



Donald County Park

Proposed Multi-use Trail Expansion


January 22, 2025





Discussion

1. Proposed Project Overview
2. Proposed Project History & Process
3. Donald Park Master Plan
4. Proposed Project Location
5. Proposed Project Plan
6. Summary of Comments
7. Existing Recreation Parks with Equestrian Use
8. Recommendation
9. Proposed Next Steps
10. Questions and Comments



Proposed Project Overview

Dane County Parks is proposing to make modifications to the existing hiking and multi-use trails on the southwest side of Donald County Park. The proposed project includes:

- expanding the network of multi-use trails
- new connections to existing trails
- removal of some existing trails
- realignment of steep trails
- consideration of trail alignments with fire breaks





Proposed Project History & Process

2019 –

- The Friends of Donald Park proposed the trail expansion to Dane County Parks
- Dane County Parks staff and Friends of Donald Park Board members walked the proposed project in summer
 - COVID slowed proposed project

2024 –

Summer:


- Proposed project restarted
- Dane County Parks staff and Friends of Donald Park Board members walked proposed alignments
- Proposed alignments conceptualized and vetted with Dane County Parks staff

Fall:

- Dane County Parks staff met with Friends of Donald Park Board members to review plans
- Friends of Donald Park Board presented the proposed plans at their October 14th meeting and approved
- Dane County Parks sent proposed plans to 14 neighbors adjacent to the expansion and the Friends of Donald Park distribution list on October 23rd
 - Comments open until November 22nd
 - Received about 20 emails/discussions with 50% Support and 50% Concerned

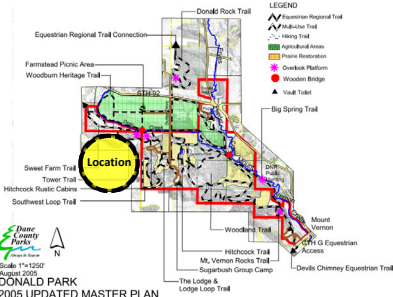
Winter:

- Dane County Parks reviewed received feedback and is proposing to proceed with the recommendation
 - Decision sent to the neighbors adjacent to the expansion, the Friends of Donald Park distribution list, and individuals who offered direct feedback on January 2nd
 - Informational session at Park Commission on January 22nd



Donald County Park Master Plan

- The location being considered for the multi-use trail expansion were not County owned and included in the 2005 Master Plan
- The proposed multi-use trails tie in with existing trails
- The proposed project seeks to enhance an existing park activity
- The park has a long history of equestrian use

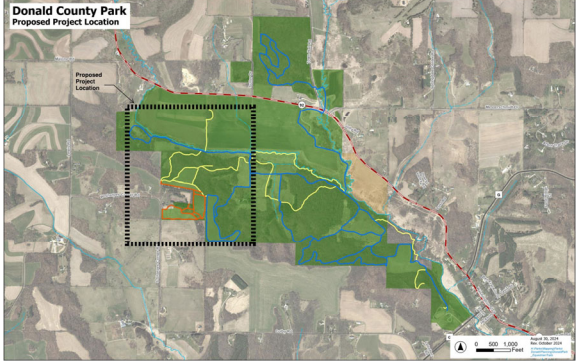



LEGEND

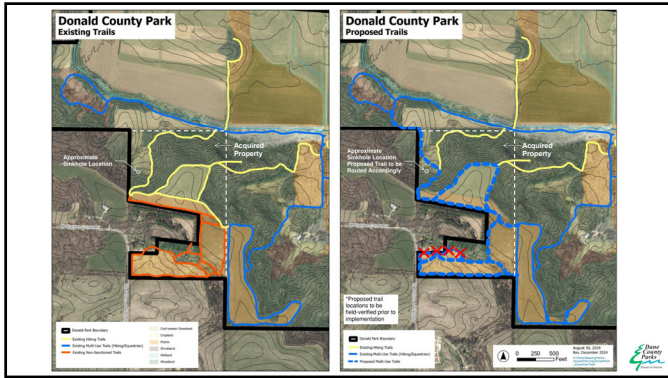
- ▲ Equestrian Regional Trail
- ▲ Multi-Use Trail
- ▲ Hiking Trail
- Openland Areas
- Public Reservation
- Overlook Platform
- Wooden Bridge
- ▲ Vail Ticket
- ▲ Big Spring Trail

Scale: 1"=1250'
August 2020
DONALD PARK
2005 UPDATED MASTER PLAN

Donald County Park Proposed Project Location







Summary of Comments

Concerns Heard

Impacts to the environment

- Horses spread invasives and pathogens
- Hooves cause trail compaction and trail erosion
- The width of multi-use trails wipe out habitat
- Horses cause damage to vegetation
- The existing multi-use trail system already offers miles of opportunities for equestrian enjoyment across the length of the entire park, appropriately protecting more sensitive areas of the park. The existing horse trails are large trails that are relatively flat, more durable, resistant to erosion, and adequate to support the substantial trail impact of horses

Access and trespassing

- Parking access should be included at Sharpes Corner Road
- Concerns over users parking on the road to access the park
- Park boundaries are not clearly signed and users are ending up on private property

Expansion for hiking only

- Equestrians are a small user group – trails should be offered to a broader base of hikers
- Hiking trails are narrow and have less impact to the environment
- Concerns for multi-use trails adjacent to property boundaries

Summary of Comments

Support Heard

Excited about the changes

- Love riding at Donald Park
- Looking forward to helping
- Like the new loops and extra distance

Letter of Support from the Wisconsin Horse Council

- Cherished part of the community's outdoor heritage
- Allow riders to responsibly enjoy nature and Donald Park
- Proactive approach to preserving the natural landscape and minimize environmental impact
- Provides diversity in the way users engage with the park

Equestrians support the local economy

- Local purchases when in town – shopping, restaurants, gas

Recreation Parks with Equestrian Use

1. Donald County Park – Mt. Horeb (10 Miles)
2. McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park – Cottage Grove (4.3 Miles)
3. Silverwood County Park – Edgerton (5.7 Miles)
4. Token Creek County Park – DeForest (2.6 Miles)
5. Walking Iron County Park – Mazomanie (6.0 Miles)

Recommendation

Dane County Parks is proposing to move forward with the proposed multi-use expansion:

- There is a long history of equestrian recreation and is an existing use in the park
- The park is a regional destination and the proposed plan provides an additional 2 miles of multi-use trails for 1 of only 5 equestrian parks
- Provides a broader range of users access to more areas within the park
- Distributes equestrian activity throughout the park, reducing congestion and minimizing wear and tear on the existing trail network

Proposed Next Steps

1. Review boundary signage and make updates
 - a. Winter/spring while leaf cover is off
2. Lay out the proposed trails with existing site conditions
 - a. Winter/spring while leaf cover is off
3. Complete cultural resource review
 - a. Dane County would contract a Phase 1 Archaeological Survey of the proposed trail alignments
 - b. Realign trails if cultural features are found
4. Work with Friends of Donald Park and Dane County Parks staff to implement proposed trails and map final alignments



THANK YOU

Contact Information

Dane County Parks
Always in Season

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