

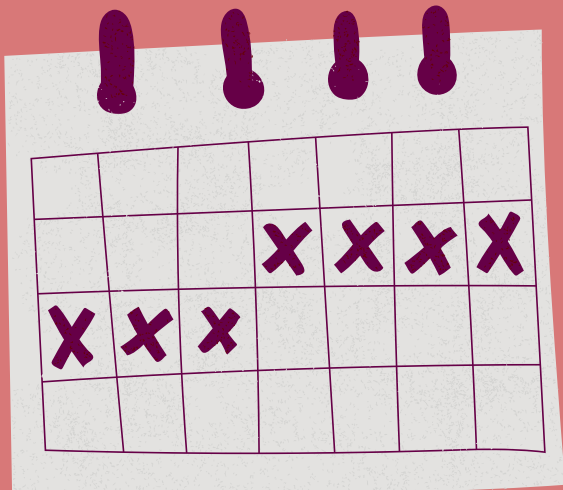
The background features a vibrant autumn theme with wavy bands of orange, red, and purple. A central white rounded rectangle contains the text. The top and bottom edges of the page are decorated with watercolor-style illustrations of various autumn leaves in shades of yellow, orange, and red, interspersed with clusters of small red and blue berries.

# **September 2022 Newsletter**

**Dane County Parks  
Volunteer Program**

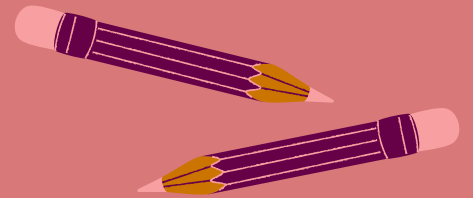
# Greetings!

We hope that your September is off to an amazing start! With the changing of the seasons it has been a busy month with beautiful parks and abundant amounts of seed to show for. Thank you all for your hard work and dedication, we truly could not do what we do without you!



 [Event Calendar](#)

 [Dane County Parks Map](#)



**Questions?**

**Contact Claire Lamberg**

**(608) 516-3703**

**[lamberg.claire@countyofdane.com](mailto:lamberg.claire@countyofdane.com)**

# Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

## Walking Iron Restoration

Help natural areas staff and volunteers continue restoration work at Walking Iron's beautiful and ecologically important remnant sand prairie!

September 27

October 11

October 25



The last bumblebee survey for the season is on October 5!



## Prairie Workdays @ Lussier Family Heritage Center

September 30

October 7

October 14



October 8 -  
Cambridge  
Farm to  
School 5K

## Dane County Friends Group Events

October 1 - Friends of Indian Lake Trail Run!

October 9 - Bock Forest Prairie Seed Collection

October 14, 22 - Lower Mud Lake Fall Workday

October 16 - Stewart Park Restoration Day

# Upcoming Seed Collections

September 27 - Walking Iron

September 29 - Yahara Heights

October 4 - Ice Age Reddan

October 7 - Brigham

October 7 - Donald

October 9 - Bock Forest

October 11 - Walking Iron

October 12 - Holy Wisdom Monastery

October 12 - Swamplovers Preserve

October 14 - CamRock

October 14 - Donald

October 18 - Indian Lake

October 18 - Pheasant Branch

October 19 - Ice Age Reddan

October 19 - North Mendota Wildlife

Area

and more!



**\*Notice how there are multiple events for some dates - double check the calendar to ensure you arrive at the correct workday!\***



Rattlesnake master is a native prairie plant that is known for its golf ball sized flowers. A fun fact about Rattlesnake master is that it's part of the carrot family!

September and October dates have different signups - click on the date you're interested in to learn more!

**[Click here to view the Event Calendar](#)**

# Seed Cleaning

After so much seed collection, it's time for seed cleaning! Seed that comes in from the field isn't perfect, so we 'clean' the seed to ensure it is usable and ready to help us reseed restored areas. We utilize a hammer mill to break seed clusters apart and then a fanning mill to separate chaff from seed. No prior experience is necessary for this, but participants will need to tolerate noise and dust with provided PPE. Learn more and sign up here!



Each cleaning day occurs in two shifts, 9AM-12PM and 1PM-4PM

- October 10
- October 24
- October 31
- November 1
- November 2
- November 3
- November 4
- November 7



# Upcoming Volunteer Trainings

## Advanced ISMTrack and EDDMaps Pro Apps (In-Person)

Wednesday November 9, 9am-10am and  
10:30am-11:30am

These trainings are important for Land Stewards, but are still available to other volunteers if they wish to learn more about these subjects. If you are not a Land Steward but are still interested in these trainings, contact Volunteer Coordinator Claire Lamberg at [lamberg.claire@countyofdane.com](mailto:lamberg.claire@countyofdane.com)

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## Herbicide Application (PAT) Certification

There are trainings for herbicide applications, and separate trainings for those who wish to become Certified Pesticide Applicators. For more information on these trainings, click [here](#).

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## Chainsaw Safety Trainings

SAWW Level 1: October 7-8 @ Indian Lake County Park  
SAWW Level 2: October 12-13 @ Indian Lake County Park



**Click HERE to fill out a survey regarding what kinds of training YOU would like to see more of.**



# StoryWalks for Friends Groups!

Introducing our new StoryWalk® Checkout System for Friends Groups! A StoryWalk® engages park visitors and youth in both outdoor exploration and literacy; laminated pages from a children's book are attached to plastic corrugated yard signs and installed along a trail or walkway. As you stroll down the trail, you're directed to the next page in the story. By adding a StoryWalk® to our parks, we hope that visitors will connect with nature in a new way, bringing together the wonders of reading, the health benefits of nature, and the exploration of the natural world.



Click the storybook image to see the list of the 20+ stories we have available for checkout at the Lussier Family Heritage Center. Please note that Friends Groups must assemble and provide their own StoryWalk® supports (plastic corrugated yard signs or posts). While this is a free amenity, please be aware that damaged or unreturned StoryWalk® books will result in a \$25 replacement fee. To reserve a book, simply fill out the StoryWalk® Checkout Form which can be found in the [Volunteer Outreach Resources](#) webpage and email it to [HeritageCenter@countyofdane.com](mailto:HeritageCenter@countyofdane.com). You will receive an email when your book is ready for pick up.



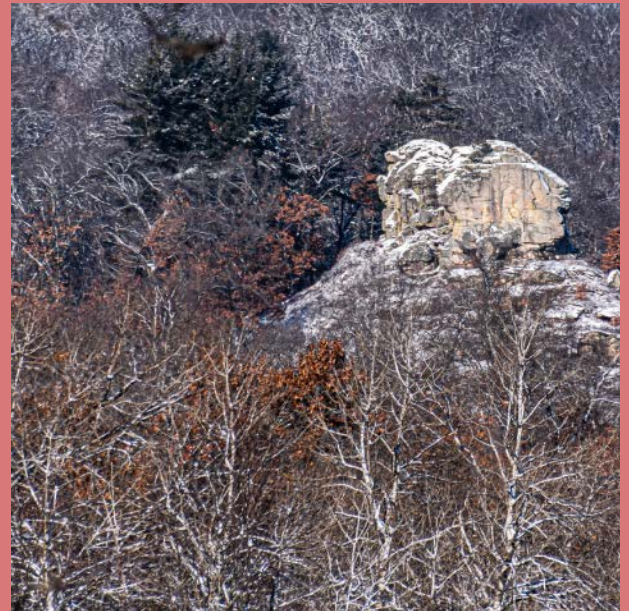
# Friends Group Feature

## Friends of Donald Park

Donald County Park is located in Dane County just 15 miles southwest of Madison. The 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 historic resources representing Dane County's rural heritage for present and future generations. This Friends group has over 100 members, but you do not need to be a member to volunteer! Listed below are the many opportunities available.

### Volunteer Opportunities Include:

- Maintaining bluebird trails and records
- Maintaining the trail system (mowing, brush cutting, trails repair)
- Assisting with visiting school groups
- Collecting and spreading prairie seeds
- Helping with special events (baked goods, greeting, registration, food sales, set up and more)
- History/archaeology (research, digs)
- Administration (board member, committee work)
- Writing (grants, newsletters, educational materials)
- Park service projects—young people earn advancement toward prestigious awards including Eagle Scout rank in Boy Scouts or Gold Awards in Girl Scouts



If you have any questions about this Friends group or are interested in volunteering, email [contact@donaldpark.org](mailto:contact@donaldpark.org)



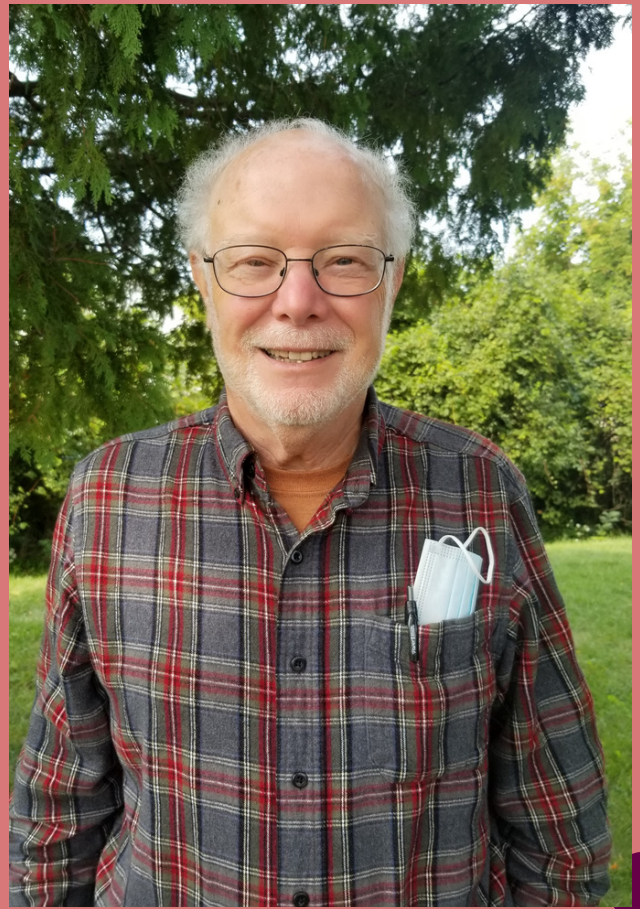
[@FriendsofDonaldParkInc](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofDonaldParkInc)



# Volunteer Spotlight

## Jack Lawton

**"Jack" of all trades!**



Introducing Jack Lawton, a volunteer with Dane County Parks since 2015!

Jack has worked for the State of Wisconsin in various capacities for quite a long time - more than 40 years in fact!

Most recently Jack worked for what was then called the WI Office of State Employment Relations as the Administrator of the Division of Merit Recruitment and Selection, following his role as Director of Human Resources at the Wisconsin DOT. About 50 years ago he volunteered with UW Hoofers to help establish ski trails in and around tracts of land that became part of the larger Indian Lake County Park. For those of you who use those trails, you'll know it's a pretty amazing network.

Jack and his wife, Bonnie, currently volunteer with the City of Madison at Westmoorland Park and have been integral in the management of several pocket prairies alongside sections of the Southwest Commuter Path. In preparation to be burn bosses for those pocket prairies, they became acquainted with the burn trainings hosted by Wayne Pauly, DCP Naturalist/Botanist (retired 2016). Following that training, in 2015 Jack began volunteering with Dane County Parks at several seed weighing and bagging events. After discussing with Wayne how the data for this process was organized, Jack offered his significant database experience (from his years with the State of Wisconsin) to help improve the process and make it more efficient!

In 2018 he began work on a Microsoft Access database which significantly improved how our Natural Areas staff were able to distribute select species of native seeds to certain projects. This program takes the hard work of determining what types and amounts of seed to use in a planting (based on requirements such as acreage, sunlight, soil moisture, and seeding rates) and outputs all the data onto neat, organized labels. These labels are then used by other volunteers and staff to weigh out all the seed for our projects! Though it sounds easy, prior to finalizing the first version in 2019, Jack spent well over 1,000 hours designing, programming, and working out all the bugs! Each year provides new questions and answers on how to better use the program, a challenge which Jack relishes. He's worked 400 hours on it so far this year and will continue to edit the program throughout this seed collection and cleaning season.



A volunteer using labels from Jack's seed distribution program to weigh out bags of seed.



Jack in 2019 weighing and bagging seed at our facility on Libby Road!

Jack's creation of this program and amazing communication with our Natural Areas staff has been instrumental in streamlining many seed-related processes. In turn, this means that our prairie restorations and plantings have become even more successful! Our Natural Areas program wouldn't be where it is today without his efforts.

**Thank you Jack!**



# Staff Spotlight

## Lars Higdon

Botanist/Naturalist



My main responsibilities are managing and restoring natural communities across the park system including prairie, wetlands, oak savannas, and woodlands. I work closely with staff, volunteers, and our DCP Friends Groups to steward these lands through prescribed burning, invasive species control, native seed collection and planting, and tree and brush removal. I have been working with DCP for 6 years. I have a B.S. in Natural Resources from UW-Stevens Point and a Master's Degree in Restoration Ecology from UW-Madison. I enjoy exploring the many lakes and streams of Wisconsin in my canoe with my wife, Brei and cattle dog, Okie! I also like to take in the seasons and enjoy everything they have to offer here in Dane County.



What is your favorite interaction with the public in a park/on the job?

I enjoy sharing my enthusiasm with volunteers and the public and witnessing people discover an appreciation for the natural world.



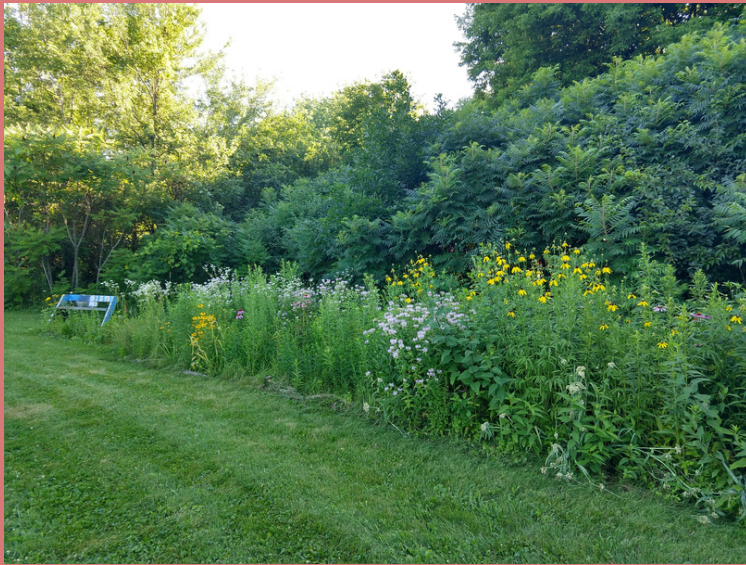
Favorite Park Activity:

Getting out on the water, fishing, and camping!

# August Recap!



Prairie Hills Community Garden



Plant grower volunteers brought back over 6,400 plants which were sorted and distributed to 50 different community groups. Since the program began in 2016, more than 29,000 plants have been distributed to 160 different groups, including schools, neighborhood associations and community centers.

Visit the [program website](#) to learn more about how to volunteer or apply for plants through this program.

## Plant for Dane! Event

Native plants have tremendous water quality benefits and increase habitat and food sources for pollinators. Because of this, the Dane County Land and Water Resources Department has started a native plant growing program to provide a source of free native plants to help schools and community groups in Dane County. These plants will be available in spring and fall each year. Spring plants are donated from community members through the Plant Dane! native plant program and fall plants are grown by local volunteers.



Pictured above: Susan Sanford and volunteers working to put together rain garden kits!



# Volunteer Photo Submission



Want to see your photo featured in next month's newsletter? Submit a photograph to the google form [here](#)! Photos must be appropriate and relevant to Dane County Parks, volunteering, nature, conservation, wildlife, or the outdoors.

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## Volunteer Spotlight Nomination

Click the link below to nominate yourself or someone else for the DCP Volunteer Spotlight! Please include a picture of yourself/your nominee with the submission.

[Click here for the submission form](#)



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September 4th: National Wildlife Day



September 7th: National Acorn Squash Day

# Thank you for all your hard work and dedication to your parks!

Check out these pages to see what we're up to:



[@DaneCountyParks](#)



[@danecountyparks](#)



[@DaneCountyParksFlickr](#)



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