

SCHUMACHER FARM PARK MASTER PLAN REPORT

Prepared by the Dane County Parks Department

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Acknowledgments

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“The goal of a historic farm site is to give to the visitor a realization that the basic needs of all people are similar and that each period in history takes care of those needs in its own way. The visitor to Schumacher Farm will realize that the manner of living which he experiences and enjoys has roots in the period depicted on the farm and that his present lifestyle developed out of the life and problems of earlier generations. People visit a historic site to search for cultural roots, for entertainment and because of their interest in people of yesteryear – to learn what these people wore, what they ate, what their entertainment was, and how they made a living. They seek to identify with them.”

Marcella Schumacher Pendall, 1987

Introduction

Schumacher Farm Park is classified as a Historic Site in the Dane County park system. Marcella Schumacher Pendall donated the original 40 acres to Dane County Parks in 1978. The park emphasizes preservation, restoration and education of the rural heritage that characterized Dane County following recorded human settlement. Schumacher Farm functions as a living history museum, representing farm life during the early 1900's, and as a place of prairie restoration and passive recreation. This master plan seeks to provide a vision for the ongoing restoration and development of this important cultural and natural resource and will serve as a guide to the future development of the park as a whole. The park boundaries were recently expanded with the purchase of the 77.7-acre Raemisch parcel; therefore, this plan will also serve to create a seamless boundary between existing and future park developments. The 1998 Master Plan for Schumacher Farm Park (Appendix II) is still intended to be utilized for future site development at the original farmstead.

The vision of this plan is to create a park environment that will allow users to experience and appreciate pre-settlement through modern day landscapes with an emphasis on education of the 1920's farming era. Recreational use of the site will be secondary and limited to passive activities such as hiking, cross-country skiing, picnicking and nature observation.

Planning Process

Master plan meetings were held with the Friends of Schumacher Farm from December of 2003 through present. Periodic updates on the planning process were presented to the Dane County Parks Commission were provided through the spring of 2005. Dane County Parks presented this master plan project to the Village of Waunakee and Town of Westport Plan Commissions for public comment in the spring of 2005.

Site Inventory

The site consists of about 116 acres, located at 5682 Hwy 19, Town of Westport, Dane County, T 8N, R9E, Section 4. There are currently three major parkland uses of the parcel– historical farmstead, prairie restoration and leased cropland.

Natural Resources

Natural Environment

The gently rolling topography of the farm site affords panoramic views of the surrounding countryside. Views include the State Capitol Building in Madison, modern day farms, rural subdivisions and the Waunakee Business Park. These views provide excellent visual samples of Dane County history as well as educational opportunities. Vegetation cover for most of the undeveloped lands is primarily in row crops and prairie restoration.

Based on the Dane County Soil Survey, soils on the site include Griswold loams, Kidder soils, Huntsville silt loam, Plano silt loams, Ringwood silt loams, a St. Charles silt loam and a Troxel silt loam.

The Kidder soils series located on the steep slope north of the farmhouse has severe limitations for any type of recreational development or disturbances due to highly erodible soils.

Cultural Environment

Existing buildings include the original farmhouse and one barn. The house and original Schumacher barn are of early vintage, built in 1908 and 1909 respectively. The house is a two-story, wood frame, classic-style farmhouse. The barn is large and typical of the era, with a stone foundation rising through the ground floor and wood construction on the second floor and above. A granary was relocated to the farmstead in 1999. A corncrib and hog house were added in 2000 and an outhouse in 2004. Both the farmhouse and adjacent barn are equipped with electricity and running water and the granary has electricity as well. A sandbox and pit toilets are on site. A barn donated by the Kaltenberg family was relocated to the site in the spring of 2004 to become the future park headquarters. On December 12, 2004 high winds blew the barn over before it could be secured to a foundation. At the time of this report, the Friends of Schumacher Farm are investigating the construction of a new barn, which will closely mimic the Kaltenberg barn.

There are no recorded archeological resources on site.

Plan Recommendations

Demonstration Farm Area Development

Friends of Schumacher Farm designed the existing Schumacher Farm program areas. Maintenance of grounds and routine building maintenance are the responsibility of Dane County Parks while the responsibility for public programming and 1920's farm era restoration lies with the Friends organization. Dane County Parks has worked with the Friends to design the spatial organization of the proposed building and grounds layout of the Raemisch parcel. Dane County Public Works will need to continue to provide technical expertise for all building development at the park. Please see the attached 1998 Master Plan for the layout of the working farm's demonstration spaces.

Parkland Development

In 2001, Dane County purchased the adjacent Raemisch property, which added 77.7 acres to the park. It is anticipated that the northern half of this parcel will be dedicated to prairie restoration and passive recreation uses. The parcel is currently under crop lease until December 2006, at which time the lease may be renewed in 2-3 year increments.

Park program areas of the Raemisch parcel would include trails, parking, kiosks, and a small shelter to be located on the crest of the hill. A small picnic area would also be located near the high point of the parcel. All park program areas will be developed and maintained by Dane County Parks.

Trails within the park will be natural surface trails of mowed grass or if serving a dual purpose, crushed limestone. These trails are expected to accommodate a variety of uses from service access to cross-country skiing and hiking. A park kiosk and/or trailhead will be located at a point off of the regional trail expected to run adjacent to Highway 19. As stated in the Friends of Schumacher Farm's Master Plan of 1998, this regional trail would "connect Schumacher Farms with other public lands and population clusters ... and could potentially increase lineal trails for hiking, skiing and equestrian use." This regional trail is also supported in the Northern Lake Mendota Regional Plan, the Waunakee-Westport Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and the Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan 2001-2005. As funding allows, Dane County Parks will seek a separated grade crossing for this regional trail, possibly utilizing the culvert location east of the park when HWY 113 is reconstructed. This culvert would serve to connect trail users to the parks as well as channel stormwater. Until funding is available, the access trail to the park crossing STH 113 would make use of the stoplight at Schumacher Road.

The open shelter located near the crest of the hill northeast of the new barn location will be surrounded by utility open space to accommodate seasonal

activities such as picnicking or Fourth of July fireworks displays. A small parking lot with an accessible path will be located near the shelter, carefully sited to minimize visibility of parked cars on the crest of the hill. Interpretive signage could be installed at this location.

The location for the shelter will best take advantage of the surrounding viewsheds. As lands to the south of Schumacher Farm are considered for development, the Friends of Schumacher Farm and Dane County Parks should work with the Town of Westport and the Village of Waunakee to preserve views of the lakes and the downtown isthmus to the greatest extent possible. At the request of the Village of Waunakee Plan Commission in March of 2005, Dane County Planning and Development conducted a southern viewshed analysis from the proposed shelter site in the spring of 2005. The analysis was done on lands south of STH 113 and found that a proposed building height of greater than 2 stories may obstruct views of the lake and isthmus from the park. (Appendix III)

The sugarbush stand will be located north of the pine stand along the north/central boundary line. Sugar maples can grow well on both sloped and level sites and are shade tolerant. If planted on a slope, south facing is preferred.

Should the Friends group wish to additionally expand the farm program areas outside the Raemisch parcel in the future, acreage northwest of the farmstead has been reserved for this use.

Future Acquisition

At this time, there are no plans to expand the park size. In the future, the County or Friends may consider the adjacent private residence on Hwy 113 for purchase. Also, if necessary, an easement may be purchased to accommodate the proposed regional trail corridor that would connect to the separated grade crossing on the northside of Hwy 113 east of the park.

Action Plan

The stewardship of this unique park is best served by a strong partnership between the Friends of Schumacher Farm, the Marcella Pendall Schumacher Trust and Dane County Parks. The Friends are responsible for the development of the working farm program areas including fundraising and management. For example, the proposed crop demonstration areas and the livestock areas will be exclusively maintained and managed by the Friends group. Due to the unpredictability of funding, a time frame for action plan items may not be useful. However, recommendations can be made based on what currently exists on site. In October of 2004, the design process for the Kaltenberg barn foundation was completed and construction began. After the loss of the donated Kaltenberg barn, Dane County Public Works has been working with the Friends on planning for a replacement barn. Construction is anticipated during the summer of 2005. Dane County Parks will create access to the new barn and an accompanying small parking area once the new barn is constructed – possibly in the fall of 2005. For the short term, the existing gravel field road will be utilized to provide construction access to the site. Long-term plans call for rerouting the entrance road of the park toward the southeast corner of the Raemisch parcel, as shown on the Master Plan.

Phase I of the new barn site development would include the access drive and small employee parking lot constructed by Dane County Parks and open grass utility area surrounding the barn. Initial site development of the farm program area would also include planting of a small family orchard and sugarbush by the Friends. The area for the orchard was staked out in the spring of 2005 with an expected planting date of summer 2005. The proposal to take the acreage for the sugarbush out of cropping should be reviewed with the Conservation Fund Lands Manager over the winter months of 2005. The Friends should next consider the addition of a machine shed/storage building as soon as funds allow

to house equipment and machinery necessary to operate and maintain their facilities.

Phase II would depend on the location of the next building acquisition. If the next building added is the tobacco shed, it should be located to accommodate the future park entrance road and proposed parking lot to the east. If the next building added to the site is the Historic School, the existing gravel road from the barn would be extended eastward and another large, open area of grass would be mowed and maintained as parking for seasonal gatherings. As the road is extended east into the park, future parking areas could be developed. A gated maintenance road that would also serve as an accessible path would be located on the east side of the barn. Creation of the new entrance to the park will be based on availability of funds. Necessary approvals would need to be obtained from the Wisconsin DOT and possibly, the Town of Westport. Discussion with WisDOT should take place regarding future plans to reconstruct STH 113, as this would be the ideal time to create the new entrance to the park. When the new entrance to the park is created, the existing field road access would be connected to the Schumacher Farm parking lot adjacent to the existing white barn and the connection to STH 113 abandoned. It is the understanding of the Friends and Parks from a meeting with WDOT that abandonment of the field access drive will allow creation of the park entrance to STH 113. The existing gravel driveway to Schumacher Farm could then be gated and serve as a special event and maintenance access only. A gate should also be considered immediately west of the new barn to allow access only on a seasonal basis. A capital improvement schedule for additional building development in the farm program area is presented under Appendix IV. These projects would be funded primarily by the Friends.

As far as parkland development is concerned, Dane County Parks will construct regional trail segments within the park as funding becomes available and trail connections outside the park are in place. Land in the Raemisch parcel is

expected to be restored to prairie plantings in 6 -12 acre allotments as funding allows and the Friends of Schumacher Farm will be notified pending restoration. Trails that follow the perimeter of the Raemisch parcel would be the first to be developed by Dane County Parks, as well as trails that serve as a maintenance access. The interior shelter, trails, and picnic area will be developed as funding allows. The steep north-facing hillside has building debris that should be removed by Dane County Parks. Due to the highly erodible soils, invasive species removal should continue in order to allow establishment of a dense native shrub/grassland cover.

Fundraising Strategies

As the barn project and new farm program areas begin to develop, it will be critical to accelerate fundraising efforts. The Friends should work toward identifying an individual who is capable of investigating different fundraising opportunities as their primary focus. There is a multitude of corporate and private grant programs available for consideration. Contacting other non-profit groups who have undergone similar projects across the nation via the internet would be another avenue to pursue. The Friends should also work toward dispersing information about fundraising needs out to a more diverse cross-section of community leaders and area businesses than in prior years. As more park facilities are developed and use of the park increases, it would be ideal to have fundraising information available at gathering points such as kiosks and trailheads.

Conclusion

As the Raemisch parcel continues to develop into parkland and growth continues around Schumacher Farm, the park will gain popularity. This increase in number and diversity of park visitors will be a benefit to the park and may help to generate more interest and outside funding sources for the park. Development of these plan recommendations will most likely take place over the next 5 -10 years. As use of the park increases and funding is realized, it may be necessary

to review and update this plan again. The combination of presettlement landscapes and historical farming demonstration areas should truly allow park visitors to experience what Marcella Schumacher Pendall had envisioned for this land.