Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation

Dedicated to the protection and preservation of natural areas in and around Dane County through conservation easements, land donations and education.

SPRING 2000

Lussier, County Support Fish Lake Project

Late November brought an early holiday gift — a surprise \$600,000 donation to the Dane County Parks Department on behalf of Fish Lake by John "Jack" Lussier. Lussier is the nephew of Capital Times Founder William Evjue and president of the Evjue Foundation. In an interview with the Capital Times, Lussier said that he believes in the preservation of land for public use. Lussier has had a lifelong love of the outdoors and has been active in the Boy Scouts.

"We are delighted by Mr. Lussier's generosity," said Executive Director Danielle Wood, "It

county's heritage center at Lake Farm Park. The \$1 million donation to the Parks Dept. is the largest conservation gift in county history.

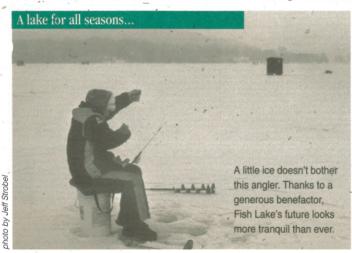
In the mean time, the Dane County Board of Supervisors was considering a proposal to purchase the Fish Lake property from the Natural Heritage Foundation at less than cost. Thanks to a balanced resolution submitted by county board members Kevin Kesterson, Vern Wendt, Darold Lowe, and David Ripp, vocal support from our members and friends, and Lussier's donation, the supervisors approved the agreement on December 3.

The county will buy the property in two stages. The first payment of \$1.25 million is due April 1. A second payment of \$1.65 million is due April 1, 2001. The county's purchase means that much of the land on the southeast side of Fish Lake will become a public natural area.

Besides Lussier's donation, a \$200,000 Lakes Protection grant from the Wisconsin

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will help to offset the county's purchase price. The Natural Heritage Foundation has also applied to the DNR for a Stewardship Program grant of \$1.06 million to help buy the land. Finally, the Natural Heritage Foundation has committed to leaving \$200,000 in private funds in the project. "We're still fundraising for Fish Lake," said Wood. "Things look great, but the project's not over yet."

"The developments of the last few months are wonderful," said Wood. "It looks like residents will enjoy Fish Lake far into the future."



demonstrates a strong commitment to our community."

Wood mentioned that County Board of Supervisors Chair Kevin Kesterson was instrumental in bringing the Natural Heritage Foundation's Fish Lake Project to Lussier's attention.

The Natural Heritage Foundation has been working to protect Fish Lake since Fall 1998. The foundation secured the land from development in May 1999.

In addition to his donation on behalf of Fish Lake, Lussier also contributed \$400,000 to the

ANNOUNCING

Celebrating Fish Lake 2000 Stewardship Awards

> Thursday, March 30 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Fyfe's Corner Bistro 1344 E. Washington, Madison

> > Hearty Appetizers \$20 per person

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The Wisconsin State Journal

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RSVP to the Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation at 258-9797 by March 24.

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Token Creek Runs Free

In late December, a dream came true for advocates of an unfettered Token Creek. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, under the direction of Fisheries Biologist Scot Stewart, removed the old millpond dam — or at least most of it. The DNR left the dam's sill in place to contain up to 12 feet of silt that has accumulated on the bottom of the millpond. The DNR also lined the creek banks with stone 'rip-rap' to prevent further erosion. Restoration work on the creek, including silt removal, will likely begin during the summer of 2001.

For information about the Token Creek Watershed Association, call Chair Tom Culver at 837-5320.



The Token Creek Millpond Dam restricted the flow of Token Creek, a cold water stream in northeastern Dane County, since before the Civil War. (photos by Scot Stewart, DNR)



In December, the DNR removed the dam's "super-structure" as part of a long-term, joint DNR-Army Corps of Engineers project to restore Token Creek as a premier trout stream. In addition to flowing through Token Creek County Park, the stream will meander through a 130-acre natural area in the town of Windsor.

Free at last! Token Creek is on its way to becoming a healthier, more beautiful stream for all of us to enjoy!



Highway 12 Status Report

By Jim Arts, Dane County

Last spring, Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) and several other agencies signed an agreement under which the DOT will expand U.S. Highway 12 to four lanes between Middleton and Lake Delton (between Middleton and Sauk City in Dane County).

Under the agreement, DOT pledged to meet several conditions, including:

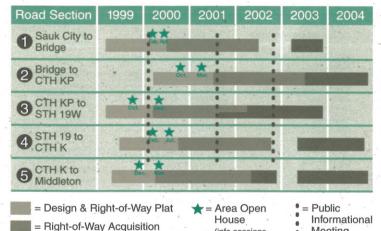
- Providing \$500,000 for local governments in Dane and Sauk County (\$250,000 each) for planning services to address growth-related issues.
- Providing \$5,000,000 over five years for the Dane County Fund, to purchase easements or development rights to help preserve farmland for farmers, protect the area's scenic beauty and safeguard important natural resources.
- Funding and other measures for protecting the Baraboo Range National Natural Landmark.
- Providing \$500,000 to assist completion of the Dane County/ Madison Commuter Rail/Transit Alternatives Study.

Agreeing to minimize the loss of prime farmland and reduce access points to the highway as part of the expansion.

Dane County and several local governments in the northwest part of the county are moving ahead with two significant components of this agreement. First, the county is working with the City of Middleton and the towns of Springfield, Dane, Berry, Roxbury and Mazomanie to hire planning firms to assist them in revising their local land use plans and ordinances. The planners will help communities address growth and development pressures that may result from the highway expansion. The governments are still early in the process, which will probably take about a year. While final decisions have not been made, the towns are interested in

pursuing a unified planning process that complies with the new state "Smart Growth" legislation. This initiative gives incentives to local governments to engage in comprehensive land use planning.

A second major initiative is the development of the Northwest Dane County USH 12 Plan during 2000. This plan will help determine how to use the \$5 million in the Dane County Fund. It will be coordinated with the revision of both the Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan and local land use plans. County staff are now identifying and collecting basic information about local natural resources, and will meet with interested parties during the spring to discuss the plan and its priorities. For more information about the expansion of Highway 12, please contact Jim Arts at 266-4795.



(info sessions for landowners

Highway 12 **Project** Schedule

Source: Strand Associates.

Planning for a Greener Future

As a result of last year's strategic planning process, our board of directors is taking a more proactive approach to preserving and protecting open space in our region. To that end, the foundation is developing a conservation plan this spring that will guide our efforts to preserve open space in the Dane County area. This plan will help focus our work and resources on areas in the region that are most threatened by the impacts of development.

Our conservation plan will integrate information from state, county, and local

governments. This will include information about our natural resources, how our communities are growing, and what agencies and organizations are currently doing to protect our special places. As a result, we will have a better idea of the region's conservation needs.

= Construction

What will the conservation plan mean to the Natural Heritage Foundation? Focusing on specific geographic areas will enable us to better direct our resources. For instance, we will be able to increase our work with landowners. In turn, we hope this will

increase the number of conservation easements we acquire annually. Concentrating on obtaining easements as opposed to purchasing land directly will allow us to protect more land for less money. In short, developing a conservation plan means that the Natural Heritage Foundation is seeking to protect our community's special places effectively and economically.

Meeting

If you have any questions or comments about conservation planning, please contact Danielle Wood at 258-9797.

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Your support fuels our efforts. Thank you for helping us protect our community's natural heritage.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Events Calendar

Night Walk

University of Wisconsin Arboretum March 18th, 6:30-8:30 p.m., 263-7888

10th Annual Native Landscaping Conference

March 18 UW Arboretum, the Prairie Enthusiasts & Wild Ones Dane County Expo Center Call 262-9925 for details.

Organic Agriculture at the Crossroads: Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference

March 16-18, La Crosse Contact Faye Jones for more details, (715) 772-3153

The Watershed Approach to Improving Water Quality: Fact or Fantasy?

March 28-30, La Crosse Contact Ann Robinson for more details, (515) 281-3845

DCNHF Stewardship Awards

March 30, 6:00-8:00 p.m. Fyfe's Corner Bistro, Madison Call 258-9797 for more details.

Token Creek Watershed Association 4th Annual Spring Forum

April 27, 6:00-9:30 p.m. DeForest Area Community Center Call 249-6863 for more details.

Tour of the Blue Mounds Conservation Easement

Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation June 17, 10 a.m. to noon, followed by lunch. Call 258-9797 for more details.

Volunteer Opportunities

The Natural Heritage Foundation offers volunteer opportunities to use your skills or develop new ones. Call us at 258-9797 for details. We're open to your ideas, but here are a few of the ways you can help:

Goodwill ambassadors — we're looking for some friendly faces to sit at our booth during local community events such as the Native Landscaping Conference or the Dane County Farmers Market. This is a great way to meet people and spread the word about our Fish Lake Project.

Administrative Assistant — can you help with basic office activities, such as answering the telephone, assisting with mailings and organizing files? This is the job for you! We're looking for someone who can commit to working at least four hours per week for three months.

Outreach Assistant — this person will help promote the Natural Heritage Foundation's profile in the community through such activities as helping organize a speakers' bureau, arranging speaking engagements and assisting with the production of our newsletter.

Special Gifts

There's no better way to honor friends or family members who love the Dane County area's natural beauty than by helping to protect it. A donation to the Natural Heritage Foundation can help protect a lakeshore, restore a prairie, or preserve a woodland. Consider a donation to commemorate a birthday, wedding or anniversary, or in memory of a loved one.

Dorf Haus Fries for Fish Lake

In October, we held our second successful Fish Lake fundraiser at The Dorf Haus in Roxbury. Legions of Fish Lake Fans attended the event — and Vern and Betty Maier donated \$1,000 to their favorite lake.





The Fish Fry featured entertainment by accordionist extraordinaire Bill Meicher.

DCNHF Board Member Emily Earley, Jean Roark, her husband Board Member Gene Roark, and his sister Nancy Roark enjoy fine Dorf Haus cuisine.

Thank You

The Natural Heritage Foundation thanks our dedicated volunteers and supporters, including:

Jim Arts for contributing an article to the newsletter,

Ed Brost for presenting the Fish Lake Project to the Dane County Conservation League,

Bonnie Cosgrove for proofreading the newsletter,

Julie Hayward for graciously allowing us to use one of her watercolors on our holiday card,

Bill Meicher for donating his musical talents at the Fish Fry in October,

Matt Nilsson, for continued help with the newsletter,

Bill Pielsticker for donating photographs of Fish Lake,

Kathy Oppegard & Gene Roark for organizing our upcoming field trips,

Harriet Riley for ongoing work on our membership database,

Deb Slavin, for helping to organize the 2000 Stewardship Awards,

Kate Schulte for her continued assistance around the office,

Tim Seifriz of Grant Thornton for lending us his human resource expertise, and

Ray Unrein, for repairing our audiovisual equipment.



Thank you!

Thanks also to the following businesses and organizations for a variety of help:

Dane County Parks Dept. for lending us photos,

Mac's Frameshop, Verona, for donating framing and engraving on Pielsticker Prints,

Meuer Art and Framing in Madison for donating framing on Pielsticker Prints,

Suby, Von Haden & Associates for donating meeting space in 1999,

University of Wisconsin Campus Natural Areas for lending us photos,

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for lending us photos, and

Vandewalle & Associates for lending us meeting space for our 2000 board meetings.

DCNHF Wish List

- A fabric-covered display board
- → Map holders
- ⇒ Frequent flier miles (so we can attend national training sessions)
- Pentium laptop

Memorials and Other Gifts to Fish Lake

In Memory of Bruce Straw, Virginia Connors

In Memory of Dick Bassman, The Krinskys

Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation

Help us make a splash at Fish Lake!

Here's my contribution to the Fish Lake project:

	Bass Boon	\$25
	Heron Help	\$50
	Osprey Offering	\$100
	Cisco Assistance	\$250
	Turtle Tribute	\$500
	Other	
Name	- 1	
Address		1, 11

City/Zip

Send to:



303 S. Paterson, Suite 6 Madison WI 53703

Contributions are tax-deductible as provided for by law.
Please make checks payable to the Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation.
Thank you!

☐ Check this box if you prefer to remain anonymous.



Thank you!



McLain Conservation Easement

Waterfowl like this scaup benefit from the McLain conservation easement along Lower Mud Lake.

Editor's note: This is the latest in a series of retrospectives on the Natural Heritage Foundation's preservation projects over the past 16 years.

by Matt Nilsson

Ancient wetlands border the southern end of Lower Mud Lake in Town of Dunn. They help keep the waters pure by filtering pollutants before they reach the lake. Thousands of birds fly in from all over to rest from migration and nest during the breeding season. Sandhill cranes, mergansers, scaup, sandpipers, warblers, sparrows and red-wing blackbirds are among the many that take refuge along the banks of Mud Lake.

Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation 303 S. Paterson, Suite 6 Madison WI 53703

Return Service Requested

Michael and Lynn McClain wanted to ensure the birds would have a spot to sing for generations to come. In the fall of 1987, they donated a conservation easement to the Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation on 12 acres adjoining Lower Mud Lake.

"The easement restricts the use and development of the land, which helps protect the quality of the lake," says Bill O'Connor, the foundation's Conservation Director.

The land consists of hilly uplands, farmland as well as swampy lowlands. The area serves as a valuable buffer not only for Lower Mud Lake, but also for the surrounding wetlands. The peat in these wetlands is 90 feet deep and supports a rich array of plant species.

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