

PARK VIEWS



A Publication of The Friends of Donald Park, Inc.

Fall 2015

Tuesday Volunteers More Than “Just Busy”

Grant Provides Money Toward Tiller

By Bob Dettwiler

For the last few months the weather has been very cooperative for the Tuesday volunteers. Our main focus has been fixing some of the erosion problems on many of our trails. This has been a big project!

Thank you to Donna Thomas for writing a grant so we could purchase a large tiller that fastens to the 3-point hitch on one of our farm tractors. We started this project by creating channels on many of the trails to get the water to run off the side wherever it was possible. This effort was to keep the trails from getting worse, for the time being. We then found some areas with good soil and used the tiller to work up the soil. Using shovels, we filled 5-gallon pails with the soil, loaded them onto our old trailer and hauled them to the areas where it was needed the most. This project will definitely require ongoing attention in the future. Fortunately, we have a very hardy and committed group of Tuesday volunteers!

You may have noticed we have rearranged many of the numbers on the junction posts and have painted the posts a bright yellow. The new trail maps/brochures will be coming soon to match the new numbers.

A few months ago, lightning hit the old milk house and blew a hole in the back wall. Matt Marty later patched up the hole with cement.

Also, Dave Green does a great job of continually working on spraying and removing invasive plants throughout the park.



*Some of the Tuesday volunteers working with our new tiller.
Photo by Dave Green.*

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Thank you to the Dane County Environmental Council for the \$1,556.00 Capital Improvement Grant Award to purchase the tiller.

Thank you to Bob Dettwiler for providing the information for this successful grant proposal. The more than 250 hours that the Natural Areas Volunteers, led by Bob, have put into the project so far more than match the dollars awarded. Thus the Friends didn't have to spend money on this equipment.

**HELP THE FRIENDS BECOME
BETTER THAN EVER!**

Please Consider a Year-End Gift.

Your gift, in any amount, helps us continue park maintenance and program development. You may designate a specific area to support – or simply request the donation be used where needed. Thank You!

MISSION STATEMENT

Friends of Donald Park, Inc. promotes and supports the development and passive use of Donald Park through programs and activities that provide education, restoration and preservation of cultural, natural and historical resources representing Dane County's rural heritage for present and future generations.

Remembering Jack Borders

A new bench graces the side trail to Larson Pond, offering a multi-faceted view of pond, prairies, Donald Rock and a bluebird house. Mt. Horeb 3rd graders stop here for pond studies. Hikers, including family groups, enjoy the chance to spend time quietly observing the beautiful natural landscape. **The bench is a fitting way to honor Jack Borders**, one of Donald Park's long-time, very enthusiastic volunteers. After retirement from the Red Cross and State of Wisconsin, where he was a safety consultant, Jack spent many hours at Donald Park, beginning in the 1990s before the park opened to the public. Park co-founder Pat Hitchcock had a close relationship with Jack, regularly consulting with him on what was to be accomplished during natural areas work sessions. Jack was an ace with a chainsaw in wooded areas, and he worked hard to help establish and maintain the park's prairies. But perhaps his greatest joy as a volunteer was introducing children to the natural world. A well-known photo of him as a naturalist guide at the UW Arboretum shows him learning on one of his beautifully carved walking sticks, smiling and listening carefully to a small child, surrounded by tallgrass prairie. At Donald Park, he worked with the Mt. Horeb 3rd graders who visited the park annually. He will be remembered as a kind and gentle man, devoted to the natural world and to sharing that special love and appreciation with others.



Jack as we remember him - ready to work!
Photo by Dave Green.

Did You Know...

Donald Park is a Grocery Store!

Hunting and gathering (*foraging*) is encouraged in Donald County Park, as is the case with almost all Dane County Parks (DCP). Our County Parks staff encourages people to connect with the land and resources of Dane County through the parks, and to regard our many wonderful parks as more than just places for recreation. In particular, DCP is promoting the idea of going to a county park and looking for a wide range of foods – berries, mushrooms, nuts, any edible plant – as a family activity.

Thanks to Donald Park's diverse habitats, foraging possibilities abound. Summer finds hikers and riders



snatching blackberries and raspberries along many trails. The fall prairie landscape may offer rose hips for tea (*or perhaps wine?*), while near Little Spring, apples for cider and



sauce abound, and a

variety of nuts (hickory, hazelnut, walnut) wait in the woods – **but hurry, squirrels and chipmunks may get there first!**

As winter descends, spend time familiarizing yourself with mushroom guidebooks, so that when spring arrives, you'll be able to gather many tasty varieties. **Enjoy!**



Pheasant's Back Mushrooms at Donald Park.
Photo by Judy Dvorak

Many visitors hunt Morel Mushrooms at the park.



Summer and Fall Happenings

By Barb Hartman

The annual **Bring Your Pop to Pop's Knoll** Father's Day picnic on June 21st brought over 100 people out for fun festivities, including campfires, hot dogs, root beer floats, kids activities and music by Bluegrass Tea and Company.

A wonderful **Stargazing** event in August enthralled a good-sized group of visitors considering it had to be delayed to the 2nd night and it was a little foggy the earlier part of the evening. Visitors viewed the Perseid Meteor showers and the stars and planets as well as the International Space Station as it travelled overhead through telescopes provided by Madison Astronomical Society.

In October, more than 175 **Mt. Horeb 3rd graders, teacher and parent chaperones** spent time in their "outdoor laboratory", collecting seeds, studying pond life, writing poetry and exploring park trails.

The Cabin at Little Spring stone wall project was approved by Dane County Parks and the Friends Board of Directors. We applied for grant money to help with the cost of this project and recently learned that the Mt. Horeb Community Foundation has awarded us \$2500.

Eight panels for the **Interpretive project** are in production and will be installed in several park locations as weather permits.

NOT A FRIENDS MEMBER?

Join others whose dues support Friends activities and help Donald Park be a wonderful resource for the people of our region! Please go to: www.donaldpark.org, for a membership form.

Bluebird Update

By Barb Hartman and Ray Glew



The 2015 bluebird season was interesting, every year has different results. 2014 presented a black fly problem where we lost chicks, this year we had a lot of eggs that didn't hatch. Even with those that didn't hatch, we had a good year with 130 bluebird eggs hatched and fledged with 32 nest boxes. Our bluebird team at Donald Park looks forward to each season. Even though a chickadee, tree swallow or house

wren may inhabit a nest where we hope to find a bluebird, we monitor them as it is the responsibility of our conservation team to protect all songbirds. The bluebirds have left for warmer climates but when March 2016 arrives, we will gather to prepare the nest boxes for another exciting season of blue-birding. At the end of the season our dedicated team gathers to review their experiences of blue-birding in Donald Park and the final reporting results and share a potluck picnic supper.

Above photo - A bluebird at one of our boxes.

SAVE THESE DATES

❖ Friends of Donald Park Annual Meeting

Tuesday, January 19, 2016

7:00 – 8:30 pm

Additional information will be mailed to current members in December

❖ Friends Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

Saturday, March 19, 2016

5:30 – 9:00 pm

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖
PLEASE NOTE: December 8th is the deadline for nominations for 2016 Friends Board members. For details email us at: contact@donaldpark.org

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

"There is strength in the hills and peace in the valleys."

Delma Donald Woodburn

Horse Trail Report

By Roger Paar

Hay all,

I Hope you all enjoyed riding our trails this summer, it was a great riding season! It was also a lot of work for *Rob Schultz and me* to keep the trails mowed since the grass didn't stop growing.

In late summer we were happy to receive an offer from Middleton UPS to help at the park by bringing 13 employees for a corporate work day. Needless to say, I put them to work, with two of our volunteers as leaders, to clean up the horse trails outside the park. *Thanks to Don Gay and Bob Ramsey for helping!* With all this help, we were able to open up all the trails and cut them back for a few years of growth. *Thank you Middleton UPS!*

Ranger Brian and I talked about placing a permanent curb where I had put the sandbags to protect the steps leading down to the trailhead. While this is on Brian's schedule, his schedule is so busy that it may be awhile.

As usual, we have more projects in mind for next year, so if you're interested in helping, please contact me.

Thanks, Roger



2016 Equestrian Trail Passes

Get "a leg up" on next year's riding season and order your 2016 trail passes now!

100% of the funds from passes sold by the Friends stay at Donald Park to help maintain and enhance our wonderful trails. Passes are \$20 (\$12 for seniors 65+).

To order, mail your check, payable to Friends of Donald Park, to: Jean Warrior, 548 Linden Street, Verona, WI 53593. Or...call (608) 770-3961.

Trail passes make excellent holiday gifts for the trail riders on your list!!



Friends of Donald Park

Partners with the Dane County Adult Conservation Team



2015 Donald Park Board

President:	Roger Parr
Vice President:	Dominic Ledesma
Secretary:	Pat Schultz
Treasurer:	Vickie Peterson
Directors:	Judy Dvorak Matt Marty Donna Thomas
Recording Secretary:	Barb Hartman – Non Board member

Donald Park Administrative Assistant: Barb Hartman

NEWSLETTER STAFF:

Editors: Judy Dvorak and Donna Thomas

Graphic Design: Judy Dvorak

THANK YOU to the following for their photographs for this newsletter: Judy Dvorak and Dave Green

Calendar of Events

Horse trail volunteer workdays: Several Saturdays during the riding season. Call Roger Parr: 832-4410.

Archaeological activities: Call Matt Marty: 249-5898

Natural areas restoration volunteer workdays: Every Tuesday 8:30am - Noon, some weekends as needed. Call Barb Hartman: 437-5210 to confirm.

Third Tuesdays some months: Board of Directors meetings, open to the public. Call Barb Hartman: 437-5210 to confirm location.

Saturday, January 2: Snowshoe Scurry Race – fun for the entire family, including the dog! Information/registration at: snowshoewi.com.

Tuesday, January 19: Friends Annual Meeting, 7:00-8:30pm. See page 3 for more information

Saturday, January 30: 2nd Snowshoe Scurry – See above listing for contact information.

Saturday, February 13: 3rd Snowshoe Scurry – See above listing for contact information.

Saturday, March 19: Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, 5:00-9:00 pm, Mt. Vernon.