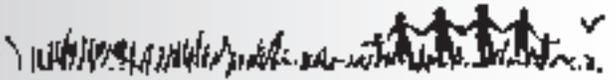


PARK VIEWS



A Publication of The Friends of Donald Park, Inc.

Spring/Summer 2015

What's Happening at Donald Park?



Bring Your Pop To Pop's Knoll

Father's Day - Sunday, June 21

Pop's Knoll * 11:00am - 2:00pm

A Special Family Outdoor Day

The Friends of Donald Park invite you to join us for our Annual Father's Day Picnic on Sunday, June 21st from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Bring dad, your family, friends and a picnic lunch – or grill out! **Don't forget your camera!**

- * Fun filled activities & entertainment for all ages
- * Music by **Bluegrass Tea & Company**
- * Self-guided hiking tours
- * Horse painting and other kids' activities
- * Bring kites to fly
- * **And as usual, hot dogs and root beer floats will be available for purchase.**

Donald Park is located between Mt. Horeb and Mt. Vernon on Highway 92. Enter at the Pop's Knoll entrance. For more information, visit www.donaldpark.org or email, contact@donaldpark.org.



Bluegrass Tea & Company

Donald Rock Revealed!

By Bob Dettwiler

"The Driftless Area abounds with natural elements that serve as geographic reference points and excite curiosity or awe. Among these is Donald Rock... Years ago, this prominent formation could be seen from a great distance, rising above a largely treeless landscape and serving as an important landmark for generations of travelers... In the past, those who scaled Donald Rock's heights enjoyed a commanding view of the countryside."

This spring, these words from the interpretive panel that will be installed at Pop's Knoll inspired the Friends hard-working natural areas volunteers to begin removing the brush and trees that were making the Donald Rock formation almost impossible to see anymore.

Our volunteers focused mainly on the south face of the rock, which turned out to be a fairly big job. Over the course of 10 workdays, we cut down many trees, eventually using a long rope, log chains and a tractor to pull the trees and branches off the hillside so we could cut them into smaller pieces.

As you drive by on Highway 92, be sure to check it out. We have already heard many positive comments about how the rock now looks. But please remember, climbing to the top of Donald Rock is no longer permitted, due to the need to protect sensitive vegetation and soil. **See picture of the Rock today on last page!**

Editor's Note: Bob, who is the volunteer in charge of the Tuesday volunteers, is speaking in a characteristically modest way when he uses the term "fairly big" to describe the difficult work that this project entailed.

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.

4th Annual Donald Dash, Another Success!

By Barb Hartman

It was a perfect spring day when 143 registered runners and 30 volunteers participated in the 4th Annual Donald Dash 10km trail run at Donald Park sponsored by Driftless Sports Club and Friends of Donald Park on Saturday, May 9th. Runners came from all around Dane County, Baraboo, Menasha, Janesville, Milton, Menasha, Stevens Point, Orangeville IL, Rockford IL and even Gillette WY. The overall female winner was Alexa Richardson from Stoughton, with a time of 48:43 and the male winner was David Smith, from Stevens Point with a time of 39:55. Participants were treated to homemade cookies from our volunteers, fresh fruit, juice and energy snacks.

Thanks to the following sponsors for contributing to the event: ☆ Driftless Sports Club, ☆ Friends of Donald Park, ☆ EVP Coffee, ☆ GU, ☆ Gentle Breeze Honey, ☆ Morningwood Farm Nursery and Green Houses, ☆ Movin Shoes, ☆ Sjolinds Chocolate House and ☆ Sweeney Construction.

Special thanks to all of the volunteers and Mt. Horeb EMS who helped make the event run smoothly. Proceeds from the race benefited Donald Park for trail maintenance and repair.



Cool Stuff That Grows In Donald Park

By Dominic James Ledesma Perzichilli



Among the many natural curiosities found growing in Donald Park, one of the most unique plants I have ever had the opportunity to encounter is the *Monotropa uniflora*. Among the many common names it has picked up over the years from different observers and sources, perhaps the most fitting is the *Ghost Flower*.

Commonly found in Oak and Pine woodlands, it grows in clusters of downward turned flowers ranging between 3-8" in height.

What is most unique about the Ghost Flower is that it is not green but a translucent white. This is because it lacks chlorophyll, a key agent that helps plants turn sunlight into food through the biochemical process of photosynthesis. Given its unusual appearance, some people may mistake this plant for a fungus. The Ghost Flower is a plant but does not find nourishment from sunlight. It gets its energy from a mycorrhiza, which is a mutually beneficial relationship between a microscopic fungus and the roots of a plant. The fungus helps break down organic material that is then consumed by the Ghost Flower plant.

It grows between mid to late summer and "blooms" in August; but if a flower grows as part of the waxy white plant, how can you tell when it blooms? Once the plant is fertilized by insects, the flower turns upward and the scaly leaves begin to turn black. **Hints on where to spot the Ghost Flower in DP:** Try checking the wooded hiking path that leads to the Deer Creek parking lot or under the cedar trees that line the Big Spring site.

Sources: Wisconsin Natural Resources Magazine, USDA Plant Data Base, Robert Freckmann Herbarium at UW-Stevens Point



Foye Cabin Foundation – Next Steps

By Matt Marty

In May, sixteen members of the Friends “Super Board” (*the term I give to the folks who have been involved with key Friends initiatives over the years*) assembled at Springdale Town Hall to discuss and make a recommendation for what to do with the reconstructed historic cabin foundation at Little Spring.



This project started in the summer of 2008 with an archaeological dig, and ended with foundation reconstruction by Kirch Masonry of Barneveld in 2012. Since that time, the foundation has been temporarily capped. I conducted an extensive search for a log cabin that could be moved to the site with no luck. Then, in 2013, I received a call from Nels Diller expressing an interest in being involved if we should decide to build a log cabin on the foundation. (*Nels is the gentleman who built the Norwegian Stavva on Main Street in Mt. Horeb.*) In February, Nels gave a great talk and slide show on how to build a log cabin to the Super Board. This sparked interest in constructing a complete cabin with volunteer participation.

We were now faced with several alternatives: construct a complete log cabin using authentic building techniques; construct a cabin “ruin”; fill in the foundation, pave it with flag stone and mow it to making a picnic area (*allowing people in the future to determine what to build on the foundation*); or build a cabin from a kit. Each option would include signage to explain the site’s history.

Our Super Board members engaged in a very lively discussion of eight questions that I developed to help focus our thoughts. We quickly narrowed the choices to two – building a complete cabin using authentic methods or constructing a ruin. There were serious concerns with both options, including security, maintenance and accessibility for the cabin, and the need for a shelter to cover the ruin, which would look out of place.

Nearing the end of the discussion, an earlier option was resurrected and given new life. Someone suggested that we fill in the foundation (*using washed stone that could be removed in the future, if desired*), then extend the foundation walls upward by adding two feet of stone to the walls, with cap stones on top to create a low wall for seating. Gaps in the wall could show door locations. We could also outline the significant parts of the cabin, such as the location of the bedroom, trqp door, cook stove and parlor stove. The advantages: this option is probably the least expensive of those consid-

ered; it would preserve an historical site in such a way that it could be used as a site for a log cabin at some time in the future; it could be done relatively soon; the maintenance would be very low and the security shouldn’t be any greater than for benches in the park. It was also thought that this type of site would not be obnoxious to park users and with the signage, would explain why it is there. It would allow visitors to imagine what the building actually looked like.

There was also talk of using a path to show where the barn, sheds and outhouse may have been located. This would be speculative, of course, because we have never found evidence of these structures.

The vote was taken and the low-wall option was the overwhelming favorite. This option allows us to make the foundation a monument to those who passed before us, and create a contemplative spot where people can sit down and look at the surrounding beauty, the spring, orchard, prairies and people using the trail. The process now moves to the Friends board for a decision. The board then sends its recommendation to Dane County Parks for final approval. **Stay tuned!**

A Few Words On Donald Park

By Rachel Rucinski



A come as you are kind of place, with its uniquely diverse landscape, Donald Park has been a favorite of mine for many years now. From its rocky outcrops to restored prairies, and natural springs to mature hardwoods, and all the streams in-between, Donald Park truly has it covered, with each of its seasons equally enchanting. I used

to long for and look forward to the idea of a visit to the park and even more so now that I’ve relocated to Central Wisconsin. Donald Park has always been a place where I gathered with my friends, both two and four-legged to relish in and appreciate the beauty of our great State. It is a true gem and to the Friends of Donald Park, I thank you for your commitment to conserving/preserving/protecting this very special place.

Comments from park visitor, Rachel Rucinski, sharing her thoughts and experiences at Donald Park. Thank you Rachel!

*“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've been out enjoying your horses this spring. The trails in the park are in fantastic condition and ready for all to use. I'm still finishing up some things on the parks *outside/landowner* trails, but they are open and can be used.

The horse trail committee could really use a few good people to help out with the work load - keeping our trails in good condition and the planning of more outside trails. Please contact me (832-4410), if you are able to help us. Your help will be greatly appreciated!

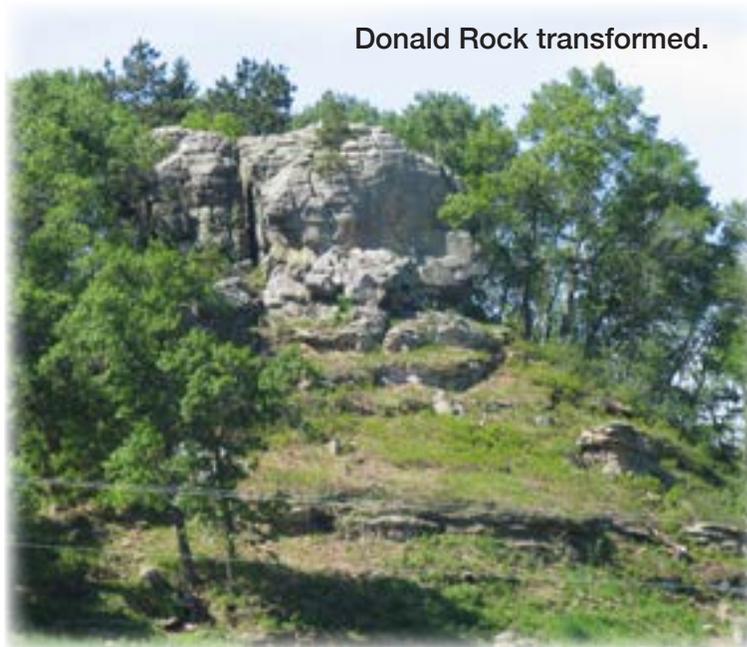
I've been working with the county to develop a water crossing near the old wooden bridge. *I see we've had some riders watering horses there, but we shouldn't use this spot because of the deep, soft mud. For your horse's safety please refrain from using this spot.*

Alyssa Yogerst has been making progress on the planning of the ACTHA-type obstacles within the park and we will start building them soon. Once again, if you're interested in helping please let me know.

Thanks, Roger



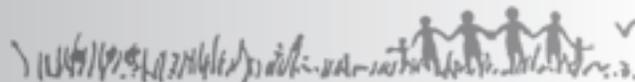
Thanks again this year to Jean Warrior, who has sold over 125 trail passes amounting to more than \$2,200 that will stay at Donald Park for horse trail maintenance. We believe Jean's sales are increasing in part because **you, the users**, spread the word to order your passes from her. **We thank you for that!**



Donald Rock transformed.

Friends of Donald Park

Partners with the Dane County Adult Conservation Team



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Vice President:	Dominic Ledesma
Secretary:	Pat Schultz
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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: Driftless Sports Club, Don Hartman, Rachel Rucinski

Calendar of Events

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

Historic settlers' cabin activities: Call Matt Marty: 249-5898

Natural areas restoration volunteer workdays: Every Tuesday 8:30am - Noon. Call Barb: 437-5210.

Third Tuesdays every month: Board of Directors meetings, open to the public. Usually held at Springdale Town Hall. Call Barb to confirm location & time: 437-5210.

Sunday, June 15: "Bring Your Pop To Pop's Knoll" Annual Father's Day Event. 11:00am - 2:00pm. See front page.

Friday, July 25: Stargazing Event at Pop's Knoll. Rain-date Saturday, July 26. Contact Barb for further details: 437-5210 or contact@donaldpark.org

October 31: Equestrian trails close for the season in all Dane County Parks.