's article of this newsletter and reach out to me.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT Glenn Daily	Ixonia	(2022-2025)
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SECRETARY / HISTORIAN Butch Guenther	Brandon	(2024-2027)
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Michael Belongie	Beaver Dam	(2023-2026)
John Shabaz	Horicon	(2024-2027)

DODGE CO LIAISON
Jason Roy, Parks & Trails Supervisor

ALEXIS FAREWELL - GSMT FUNDRAISER

by Glenn Daily

On June 22nd, hundreds of people came from far and wide to enjoy good music, fun times with friends, and participate in 50/50 Raffles, Meat Raffles, Bucket Raffles and a Silent Auction. Tower Lanes in Beaver Dam was the venue for the Alexis Band Farewell performance.

All of this was organized to raise funds for the Gold Star Memorial Trail (GSMT). The result of this one-day event was raising \$13,908.35. An amazing time was had by all! At the same time, providing over two thirds of the total Friends Of Dodge County Parks, Inc. GSMT June Fundraising Drive of \$20,792.35. Thank You one and all for your support of the June drive.

FOX BROS. MAYVILLE PIGGY WIGGLY SEPTEMBER RUFAC

by John Shabaz

The Friends of Dodge County Parks, Inc. (FODCPI) had the privilege of being a part of the Mayville Piggy Wiggly Round Up For A Cause program, with the Gold Star Memorial Trail (GSMT) being the beneficiary of the funds raised. Throughout the month of September, supportive shoppers rounded up at the checkout of the Fox Bros. store. On September 7th many enjoyed and supported the brat fry and bake sale that took place in the parking lot. It was a beautiful Saturday that allowed us to have fun with the community and inform those that were curious about the GSMT, its significance and value to the community and Dodge County.

An incredible amount of generosity, time and talent is required for these types of initiatives to be successful, and I want everyone to know how much theirs was appreciated. Thank You to the shoppers choosing



Pictured from L to R: Erik Anderson Tower Lanes Manager; Andy Wentworth event co-coordinator who served alongside Ryan Cantafio in the Marine Corps; Cindy Haerterich Friends of Dodge County Parks Treasurer, Bill Ehlenbeck Dodge County Parks Director and Trail Project Manager; Glenn Daily, Friends of Dodge County Parks President; Sherri Gysbers, Friends of Dodge County Parks Board Member; Scott Hautamki Gold Star Father, event creator and co-coordinator.



Pictured from left to right: Store Manager Tyia Kemnitz, FODCPI Vice President Harvey Gysbers, FODCPI Board member Sherri Gysbers, FODCPI Treasurer Cindy Haerterich, Dodge County Director of Land Resources and Parks Bill Ehlenbeck, FODCPI Board Member Shirley Rotta, FODCPI President Glenn Daily and FODCPI Board member and RUFAC Coordinator John Shabaz.

to round up and donate, and the volunteers giving their time, baking, cooking and serving at the brat fry. Thanks to the knowledgeable people on hand for their expertise to field questions about the GSMT through the month. Most importantly, Thank You to the store manager and staff, ensuring that everything ran smoothly throughout the month and during

the brat fry by helping coordinate everything. It truly is a blessing to see how many caring individuals are involved

Everyone's arduous labors netted a grand total of \$3,961.70 for the GSMT in September. The one-day total for the Brat Fry/Bake Sale - \$358.00, and the total for the month of September RUFAC - \$3,603.70.

GSMT PHASE 2 RECEIVES \$190,000 DNR GRANT

The County was notified in September that the GSMT #2 was selected for up to \$190,000 in State Stewardship funding for the construction portion of the project. The Federal TAP grant is already covering up to 80% funding for design and construction. Design and Engineering work should be at 60% completion by end of the year. At the 60% milestone, acquisition efforts can begin. The majority of the trail will be located within the existing right of way of State Hwy 33, however some temporary grading easements and a few permanent ones will be required. Based on the Federal funding schedule, construction is slated for early 2026, assuming all designs and acquisitions are completed by November 2025 (and all sufficient local funding is in place). We are close to having all the local funds needed for construction, assuming the final bid amounts are within our estimates. Donations are still needed and much appreciated.



GSMT PHASE 3 FEASIBILITY & PRELIMINARY DESIGN

Phase 3 (Wild Goose Trail to Beaver Dam) was awarded American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds by the County Board to conduct feasibility and preliminary design and analysis of the route needed for filing grant applications. MSA Professional Services has been selected for the work. A contract is being finalized that will allow commencement of work this winter. Final design, acquisition and construction will be dependent on the timelines needed for sufficient grants and donations. Total project cost estimates are \$4.5 - \$5 million. Grants could cover as much as 80% - 90%. Significant grants and donations will be needed to fund this largest segment of the Gold Star Memorial Trail. A fund for this phase was established a few years ago to receive the needed donations.

CONSIDER PURCHASING GSMT SHIRTS, ORNAMENTS OR STICKERS OR MAKING A DONATION TO HELP WITH EITHER OR BOTH PHASES OF THIS PROJECT. Donations can be made online at www.goldstarmemorialtrailwi.org via Venmo, Paypal or credit card. Donations can also be sent via check to Friends of Dodge County Parks, P.O. Box 72, Juneau, WI 53039. Make sure to indicate Gold Star Memorial Trail and what phase you are donating to.

Donations can also be made to the Gold Star Memorial Trail fund through the Beaver Dam Area Community Foundation at www.fdlareafoundation.com/beaver-dam-area-community-foundation/.

Gold Star Memorial Trail

items are a way to honor and remember the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for your freedom, and their families. At the same time, you are donating to help fund the next phases of the Gold Star Memorial Trail.

T-SHIRT S, M, L & XL - \$15; XXL - \$17

SWEATSHIRT L & XL - \$25; XXL & XXXL - \$28

ORNAMENT 4.5" x 4" Solid Aluminum \$20

STICKER 3" x 4" Clear Vinyl \$5

Cost of Shipping: To be determined for each order. To order, call or email Cindy at 920-285-0305 or haerterich1860@gmail.com



CONVERSATIONS LEAD TO DONATIONS

Our "Open House" Sundays for the Summer season at Harnischfeger County Park have ended for 2024. We were open the first Sunday of the month from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. in conjunction with the Lebanon Historical Society and the Ashippun Historical Committee from April through October. These open houses afforded us the opportunity to have conversations with people interested in visiting and viewing our museum. A bonus to some of those conversations have led to us receiving additional donations to the museum. Stay current with the Friends Of Dodge County Parks, Inc. Facebook page and watch for the Spring of 2025 schedule.

FALL 2024 PARKS REPORT

by Jason Roy
Dodge County Parks Superintendent

PHOTO CREDIT TO STEVE TAGGART

There's an old saying that states, "The older you get, the faster time goes." This sure holds true this year. It seems like just yesterday we were opening our parks for the camping season. As I write this our camping season has already ended. Where did the time go?

This season was exceptionally busy managing park improvement projects for both Astico and Harnischfeger Parks.

ASTICO PARK

We welcomed two new staff members at the park this season: Park Attendant, Kaylee Hill and volunteer Camp Host, Eric Henninger. Due to all the rain and flooding this season, a third of the



sites were closed limiting the options available for campers. Preparations continued for the new restroom/shower building and pavilion with anticipated completion of the project on or before July 15, 2025.

DERGE PARK

We welcomed new volunteer Camp Host Charles Gottschalk this season. Several campsites were closed periodically throughout the season due to flooding. Electrical upgrades and the Fish Cleaning Station were completed.



HARNISCHFEGGER PARK

We welcomed David Baumgartner and Bonnie Ayers as new volunteer Camp Hosts this season. The campsite pad reconstruction was completed. This included making Site 4 a drive-through site and eliminating Site C. The site upgrades to include 20/30/50-amp pedestals and water hook-ups at each site is scheduled to be completed prior to the end of the year.



LEDGE PARK

Ledge Park remained our top visited park again this season. The hiking trails along the Niagara Escarpment and the overlook are very popular attractions. A new firewood shelter is being constructed by the restroom/shower building, across from the Host Site in the off-season.

NITSCHKE MOUNDS PARK

Red Wolf Trail planning continues; to include quotes for the boardwalk. The installation of solar power to the pavilion for educational presentations is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year. A Wisconsin Archaeology in Public Education Grant was received for educational signage updates for the pavilion. Thank you to Ryan Howell, Effigy Mounds Initiative, Kurt Sampson, Dodge County Historical Society and Bill Ehlenbeck, Dodge County Land Resources and Parks for their efforts to obtain this grant.

GLACIAL RIVER TRAIL

The Dodge County Highway Department assisted with spring trail maintenance by sweeping the trail. General maintenance efforts continued throughout the season.

GOLD STAR MEMORIAL TRAIL

Planning continues. See page 4 for further information.

WILD GOOSE STATE TRAIL

Our park staff stayed busy this year with tree removal from the WGST and the adjacent horse trail. The flooded conditions saturated the ground and caused numerous large trees to uproot and block the trails. Several bridges were resurfaced and repaired by park staff and the Dodge County Highway Department. This will be an ongoing process as the current bridges begin to wear and age. The WGST is open for snowmobile and ATV/UTV use during the winter months (Dec 1 – March 31) when conditions allow. Please check the Trail Status Hotline at (920) 386-3705 for current trail status prior to riding on the trail.

In conclusion, thank you to all our staff and volunteers for your support, dedication and hard work that make our parks and trails what they are. Thank you to the Friends of Dodge County Parks, Inc. for your commitment and promotion of the great outdoor resources we have. A special thank you to Sergeant Marty Koutnik and the Burke Correctional Center work crews for all your help again this year.

Thank you to all our parks and trails visitors and thank you for the feedback you provide to help us make continued improvements. We look forward to an exciting winter season in the parks and on the trails. See you out there!



Dodge County operates five parks and three recreational trails, providing a perfect year-round escape to the scenic rural countryside to relax or take part in many recreational activities available. The County Parks are located at various points around Dodge County, providing scenery and views.

ASTICO PARK ~ Located 3 miles east of Columbus, is a 100- acre park on the Crawfish River and features campsites, hiking trails, canoe/ kayak rentals, fishing access, picnic shelters, a naturalist program area, and more. Potential projects include trail expansions/improvements, playground upgrades, improved ADA accessibility, and invasive species vegetation control.

DERGE PARK ~ Located northwest of Beaver Dam, is a 13-acre park that provides access to the 6,600-acre Beaver Dam Lake and features campsites, a boat launch, an ADA accessible kayak pier, and fishing access. Potential projects: new fishing/ docking pier, improved shoreline fishing access with benches & landscaping, and parking expansion.

HARNISCHFEGER PARK ~ Located along the Rock River is 8 miles east of Watertown. This 132-acre park contains a variety of terrain, vegetation, and facilities for multiple recreation opportunities. The park hosts the annual FallFest on the last Saturday in September. New to the park are Vintage Farming displays in the north barn & building. The park features a clubhouse and picnic shelters for group picnics and activities. There are hiking trails with boardwalks, campsites, canoe/ kayak rentals, fishing access, 9-hole mini-golf and 9-hole disc golf courses. Current and potential projects include mini-golf & disc-golf rehab and expansion, clubhouse improvements and expansion, a gazebo for general use, a future enclosed "Off Leash" dog run, an edible plants harvest naturalist

program, invasive species vegetation control, north barn restoration phase 3, homestead area repurposing phase 2, trail improvements and a vault toilet for the north end of the park.

LEDGE PARK ~ Located near the Horicon Marsh, is a 83-acre park that lies on and along the Niagara Escarpment and provides a breathtaking over-look of the Horicon Marsh. The park features campsites, hiking trails, picnic shelters, playgrounds, and an ADA accessible boardwalk to the edge of the ledge, overlooking the scenic Horicon Marsh. Potential projects include trail and accessibility improvements, invasive species vegetation control, pond boardwalk and more parking.

NITSCHKE MOUNDS PARK ~ Located 4 miles north of Juneau and adjacent to the Wild Goose Trail, is a 54-acre park featuring 39 pre-historic Native American animal, conical, and linear effigy mounds, with hiking trails through the mounds and park, and an open-air picnic shelter. Current and potential projects include trail and interpretive mound identification improvements, brush removal off of overgrown mounds, invasive species vegetation control and the Red Wolf Memorial Trail including a pond boardwalk.

WILD GOOSE STATE TRAIL ~ This 34-mile limestone trail on an abandoned railroad grade has a southern Trailhead on Highway 60 and links the city of Juneau to the city of Fond du Lac. Potential and future projects include parking lot improvements and invasive species vegetation control.

GLACIAL RIVER TRAIL ~ This 3.5- mile trail is a paved hiking

and biking only path along HWY 26, running from HWY CJ near Clyman, south to 2nd Road near Watertown. It is part of the multi- county trail that runs south through Jefferson County and into Rock County. This trail connects to the Wild Goose State Trail via road routes to & thru Clyman, and then to the WGST southern trailhead at Highway 60.

GOLD STAR MEMORIAL TRAIL ~ To honor the fallen military, the newest East-West paved hiking & biking only trail system will eventually link Mayville, Horicon, and Beaver Dam to the Wild Goose State Trail. Phase 1 from Mayville's Theiler Park to Horicon Marsh, had its Grand Opening in June of 2019. A route to walk your bike through the marsh to Horicon has been established, and a signed city bike route through the city of Horicon is completed. Grant applications and funding campaigns continue to build this trail onwards to Beaver Dam. Phase 2 from Horicon to the Wild Goose Trail is the current priority.

T-Shirt Sale

Friends of Dodge County Parks, Inc .
(FODCPI) T-shirts are here!!!





Ask staff for details

\$20 Small—XL | \$22 2X | \$23 3X

RESTORATION EFFORTS AT NITSCHKE MOUNDS

by Sue Knaack

Restoration efforts continue at Nitschke Mounds County Park. Over the past decades many invasive species have not only gotten a foothold in the park but have taken over many areas. The result is the dying off of many native species in some areas of the park, including many of the oak trees. The main focus up until now has been tackling several of the most invasive species, including Common and Glossy Buckthorn, Bush Honeysuckle and Garlic Mustard, that have greatly impacted the park. We received a boost this past Spring in our volunteer efforts when 32 students from Beaver Dam High school came and pulled 40 bags of Garlic Mustard in less than 2 hours! What an incredible effort that really benefitted the park!

This summer some volunteers began to tackle pulling Wild Parsnip. Wild Parsnip is native to Europe and Asia. It invades prairies, oak savannas and fens. It is often seen on roadsides, and in old fields and pastures. Anyone who comes in contact with Wild Parsnip needs to be extremely careful. If the sap comes in contact with your skin and



PHOTO CREDIT TO SUE KNAACK

is exposed to sunlight, it can cause severe rashes, blisters, and skin discoloration. Volunteers need to wear gloves, long sleeves and long pants when handling this plant.

In addition to removing invasives, volunteers have also helped plant sapling oak trees, primarily bur and swamp white oaks in the park. Since there is currently little natural regeneration of oaks in the park due to invasives, it is a boost to these ecosystems to be able to plant oak saplings in several areas of the park. More volunteer help is needed. If you are interested in volunteering at Nitschke Park, please email Sue Knaack at sunnypt2@centurytel.net

NITSCHKE MOUNDS COUNTY PARK

by Harvey Gysbers

As another year comes to a close, we hope that you found the time to visit one or more of Dodge County's parks. Nitschke Mounds is one of those parks that we open to you to walk its trails and enjoy the diverse fauna and wildlife. This past year, in cooperation with the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, we again offered two planned tours on April 27th to enjoy Wisconsin's outdoors. A total of 43 people enjoyed the day and the trails. As of this writing there are not any planned

tours for 2025.

However, we do hope that you do take the time to come out and enjoy this park or any of our other parks and trails in Dodge County. All parks are open dawn to dusk every day throughout the entire year. Get out and enjoy the silence of a walk or hike through a winter wonderland. Given the right snow conditions, the Parks Staff will again be grooming cross country skiing and snowshoeing trails at Nitschke Mounds as well as some of its other parks.

FODCPI CORNER

by Erin Johns



PHOTO BY BONNIE DITTBERNER BECK

August 2024 - A plane flying from EAA made an emergency landing in a farm field by the Ledge. The pilot that was flying with him in a separate plane also landed to check on his pal and his plane. In six days of posting regarding the emergency landing we had a reach of almost 10K people.



October 2024 - One of our notable Facebook reaches came from an aerial/drone view of Ledge Park with 9,013 views.



PHOTOS BY STEVE TAGGART

SPONSOR A MEMORIAL BENCH

Benches along the Gold Star Memorial Trail Phase 1 (Mayville to Horicon Marsh) and at Ledge Park (Ledge overlook platform), were installed this past year and are now ready for sponsorship at \$1000 each. Sponsorship includes up to 3 lines of engraving or a 9x12



sign that can include a picture along with text. Sponsors can provide their own bronze or special plaque if desired. Requests for more information or for bench sponsorship can be emailed to parks@co.dodge.wi.us with contact name, address, phone #, who the memorial is for, and which bench/location is desired. The Friends of Dodge County Parks Board will review all requests and will award sponsorship locations as they deem appropriate. Sponsorships are payable to Friends of Dodge County Parks, Inc. after requests are approved.

thrivent CHOICE DOLLARS

If you are a Thrivent Financial account holder you can have Thrivent Financial donate to the Friends of Dodge County Parks, Inc. through their Thrivent Choice program. Log onto www.thrivent.com and go to Thrivent Choice under the "Making a Difference" tab.



SAVE THE DATE! MARK YOUR CALENDARS & SPREAD THE WORD! **GSMT CORN HOLE FUNDRAISER**

A GSMT bags tournament is planned for Saturday, June 14, 2025 at Tower Lanes in Beaver Dam. There will be raffles and music. More information to be announced in our Spring newsletter.



FODCPI MISSION STATEMENT

The Friends of Dodge County Parks, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit for the purpose of enhancing the quality of life in Dodge County by increasing opportunities for active and passive recreation and by preserving, protecting, restoring, and promoting natural resources, parks, trails, and recreation areas owned and/or maintained by Dodge County.

2025 FODCPI MEMBERSHIP FORM

Online membership and donation options are available at our website
<https://GoldStarMemorialTrailWI.org>

- ☐ Senior Citizen or Child (\$10)
- ☐ Individual / School / Class (\$20)
- ☐ Family (\$25)
- ☐ Club, Agency, Organization or Not-for-Profit (\$50)
- ☐ Municipality (\$75)
- ☐ Corporation or Business (\$100)

Name(s): _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Designate purpose or park _____

Membership Total \$ _____

General Donation \$ _____

Endowment Fund \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Please send completed form with check made out to:
Friends of Dodge County Parks, Inc. • PO Box 72 Juneau, WI 53039