

PARKVIEWS

A Publication of The Friends of Donald Park, Inc.

Fall/Winter 2019

FALL AND WINTER AT DONALD PARK

Further Insights Into One Of Donald Park's Founding Families

By Donna Thomas

This newsletter often features the Donald Family, especially Delma Donald Woodburn (1899-2001), who in 1993 spearheaded her family's initiative to donate land to form the nucleus of Donald Park.

Family members continue to come into sharper focus as articles and research shed more light on their lives and contributions. An article in the Mount Horeb Area Historical Society's July publication puts the civic-mindedness and progressive ideals of Vona DeCrow Donald (Delma's mother) into the context of the decades-long local, state and national effort to gain women's suffrage.

The article notes that as a young bride newly arrived in Springdale in 1898, Vona was knowledgeable about "...city ways and well educated about the wider work beyond the confines of the farm..." She and husband John "...were no typical regional farm couple." As she grew into her life in Wisconsin, Vona took up many causes, often with a focus on modern approaches to education and reform.

Friends of the Donalds shared in their progressive ideals, among them "Fighting Bob" La Follette and his wife Belle. An advocate for equal rights for women, Belle spoke to crowds in the Mt. Horeb area while Vona eloquently and passionately expressed her views in area newspapers. Thanks in part to these brave, energetic women, Wisconsin became the first state to ratify the 19th Amendment granting national suffrage to women; 2019 marks that event's centennial anniversary.

The Mount Horeb Driftless Historium's collections include extensive Donald Family holdings. This year, intern Kaitlynn Gipson, a UW-Madison library sciences graduate student, began organizing the family's personal correspondence. Kaitlynn first focused on letters related to Delma, John and Vona during the period 1900-1930, analyzing them by major historical themes, events and patterns-- a valuable way to increase accessibility for researchers.



The Donald-Woodburn Family in their Madison home, 1929, left to right: Ellen Sweet Donald Jones; John Sweet Donald; Delma Donald Woodburn; James "Pop" Woodburn; Vona DeCrow Donald; and Delma's and James' sons James Jr. (left) and Robert. Courtesy, Mount Horeb Area Historical Society.

Kaitlynn met with Friends board members in August to share insights gained from this project. She stressed family members' profound sense of legacy. Much was saved---the clothing worn in photographs; every holiday card they received---and clearly the act of corresponding through writing was very important. John wrote Vona every day when they

Continued on next page

MISSION STATEMENT

Friends of Donald Park, Inc. promotes and supports the development and passive use of Donald County 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.

were apart. Sometimes, letters were very touching, as when John gently scolded Vona that he wasn't receiving letters regularly (a reflection of how much he missed hearing from her), or when women wrote to Vona seeking support during their times of loss and family tragedy (two of Vona's and John's children had died very young). We look forward to hearing

more from Kaitlynn as she continues working with the Historium and undertakes research on Vona.
To read "Vona Donald and the Wisconsin Suffrage Movement" by Brian Bigler and Ken Scott, go to the July 2019 issue of the Mt. Horeb Past Times: <http://www.mthorebhistory.org/newsletter.html> Kailynn Gipson is profiled in the November 2019 issue.

Horse Trails

By Roger Parr

Well, once again we've had an incredible wet year at the park and it's been hard on all our trails. The constant rain has kept the ground so wet it's been extremely hard to maintain the condition of the trails. I'm sure you've noticed all the parks in our area have had to close their trails multiple times this past year. Donald Park closed only a few times. We rely on all of our friends to be respectful of the trail conditions and let the trails dry out before using them and creating any damage. Thanks for helping protect Donald Park!

This next year we have an opportunity to expand some of our multiuse trails on the west side of the park, up behind Pat's homestead area. Many of these trails need only to be mowed and have signage installed. Some will need a little trail building work. I hope to get some crews together early in the spring and start working on these trails so we can get to using them. I'll keep you informed when we schedule a date. Adaptive Restoration did some trimming on the outside trails to allow their tractors to fit thru some areas when they mow, so hopefully we will only need to clean up the unimproved trails this spring on our workdays. Let's hope next year will be somewhat drier than the last previous couple years so we'll be able to get out and enjoy the trails!



2020 Equestrian Trail Passes

Get a "leg up" on next year's riding season and order your 2020 trail passes now. 100% of money from passes sold by the Friends stays at Donald Park to 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. Questions? Call 608-770-3961.

Trail passes make excellent gifts for the equestrians on your list!

HWY G Park Entrance

The park is closed to equestrians from Nov 1 to May 1 so the gate at the Hwy G entrance is now closed. BUT REMEMBER, it's still possible to park at the gate and walk in. The park itself is open year-round and glorious in all seasons!

"There is strength in the hills and peace in the valleys."
Delma Donald Woodburn, Donald County Park Co-Founder



Cub Scouts of Pack 62 gather seeds

Cub Scout Seed Gathering

By Barb Hartman

Scout leaders Adrienne Stauffacher and Ryan Danz along with the Mt. Horeb Cub Scouts Pack 62 visited Donald Park in October to gather prairie seeds with the help of Friends volunteers Barb Hartman, Carolyn Johnson and Donna Thomas (Mary Spaay scouted seed sources for us in advance of the visit). The weather was a bit dreary but raindrops held out so that scouts, their parents and siblings could have a great outdoor experience and gather a fair amount of seeds. A few scouts have had experience gathering seeds on their school field trips and provided valuable skills to the younger participants.

Watch for more info about these events in the new year:

- Annual Meeting:**
Open to all. To be held in January. All Friends members will receive a notice in the mail.
- Maple Syrup Event:**
Planned for March. Fun for the entire family. Watch for announcements when the sap starts to flow!
- Volunteer Appreciation Dinner:**
March 21



Young visitors to the 2019 maple syrup event watch sap flow



The Bluebird Team, L-R: Aimee & Steve Gauger, Liz McBride & David Thompson, Katie & Lee Haag, Jenny Seivert & John Shaw, Barb & Don Hartman.
Not pictured: Susan Eisele, Sharon Hughes, Ray Glew

Bluebird Report

By Ray Glew and Barb Hartman

2019 presented less than positive results for the Bluebirds at Donald Park. Rainy weather, black flies, takeover of house sparrows and predators resulted in loss of bluebird eggs and chicks and also tree swallow chicks. It's our practice to monitor other songbirds like tree swallows and wrens and they didn't fair well either. As a bluebird restoration team, we evaluate restoration results at the end of each season and in Spring 2020 will be concentrating on practices to take back the boxes from the house sparrows and prepare for conditions that keep our bluebirds from being successful. Summary: Total of 51 bluebirds fledged, 20 wrens, 9 tree swallows. Almost had a chickadee nest but wrens took over.

Friends Embark On Two Exciting Partnerships

The Friends organization is pleased partner with Dane County Parks and Adaptive Restoration in two major undertakings important for the health of Donald Park natural areas. Already underway is the **Grassland Bird Habitat Restoration Project** on Donald Park’s west side, involving fence line brush removal by Adaptive Restoration. The Friends are committing \$5,600 to this important effort and also will sponsor bird surveys to track increased use by threatened species such as meadowlarks, bobolinks, various sparrows and bluebirds.

The **Forest Management Project** begins in spring with a survey of several hundred acres of Donald Park woodlands. Recommendations based on survey findings will create a 10-year management plan, including species removal and burning, to enhance the park’s high quality oak forests and oak openings. The Friends will cover one third of the cost, about

\$4,500, with Dane County Parks sharing another third of the cost and Adaptive Restoration very generously contributing the final third.

Adaptive Restoration LLC is a full-service ecological restoration and land management company with services based on a foundation of science, learning and outreach, and responsible ecosystem management.

We couldn’t be more pleased to undertake these partnerships that will further improve the natural beauty and resources of our wonderful park!

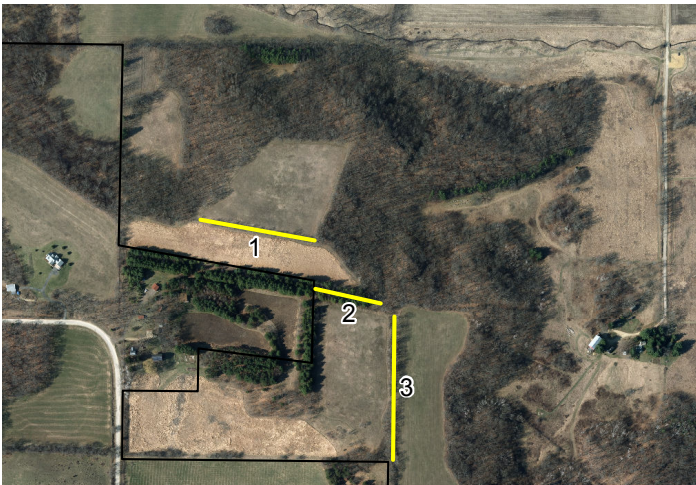
The Friends’ monetary contributions to these projects are made possible, in part, by supporters’ gifts. If you would like to make a year-end gift in support of this work, please send a check payable to

FRIENDS OF DONALD PARK
P.O. Box 235, Mt. Horeb WI 53572

Thank you!



Fenceline clearing by Adaptive Restoration



Map showing the fence lines being cleared for the Grassland Bird Habitat Restoration project

Rain Brings Challenges to Natural Areas Work

By Bob Dettweiler

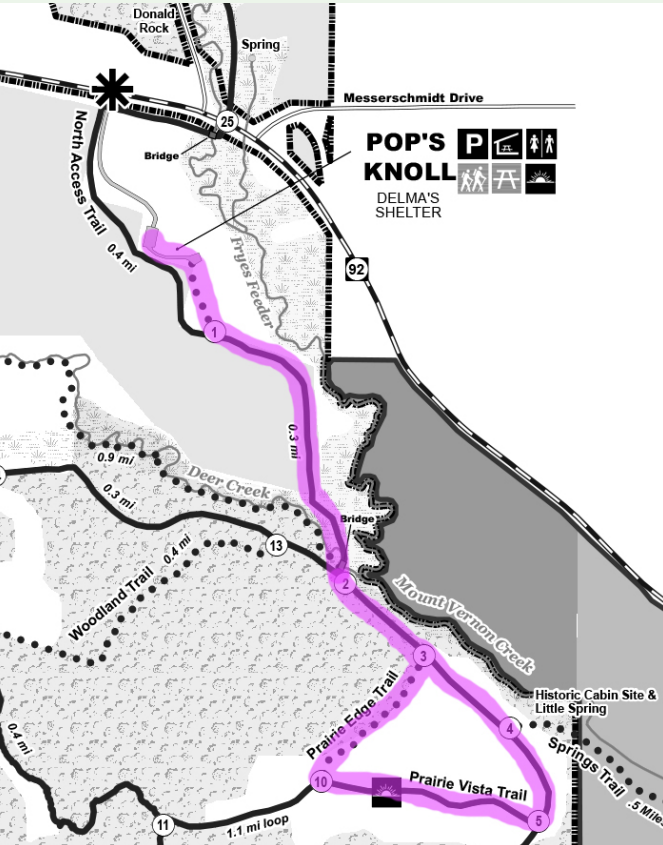
The biggest problem that our dedicated Natural Areas volunteers dealt with all summer and fall was rain. Many Monday nights saw rain/snow, which changed our plans for our Tuesday workday. Fortunately the Friends purchased a walk-behind brush hog through a grant from the Dane County Environmental Council; we used it almost every Tuesday to keep the trails widened. We had many wet areas in the low spots on the trails and in many cases it was too wet to fix them. The biggest problem was west of the Sutter Drive parking lot. Water draining from the wetlands in that area made it almost impossible to get through with the mowers. We put in drain tile to get the water to the creek without passing over the trail and created swales to channel the water toward the drain tile. Although we got stuck many times with lawn tractors/mowers we were able to keep the other trails open most of the summer. We also cleared a lot of brush along the trail coming in from the Hwy G Equestrian Access and around Donald Rock.



Trail Guide: Prairie Loop Hike

By Jenn Tzeng

One of my favorite hikes in Donald Park is a loop around Deer Creek Prairie. For this easy and family friendly trail, we park at the Pop’s Knoll Trailhead. The trip is 1.8 miles. With my toddler, it takes about 1.5 hours, but would be much shorter without breaks for snacks and playing in the grass!



From Pop Knoll walk towards marker 1. The trail begins through the tall grass and wild flowers. In warmer weather, you can see butterflies fluttering along the trail. Continue walking past the bridge on your left. (Or stop to view the water of the Fries Feeder, and return to the hiking trail).



Jack and Emma Tzeng

When you reach the bridge over Deer Creek, you will see trail marker 2. Take a left toward the Prairie Edge Trail, turning right at marker 3 to hike up the hill. Enjoy the prairie and vista from marker 10 to 5 before walking downhill. If you are interested in history, there is a historic cabin, spring and interpretive panels along the Spring Trail near marker 4. Continue towards marker 3 to complete the loop. A majestic tree stands tall on the edge of the prairie in this segment.

Return along the same path to the Pop Knoll Parking Lot. Delma’s shelter has picnic tables for snacks and a toilet.



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View our Facebook page for updates about our park. Invite your friends by sharing our events. <https://www.facebook.com/donaldcountypark/>



VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO VIEW
<http://donaldpark.org/>
Trail Maps & Directions
Support our club



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES!

Volunteers make it possible for the Friends to support Donald County Park in so many ways!

We invite volunteer participation in all that we do—from natural areas restoration to writing and research.

Among special current needs, people to help with a variety of outreach tasks.

For more information, contact:
contact@donaldpark.org

“We can do this!”
Pat Hitchcock, Donald County Park Co-Founder

Friends of Donald Park

Partners with the Dane County Adult Conservation Team



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Friends of Donald Park,
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Horse trail volunteer workdays:

Several Saturdays throughout the season. Call Roger Parr: 832-4410.

Natural areas restoration volunteer workdays:

Every Tuesday 8:30 a.m.-noon, some weekends as needed. Call Barb Hartman: 437-5210.

Board of Directors meetings:

Third Tuesday, quarterly; open to the public.
Call Barb Hartman, 437-5210 to confirm date, location.

Annual Meeting: January 21st; Location TBA.

Maple Syrup Event: March - Date TBA

Horse Trails open: May 1—October 31

9th Annual Donald Dash: Saturday, May 2, 9am

Annual Father's Day Picnic: June 21, 11am-2pm