

Creating a Dane County Parks' Friend Group



Dane County Parks' Friends Groups are volunteer groups which coordinate with Dane County Parks (DCP) staff to provide valuable services and support areas within the DCP System. Groups may choose to become registered non-profits with 501(c)3 status, but this is not a requirement. Friends Groups focus on a park in its entirety, not just independent components of it.

FRIENDS GROUPS ARE:

- Recognized by Dane County Parks as an official Friends Group through:
 - The Dane County Parks Friends Group webpage.
 - The DCP Event Calendar, Social Media, and other marketing and outreach.
 - Promotion of events through the DCP Volunteer Program's email outreach.
- Eligible to:
 - Operate on the property for special events and approved activities.
 - Use facilities designated by Dane County Parks.
 - Fundraise with the purpose of supporting a park, cultural/ historic site, natural wildlife or resource area, and/or forest within the DCP System (must have 501(c)3 status).
 - Conduct and support community activities that enhance cultural, interpretative, recreation, and educational activities.
- Qualified for several Dane County Parks-related grant opportunities:
 - Dane County Parks Friends Capital Grant
 - Foundation for Dane County Parks Collaborative Grant
- Permitted to host Special Events with additional provided support:
 - Apply for a Special Event Permit with no added fees.
 - Request the use of the DCP Special Event Trailer and/or Volunteer Tool Trailer.
- Invited to Friends-specific annual events and trainings.

INITIAL STEPS TOWARDS FORMING A FRIENDS GROUP:

1. Consider if starting a Friends Group seems like a good fit for the Dane County Park and community. Identify areas of need throughout park and summarize a list of goals and ideas.
2. Bring together a core group of people with varied skill sets who care about the area and want to offer support. Be sure to identify several members who would provide leadership within the group.
3. Contact the DCP Land & Water Volunteer Coordinator and schedule a meeting to discuss potential Friends Group interest, summary of members and goals, and steps of group formation.

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