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September 13, 2022

Dane County Park office  
5201 Fen Oak Drive #208,  
Madison, WI 53718

**RE: 2023 Proposed Fee Changes**

Dear Sir or Madam:

Following are my comments on the proposed fee changes:

In general, I support your proposed rate increases. (However, Dane County should know that some counties do not charge any fee for using their extensive Mountain Bike trails—e.g. Nine Mile Park and the trails near Ringle both in Marathon County WI. Yet, I believe a user fee is deserving based on the cost to maintain these trails.)

I agree a small annual-fees discount for residents who are, seniors, disabled, and veterans is appropriate. However, both current and proposed discounts are unusually generous at 50% reduction.

Lake access fees need a major revision. Access fees should be based on boat/motor size and whether the watercraft must be registered. Delete special rates for non-residents, senior, disabled, and veterans. These fees are for launching a boat not an individual participant like bikers or skiers.

At your request to review the proposed fee changes, I took time to review all Dane County fees. Based on that thorough review, I have numerous comments which follow in greater detail. In summary,

- There are significant inconsistencies noted when comparing the following rates:
  - Annual vs. daily rates
  - Discount amounts offered for various activities
  - Residents and non-resident rates
- Certain fees do not appear to scale with the cost to operate and maintain the facility.

Therefore, a more complete review seems timely for all Dane County fees, not just the those considered in this proposed change. Because many of my comments are outside of the scope of the notice proposed changes, portions may have to wait until for another fee change. Nevertheless, a more global look at rates should be done now so these fees would not have to be change again to achieve more consistence and possibly simplify Dane County's fee structure.

I have submitted my comments both in text describing the issues and my suggested remedies and in table format comparing current, proposed and my suggest rates.

This took me considerable time, so a hope my comments are given detailed review and consideration. Thank you for the oppportunity to comment.

**Non-Resident:**

Since tax dollars also support Dane County parks, trails and boat launches, it seems reasonable that Non-residents should pay at least 50% more than residents.

Many Wisconsin's retiree-snowbirds are extending their southern stay just long enough to claim residency in Florida. Since they escape paying Wisconsin income tax, a non-resident rate that is 50% more than resident rate seems appropriate.

**Non-Resident Seniors:**

Should non-resident seniors be entitled to discounts? If they do not pay taxes to Dane County, why would they get any discount?

For example, RTA Fares to ride the **Union Pacific Northwest** train from Harvard to Chicago are the same for non-residents whether you're a senior or not. You only qualify for a senior discount if you have an Illinois State driver's licenses or ID of residency.

**Lake access**

Ideally, launch fees should be based on the size of the boat and/or motor and the number of times it is launched, not the age or military status of the owner or person(s) launching the craft, which is totally irrelevant. I'm suggesting only a daily launch fee based on the size of the boat or motor and no annual fee option. These factors relate to the environment and noise impact and the size and quality of the boat landing and parking area required. There should be a severe penalty for non-payment and the penalty should be posted with the rates at the fee station.

Launch Fee (daily)	Resident	Non-resident
Boats over 14 ft or Motors over 20-hp Sailboats with a motor All Pontoon boats	\$10	\$15
Boats 14 ft or less long with Motors 20-hp or less Any Jet Boat Sailboats >12' ft (Req. WI registration) Includes Rowboat, or multiple Canoes, Kayaks, Rafts hauled on a trailer	\$5	\$10
Canoe, Kayak, Rafts, wind/kite surfboards not hauled on a trailer (Physically carried to water)	No fee	No fee

If Dane County desires to keep an annual fee, the schedule should be:

Launch Fee (daily)	Resident Annual*	Resident Daily	Non-resident Daily
Boats over 14 ft or Motors over 20-hp Sailboats >12' ft (Req. WI registration) All Pontoon boats	\$50	\$10	\$15
Boats 14 ft or less long with Motors 20-hp or less Any Jet Boat Sailboats 12-ft or less (WI Reg. not req.) Includes Rowboat, or multiple Canoes, Kayaks, Rafts hauled on a trailer	\$35	\$5	\$10
Canoe, Kayak, Rafts, wind/kite surfboards not hauled on a trailer (WI Reg. not req.) (Physically carried to water)	No fee	No fee	No fee
Senior, Disabled or Veteran discount	NA		
Additional Vehicle (max 2 per household)	\$20		
Replacement of lost permit	\$20		

The cost of building and maintaining a boat launch and parking area is relative to the size and maximum number of boats being launched on any day. The impact on the lake and environment is relative to the size of the boat and motor and the amount of time of boats are used on the water. The rates should respect this impact difference.

Motorless craft (Crafts that do not require WI registration) such as Canoe, Kayak, Rafts Windsurfers should be free.

Because there is currently no annual fee option available for canoes, a canoe owner could be paying more during a season than a boat owner. A boat owner with a pier on the lake could launch their boat in the spring and retrieve it in the fall for only \$16. While someone launching a canoe only once each month during the summer would pay \$35. Eliminate the fee for motorless craft.

### **Dog park permit**

Should the fees be per dog? The permit could state the number of dogs permitted entrance. I'm suggesting a base fee for the first dog plus an increase for additional dogs.

### **Mountain Bike Trails**

Yes, Dane county should increase these fees commensurate with the cost to build and maintain trails.

There should be a **youth** rate. Dane County should determine the maximum youth age qualification. The very young bikers use easy trails that are less costly to maintain.

There is a balance between encouraging regular bikers to purchase an annual pass but not discourage a new biker wanting to try the trail. For other park uses, the annual fee is between 4 to 6 times daily fees—suggesting annual fees could be \$30.

X-country skiers currently pay \$30 for annual trail pass. Therefore, \$30 annual pass appears reasonable for Mt Biking. Mtn. bikers are likely frequent riders and would still buy an annual pass.

### **Discounts Rates**

In general, I agree with the concept of offering a small discount for Seniors, Veterans and Disabled.

Youth Discount: Dane County should also offer a discount for **Youth** below a certain age to encourage family use and to introduce younger children to these activities.

My children at age 4 began X-country skiing on trails. Before that (when ages 0 to 2), I carried them on my back. Even tickets for downhill skiing have discounts for youth.

My grandson learned to ride his peddle-less, coaster bike on an easy Mt Bike Trail, consisting of a circle with small humps. There are no fees (even for adults) at that Mt. Bike Park in CO.

Consistent Discounts: Discounts should be more consistent across Dane county's various activities. Many activities have (zero) no discounts. Changes to other fees beyond those considered in this change proposal, are needed.

Annual vs. Daily Discount: The current approach to discount only annual fees is a great approach, which keeps fees simple, less confusing. The daily fees are small and not worth discounting.

Non-resident Discount: As another inconsistency Dane County offers discounts to residents but not always to non-residents. This should be consistent for all activities. Keep it simple, only offer discounts for annual fees for residents. Proposed Lake Access discounts should be deleted for **non-resident** seniors and veterans. This fee is for launching a boat, not each participant like a biker or skier.

Appropriate Discount Amount: A discount of \$-10.00 or about 20% of the annual fee should be sufficient. The current and proposed discounts are unusually generous. The proposed discounts are approximately 50% of the annual fee; yet many activities continue to have no discounts available.

**Qualifications of a senior, veteran, disabled person:**

When charging small user fees at a self-registration station, there is no way to assess how deserving a particular individual is to receive any discount.

Disabled participants are likely well deserving of a generous discount. However, as the government knows, disabilities vary in the level of handicap.

As a senior, I do not feel deserving of a 50% discount. I receive numerous supports from all levels of government. For example, during COVID, I continued to receive my Social Security check, while many workers were laid off. Seniors may also have a company or government pension or, if they worked for themselves or a small business, they may not have any pension at all, but you can't distinguish.

Veterans also have many of the same guaranteed benefits as do seniors, including VA health. Also, some veterans may have seen combat service while others may not have. Consider a spouse of veteran killed in action who could not claim to be a veteran yet suffered the loss of his/her spouse.

How can any of these variables be considered at a simple self-service fee station?

Conclusion, keep it simple—offer small annual discounts, e.g., minus 20% or \$-10.

**Fee Inconsistencies**

The following Table compares all Current Fees and proposed fee changes. (Camping and shelter rate are not shown)

RESIDENT	Current Fee							Proposed Fee						
	Day \$	Disc \$	%	Year	Year /day	Disc \$	%	Day \$	Disc \$	%	Year	Year /day	Disc \$	%
Dog Park	5	NA	--	35	7.0	-18	-51	8	--		43	5.3	-23	-53
Lake Access	8	NA	--	40	5.0	-19	-48	8	--		50	6.3	-25	-50
Canoe	7	NA	--	--	0.0	--	0	7	--		--	0.0	NA	0
Tenney Lock	10	NA	--	30	3.0	NA	0							
TRAILS														
Ski	7	NA		30	4.3	-15	-50							
Mt. Bike	5	NA		16	3.2	-4	-25	8	--	0	25	3.1	-10	-40
Horse	8	NA		20	2.5	-8	-40							
Combined		NA		48		NA	0							
Disk Golf	8	NA		50	6.3	NA	0							
Aero.	--			30		NA	0							
Archery	3			14	4.7	NA	0							
SHELTERS														
camping		-2	Var											

**Table Highlights:**

**Fee discounts for Seniors, Veterans and Disabled:**

The proposed discounts are consistent at about 50%. However, the range of these discounts will still extend from zero (0%) to 50%, when comparing discount fees for all activities. In the future, Dane County should address other activities to apply fee discounts across all activities.

Annual Rate incentive vs. Daily Rate: Note the ratio of Annual to Daily fees (Year/Daily). The spread for the current ratios is from 2.5 to 7.0. Dane County should consider what is an appropriate multiple such that annual fees would remain attractive but not reduce the desired revenue needed to maintain the trail. The predominate ratio is 5:1 (Annual vs. Daily).

Glaring disparities exist for Tenny Locks, Mt. Bike and Horse Trails. For these activities, the Annual Fee at a very cheap offering a significant advantage compared to the Daily Fee. These ratios are not being corrected by this change proposal. How might these be corrected?

**Mt. Bike Trails:** To be consistent, the annual rate should be about 5 times the daily rate. For a daily rate of \$8, the annual rate should be a \$40; or \$7 daily rate and \$35 annual rate.

**Horse Trails:** Reduce the daily fee to \$6 or \$7 and/or increase annual fee to at least \$30.

**Tenney Lock Annual Fee** is unusually cheap compared to the Daily Fee. I suggest raising the annual fee a least to \$50. The current rate is a steal at only \$30 annually when lake access fees are proposed to increase to \$50, which equals 5 times the daily rate. User fees should reflect the maintenance and operating cost. Unlike access fees, Lock Fees should remain the same for all classes of boats because locks must be opened whether a large motorboat of canoe passes through. Delete the discounts. The fee is for the boat passage carrying the occupants. If there are ten people in the boat and one is a veteran, do they get 1/10 discount?

### **Camping Rates:**

Camping fee for a large camping trailer with electric should be double the fee for a tent site.

Larger camping units also have storage for all sorts of toys and conveniences of home—such as a screen house, yard lights, etc. Whereas small teardrop camping trailers like tents have a much smaller footprint and impact than large RVs and don't have storage for, screenhouse, awning and yard lights.

Even if an owner of a large unit with air conditioning doesn't request an electric connection, they may use a supplemental generator to power the AC or recharge batteries. Such occupant still has a significant impact both with the unit's size and the noise from the generator.

Dane County should develop a price structure, relative to the impact of the camping unit.

1. A lower fee for tents\* or a teardrop trailer, without electric. \$15  
\*Could be more than one tent if a family unit arrives in a single vehicle.
2. Single-axle, pop-up trailer, non-electric site \$25
3. Single-axle or pop-up trailer, at site with electric service. \$35
4. Double-axle trailer or RV, with or w/o electric service \$35
5. Replace the \$2 discount for seniors with a premium for Friday and Saturday nights. Seniors (retirees) could avail the lower weekday fares and possibly vacate the site to accommodate a younger family on weekends. A weekday discount of minus \$10 could replace the senior discount. Residency rates would be determined by WI license plates.

**Military Veteran:** I did a quick, unsuccessful search to see if there was a simple means Dane County could distinguish the level of military service. Although I did not find a means to make such a distinction, at least, my effort confirmed that veterans are not all equal in the sacrifice they've made for our country.

*"Can I call myself a veteran?"*

Yes, just recently signed legislation allows you to call yourself a Veteran. During the December 2016 transition period, President Obama signed H.R. 6416, a bill that says National Guard and Reserve retirees who had zero active-duty time are now eligible to be referred to as Veterans."

*"Can I get a military ID if I was honorably discharged?"*

You may be eligible if you meet both requirements. Both requirements must be true: You served on active duty, in the Reserves, or in the National Guard (including the Coast Guard), and. You received an honorable or general discharge (under honorable conditions)."



Dane County Parks – Current Fees and My Suggested fees

	2022		Resident Annual*	Resident Daily	Non-Res. Daily
<b>Dog Permit Fees</b>		<b>Dog Permit Fees</b>			
Annual	35	One Dog	\$40	8	
Daily	5	Each Add'l Dog	\$5	1	
Senior	17	Senior, Disabled, Veteran	\$30	8	
Disabled	17				
Additional	17	Additional	17		
Replacement	17	Replacement	17		
<b>Lake Access Fee, Apr 1 - Mar 31</b>		<b>Lake Access Fee</b>	WI Craft Registration		Not WI
Annual Resident	40	Boats over 14 ft or			
Daily	8	Motors over 20-hp	\$50	8	15
Not motorized / Not trailered	7	Sailboat >12-ft (WI registration) All Pontoon boat			
Annual (non Res)	50	Boats 14 ft or less long with Motors 20-hp or less			
Senior (Resident)	21	Sailboat <12-ft Jet Boat Rowboat, or multiple Canoes, Kayaks, Rafts hauled on a trailer	\$35	6	10
Senior (Non-Res)	28	Canoe, Kayak, Rafts, Surfboard not hauled on a trailer	No Fee	No Fee	No Fee
Annual (Disabled)	21	Discount Sr, Disabled, Vets	NA		
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vehicle	18	2 <sup>nd</sup> Vehicle	20		
Replacement	18	Replacement	20		
<b>Tenney Lock Fee</b>		<b>Tenney Lock</b>	WI Craft Registration		Not WI
Annual	\$30	Passage fee	50	10	20
Daily	\$10	Discount Sr, Disabled, Vets	NA		
Add'l Replacement	\$12	Replacement	15		
<b>Trail Permit Fees</b>					
Annual Ski	30	<b>X-Country Ski</b>			
Daily Ski	7	Trail Fee	30	7	10
Senior Ski	15	Senior, Disabled, Veteran	20	7	
Disabled Ski	15	Youth, age 10 or younger	No Fee	No Fee	No Fee
Replacement Ski	12	Replacement Ski Pass	15		
Annual Mt. Bike	16	<b>Mt. Bike</b>			
Daily Mt. Bike	5	Trail Fee	30	7	10
Senior Mt. Bike	12	Senior, Disabled, Veteran	20	7	
Disabled Mt. Bike	12	Youth, age 10 or younger	No Fee	No Fee	No Fee
Repl. Mt. Bike	12	Replacement Mt Bike Pass	15		
Annual Horse	20	<b>Horseback</b>			
Daily Horse	8	Trail user fee	30	8	
Senior Horse	12	Senior, Disabled, Veteran	20	8	
Disabled Horse	12	Youth, age 10 or younger	No Fee	No Fee	No Fee
Replacement	12	Replacement Horse Pass	15		
Combined Trail	48	Combined Trail	50		
State (DNR) Trail Annual	25				
State (DNR) Trail Daily	5				
<b>Disc Golf</b>		<b>Disc Golf</b>			
Annual	50	Course Fee	50	8	
Daily	8	Senior, Disabled, Veteran	40	8	
		Youth, age 10 or younger	No Fee	No Fee	No Fee
		Replacement Golf Pass	15		
Tournament/Day	200	Tournament/Day	200		
Tournament Half Day (4-hours)	100	Tournament Half Day (4-hrs)	100		
<b>Aero modeling</b>		<b>Aero modeling</b>			
	30	Field user fee	30		
<b>Limited Archery Access</b>		<b>Limited Archery Access</b>			
Application fee	\$ 3	Application fee	\$ 3		
Permit fee	\$14	Permit fee	\$14		

<b>SHELTERS</b>						
<b>Premier Shelter Weekend</b>						
1-100	\$115					
101-200	\$155					
201-300	\$205					
<b>Premier Shelter Weekday</b>						
1-100	\$75					
101-200	\$110					
201-300	\$145					
<b>Standard Shelter</b>						
1-100	\$60					
101-200	\$100					
201-300	\$140					
<b>Shelters - Chaperoned Youth Group Discount</b>						
	\$(30)					
<b>Alcohol Permit</b>						
<b>1-24</b>						
25-100	\$25					
101-200	\$50					
201-300	\$75					
301-400	\$100					
401-5-00	\$125					
501-1000	\$150					
1000+	\$200					
<b>Special Event Permit</b>						
	\$75					
<b>Vending Permit per event</b>						
1-100	\$80					
101-200	\$100					
201-300	\$120					
301-500	\$160					
501-1000	\$200					
1000+	\$300					
<b>Geo-Cache</b>						
	--					
<b>Violation Notices</b>						
<b>Permit Violation Notice</b>						
	\$50					
<b>State Trail Violation Notice</b>						
	\$5					
<b>CAMPING (per night)</b>		<b>CAMPING (per night)</b>	<b>Elec Serv</b>	<b>Resident Fri &amp; Sat</b>	<b>Resident weekday</b>	<b>Non-Res. all days</b>
Camping - Electric	\$28	Dbl.-Axle Trailer or RV	NA	35	25	40
Camping - Non-Electric	\$18	Sngl-axle trailer, Pop-up Trailer	Yes	35	25	40
Brigham only (more rustic)	\$15	Sngl-axle trailer, Pop-up Trailer	No	25	15	30
Camping - Senior Discount	\$(2)	Tent* Teardrop Trailer Brigham all sites	No	15	15	25
*More than one tent permitted for a family unit, traveling in one vehicle. Weekdays - Sunday night thru Thursday Night, Replaces Senior rate						
<b>Group Camp - Friends and Family</b>						
Per Night	\$65					
Add'l 25 Campers	\$25					
<b>Group Camp - Chaperoned Youth Group</b>						
Per night	\$50					
Add'l 25 Campers	\$25					
<b>Dump Station (Non-Campers)</b>	\$10					

**From:** [Lindsay Ewert](#)  
**To:** [Land&WaterResources Mail](#)  
**Subject:** Annual fee  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 6, 2022 7:32:12 PM

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Hello,

I wanted to let you know that we absolutely love visiting the dogs parks and appreciate all you do to keep them running. We feel very blessed to have access to these nice parks and are happy to pay the proposed higher fee to be able to continue to use them.

Thank you for all you do!  
Lindsay

Sent from my iPhone



**From:** [Mary Michal](#)  
**To:** [Ripp, David](#); [Stinson, Joleen](#); [Thoresen, Tom](#)  
**Subject:** Statement in opposition to group fee increases without further evaluation and study  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 13, 2022 4:44:04 PM  
**Attachments:** [Dane County Parks fee proposalstatement.pdf](#)

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Greetings,

Another engagement in Dodgeville will prevent me from attending the hearing tomorrow in person. This is a matter of significant importance to me, as I know it is for many others, and I appreciate the opportunity to share information, and hopefully to slow down the process, before final decisions are made. I intend to be present via Zoom tomorrow for the hearing, and wanted to share my statement (attached) in advance of the meeting.

Thank you for all you do to make our parks the exceptional places that they are.

Best wishes,

Mary Michal

To: Dane County Parks Commissioners

Re: Opposition to fee increases without further evaluation of impact on group users

Date: Wednesday, September 14, 2022

My name is Mary Michal. I am 75 years old and an enthusiastic volunteer with Wild Harvest Nature Connection. I, my children and my grandchildren have all loved spending much time in Dane County's beautiful parks. My comments are my own, and not an official statement on behalf of the organization. They reflect my concerns about unintended consequences.

In addition to volunteering each week, my 9 year old grandson, who lives in Madison, had his first experience with Wild Harvest this past summer. He totally enjoyed Hoyt Park for a week of learning about serviceberries and jack-in-the-pulpits, increased his awareness of insects and squirrels and birds, gained an appreciation for the gigantic oaks in the park, and deepened his care of the Earth. He learned about the traditional inhabitants of the land, sang songs related to the natural world, and learned how to express his gratitude. Next year, he will hopefully be joined by his little sister. The parks are the perfect way to engage young people in becoming more aware, caring for and protecting the Earth; and Wild Harvest Nature Connection is dedicated to helping children, and all of us, to care for the Earth and all of its creatures. Wild Harvest teaches children to love our parks.

I am very concerned about this extremely steep proposed fee increase. Wild Harvest is not a huge, well-funded program. It is staffed by very skillful and dedicated and knowledgeable mentors, who are making sacrifices, financial and otherwise, because they believe in this work. A fee increase of this magnitude would, I believe, pose an immense and unwarranted challenge for this organization and others like it. Wild Harvest is dedicated to making its programs available to all, and has a generous sliding scale. We want to encourage programs like Wild Harvest Nature Connection. For me, they represent hope for the future in our challenging times. Let's not price them out of business, but encourage them to thrive.

Bill Lunney, Pat Hitchcock and all the many others who have, through their love of wild spaces and their care for the Earth, and their generosity, made these parks the gems that they are. I believe they intended them to be used, and treasured, and cared for by all of us, and especially children, who will hopefully care for them wisely into the future.

At Wild Harvest, the small groups of children participating with wise mentors and many volunteers, are learning how to care for the land. I see them learning how to respect nesting birds and turtles, pull invasive plants and leave the park more pristine than when they arrived. I see WHNC collaborating with the parks to offer a sense of deep connection and deep ecology. This collaboration reminds us that we are not separate from Nature, but rather an integral part of it.

I understand the need for parks to generate revenue, but this very steep proposed increase seems premature and ill-advised. I know that a few other communities' fee structures have been reviewed, but I don't think this has been as thorough an analysis as is warranted. I respectfully request that the Dane County Parks Commission slow down the process, and consider a more equitable fee schedule. I hope that there can be more dialogue about what Wild Harvest Nature Connection and other similarly situated organizations bring to the parks, and how best to nurture and strengthen this relationship. How can we support the next generation of future citizens (and taxpayers) to love, cherish, use and support our much loved parks? That, I think is an essential question, and the reason I request that you not support this increase without more inquiry and careful examination. Thank you.

**From:** [Clio Bushland](#)  
**To:** [Rose, Rick](#); [Parisi, Joseph](#); [Stinson, Joleen](#); [Pascual, Lael](#); [Schwab, Ryan](#); [mcrombie@cityofsunprairie.com](mailto:mcrombie@cityofsunprairie.com); [mjacobs@cityofsunprairie.com](mailto:mjacobs@cityofsunprairie.com)  
**Subject:** Significant concerns regarding proposed County Park fee increase  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 14, 2022 11:12:07 AM

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To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing to request that the Dane County Parks commission postpone implementing the proposed new Fee-Based Recurring Program Permit category, pending further review and input from interested stakeholders, especially those who do not appear to have been given much notice of this substantial change in proposed fee structure. We are not necessarily asking for these changes to be discarded. However, postponing a decision to allow for greater input and review of all of the impacts of this change would be appreciated.

Some of our primary concerns are:

- While many of the changes proposed are relatively small and minor adjustments to existing fees, the proposed addition of the Fee-Based Recurring Program Permit category represents a significant change to existing fees, and it seems to us a fundamental shift in philosophy and policy.
- The changes create an arbitrary and unnecessary financial burden to local citizens and businesses. As an example, for the organization Wild Harvest Nature Connection, who our family looks to for nature education, this proposed change would represent an increase of 2400% in fees from 2022 to 2023 and an even greater increase from 2023 to 2024.
- These monumental increases in cost come with no increase in service, support or access, nor was any increase sought. The correspondence as shared with us used words such as "industry standard." It is not industry standard to increase prices at such magnitude when there has been no such increase in cost to the provider or increase in services to the end user. Certainly prices are up but these changes far, far exceed inflationary pressures.
- The language used in the communications we have received seem to represent a fundamental shift in philosophy and use of the parks as a community asset to a profit center for the county. Have appropriate policies and procedures been put in place to ensure that they support this shift?
- Some of these proposals appear to be predicated on potentially incorrect assumptions. For example, in the notice of proposed changes, one of the justifications noted for the change in structure states: "If the group is not reserving a shelter, there are no additional fees. Most of these groups still use shelters if they are not reserved by another group, but choose not reserve (sic) them for exclusive use." In other communication it seemed that the fact that Wild Harvest does not reserve a shelter was a source of contention. During the many instances over two years our children have attended educational activities hosted by Wild Harvest Nature Connection, we have very rarely seen them

actually in a shelter and their use in no way barred others from using the shelter or any way represented exclusive use. Using only a portion of the shelter at a time when it is not reserved for other functions seems in line with the intended purpose of the shelter. To our understanding, park shelters are intended to be a community resource both for pre-planned exclusive events (which make sense to administer and regulate based on the existing reservation and fee system) as well as shared drop-in use outside of reserved times by all community members.

- The support for a change of this magnitude included links to four other communities in other states but were largely non-applicable. For example, the Minnesota fee structure includes things like bandstands, face painting stands, police support for closing roads. Another location had clear references to large scale running events. None of these activities is comparable to a small, local nature education organization who requires little to nothing beyond access to the land. This particular group also uses a significant portion of their time to care for and maintain the parks and whose focus is primarily on education and conservation. Other uses mentioned were a preschool group and a dog obedience class. None of these activities require support of any great level from the county.
- Our family often uses parks during the day. I fail to see a fundamental difference between our meeting a group of families at a park informally and meeting with them with Wild Harvest facilitating, other than Wild Harvest offers a structure to make sure that there is a thorough clean up of the area after use.

Speaking personally, we have four children from age seven to twenty. Our family has participated in a variety of activities, sports, community events, etc. We have never seen an organization so responsible in their use of land and facilities as Wild Harvest. They are scrupulous in making sure that not only do their participants not leave waste behind or misuse the land and facilities in any way, but other waste, litter, etc. is removed. They leave their sites better than they found them every time. I have yet to leave another activity where so much energy has been put into caring for and maintaining the space used. Previous examinations of the use that Wild Harvest makes of the land by the county itself have concluded that their negative impact is negligible and is, in fact, positive. Their work creates citizens who are aware of, connected to and good stewards of community land assets.

We support the county in setting usage rates in line with costs and we expect that costs will necessarily rise over time. We question the need to increase rates 3600% over two years.

Due to the timing of the public hearing this afternoon, we are not at liberty to attend. Please consider these comments as our input for the meeting.

Regards,

Paul and Clio Bushland  
1670 Don Simon Dr  
Sun Prairie, WI 53590

**From:** [Shaili Pfeiffer](#)  
**To:** [Land&WaterResources Mail](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Fee-Based Recurring Program Permit  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 13, 2022 4:23:18 PM

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Hello - I recently learned of the fee increase for the recurring program permit. However I didn't see any information on the impacts these groups are having on the parks and what the increase in fees will go to support. Other fees have a clear tie to use that has impacts on the land and services that need to be provided (I can easily imagine the increased cost of horses, bikes, grooming ski trails, frisbee golf) - but not groups that do yoga/hike/etc. But the groups you listed for this are only connected by that fact that they charge fees - not what impact they have on the park that increases costs.

Can you please let me know what impact these groups are having that require additional services that cost the park system money?

Are there plans to expand services at the parks in conjunction with these additional fees?

Why are friends groups listed as waived in this fee structure?

Is there a policy for any other group waivers?

Why is the fee structured the way it is? It is sort of inclining, but then not at the very highest levels?

How long has this been in the works? When were groups first notified of this change?

What is the timeline and steps for this new fee structure to be approved?

Does the fee apply only to participants or also instructors (for example if a group has 10 participants, 2 staff and 2 volunteers does that count as 10, 12 or 14 for calculating fees)?

The answers to these questions will help me understand why the program is being implemented and how the program is being implemented.

Thanks,  
Shaili Pfeiffer