

**Prairie Moraine Newsletter**  
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It's more than time to share with all of you how much progress we have made in 2021, and how far along current projects and future plans are. It's also time to remind you, if you haven't already, to renew your annual membership for 2022. The easiest way to renew is to go to the membership renewal web page. Go to <https://prairiemorainefriends.org/renew-your-membership>, or you may send a check to Lorna Goshman at 6909 Pilgrim Rd, Madison WI 53711. We are enormously grateful for your ongoing moral and financial support.

Mark your calendars now for our annual membership meeting, tentatively scheduled for Saturday, April 23rd. Because of ongoing health considerations, it will take place outdoors in the park. With luck, the 23rd will be sunny and warm.

Our purpose remains to provide extra labor and organization to help Dane County Parks carry out their long-term vegetation plan for the entire park. You can see the plan map on our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/prairiemorainefriendsinc](http://www.facebook.com/prairiemorainefriendsinc). The landscape will not be just prairie and moraine, but oak openings and oak woodlands as well.

Some of our first big acquisitions like the utility shed now seem as if they were always part of the park. For two summers now, we have enjoyed the many species of grasses and flowering plants at both the Pollinator Garden and Prairie Corner. Weatherproof labels identify the plants and have influenced native plant choices for a number of home gardeners. In October of 2020, 30 new bur oaks were planted in several locations in the off-leash side of the park.

Our Facebook page was created on December 11, 2020. It now has 227 page likes and 288 page followers. Editors estimate that each post reaches an average of 125-150 viewers. It's fun to look back at the highlights of so many work days and events in the posted photo albums. July 23rd this year marked our first Instagram post. This account now has 254 followers.

In 2021, winter work featured the burning of brush piles from previous clearing of invasives. Spring prairie burns on both sides of the park were carried out by volunteers from the Ice Age Trail Alliance and Prairie Moraine Friends in mid-April. Then, on April 22nd, Dane County

Parks held its official Earth Day celebration at Prairie Moraine. Parks staff directed teams of volunteers from the Friends, Ice Age Trail Alliance, Operation Fresh Start, and Resurrection Lutheran Church. Volunteers planted 18 young swamp oak trees, scattered bushels of native flower and grass seeds on both sides of the park, cleared and stacked brush, mowed stubble in the west end, and led tours of the on-leash side of the park. Park staff cleared brush in the southwest oak opening/oak savanna area with a heavy-duty brush mower and spread fresh wood chips on the off-leash trails. A hearty lunch was provided for over 90 participants by the Friends.

June. Time for fun! Hundreds of park goers enjoyed a perfect sunny day at the Pop-up fundraiser listening to live music, drinking cold beer from the mobile Karben 4 concession, strolling in the park with their dogs, viewing offerings from vendors of dog-related products, getting photos of themselves with their dogs, even taking guided tours of the on-leash side of the park. The event raised \$750 toward the purchase of a new mower. June also had work days, including an extensive mowing operation by both DCP and the Friends to prevent fields of wild parsnip from seeding themselves. Other summer work days concentrated on removal of specific invasives like garlic mustard and Japanese hedge parsley.

October. Serious work. Parks installed a temporary fence around an 11-acre area on the south side of the off-leash side of the park to provide space for ongoing activity away from dogs and walkers. Parks staff used a heavy-duty Fecon brush mower to remove underbrush and thickets of honeysuckle and buckthorn, so that the view of the moraine from the south hilltop has opened up. They planted more new oaks. Volunteers have been busy taking down dead ash trees, clearing and stacking brush, and freeing up native stands of wild plums, hazelnut, highbush cranberry and ninebark. Dog lovers will be excited to find that the worst doggie bathtub in Dane County has been filled in and planted with native grasses. When the fence comes down, park goers will experience an oak opening with a wonderful view.

We have been fortunate to receive grants for various projects from the Fiskars Group, the State Bank of Cross Plains Verona Branch, the Dane County Parks Foundation and several private donors. We are particularly enthusiastic about a gift from Matt Karcher to create Rey's Place, in memory of his dog, surrounding the iconic oak tree near the access road entrance gate. Seating stones and native plantings will provide a quiet space for rest and reflection. Because of soil compaction, the path under the tree will be re-routed as part of the landscaping. The landscaping plan has been completed, and bids for a landscaping contractor are out.

When the oak savanna project is finished, work to clear invasives and weedy thickets in the additional 12-acre parcel behind the apple orchard and the church can begin. The sooner this work is completed, the sooner the addition can be fenced and opened for use. Our hope is to complete the work in 2022-23 and get the money for fencing into the Parks' 2023 budget.

We welcome all volunteers to all the work days to come. If you are interested or even curious, please contact Dave Jelinski at [djelinski@charter.net](mailto:djelinski@charter.net). We welcome your comments and ideas and hope to talk with you at the annual meeting and in the future. Our aim is, with your help, to continue making lasting and observable enhancements to a beautiful natural area.