

Friends of Governor Dodge State Park 2023 Accomplishments

Projects and Property Maintenance

- A 20x36 open air picnic shelter was constructed in the group gathering area at the equestrian campground. Landscaping with split rail fence and horse hitching rails is being planned.
- Friends donated \$27,668 to the park for their 2024-2025 operations cost share for the equestrian campground
- Spring and Fall "Adopt a Highway" roadside cleanup was completed-thank you Jean Breslow!
- More than 75 volunteers did spring cleaning of the 300 loop of the Twin Valley campground
- Benches at the Trails End amphitheater were sanded and re-painted
- Volunteers planted many new trees at the Equestrian and Twin Valley campgrounds
- Trail brushing was done along the Pine Cliff trail
- Volunteer gardeners added plants to campground entrance flower beds and removed invasives from the Gateway prairie. Thank you RuthAnn Francis for your efforts.

Revenue Generating Activities

- Firewood sales: January through September net profits were approximately \$12,000. Thank you to ChipForrest for handling firewood contracts and Peggy Forrest for handling deposits.
- Merchandise including nature guides, nature-themed children's books and activities and trail hankies were sold at the Cox Hollow Concession, generating \$654 in net profits after cost-sharing with Kiwanis. Thank you Kathy Gruentzel for coordinating concession sales.
- Equestrian committee's Find the Magic ride/hike, raffle and online auction generated over \$11,000 to "Raise the Roof" on the equestrian campground picnic shelter. Thank you Sandy Rogers and equestrian committee members for a great job planning and hosting this event.
- The equestrian committee sold 388 trail passes, earning \$1,940. Thank you Sandy Rogers and equestrian committee members for this effort.

Grants

- Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Friends fund grant of \$20,000 for new picnic shelter
- Wisconsin Horse Council Trails committee grant of \$3,000 for new picnic shelter
- Friends of Wisconsin State Parks match grant of \$3,500 for nature education programming
- State Park and Forest Heritage Trust match grant of \$8,112 used towards the Friends 2023 equestrian campground operations cost share for years 4-5

Programs and Events

- Friends supported summer programs with funding totaling \$10,031 (including the FWSP grant noted above), allowing the park to offer 35 programs attended by 765 individuals.
- A Smokey the Bear birthday party and fire safety awareness event was held on August 5th. Guests heard the Smokey Bear story, enjoyed cake and ice cream, met Smokey and learned about fire safety through a variety of games and activities.
- Equestrian committee planned and hosted a fundraiser treasure hunt ride and hike on Sunday, June 4. Over 120 participants and volunteers turned out to "Find the Magic" at this fun event.

- Friends prepped and hosted the fall candlelight hike on Saturday, October 8 with an estimated 75 participants enjoying the illuminated hike and a bonfire with complimentary s'mores. Cake was served by DNR staff at the event in celebration of the park's 75th anniversary

Public Relations and Outreach

- Friends equestrian committee designed and staffed an informational booth at the 3-day Midwest Horse Fair held in April at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison
- Friends equestrian committee members attended 5 tack sales to share information about park facilities and Friends projects
- Membership in the Dodgeville Chamber of Commerce was continued
- multiple articles and event announcements were published in the Dodgeville Chronicle
- articles and announcements were published in the Wisconsin Horse Council newsletter
- Friends Facebook presence continued to grow to over almost 3,000 followers. Board Member Sandy Rogers posted many event and activity announcements on the Friends FB, increasing community awareness of park happenings and volunteer opportunities
- Three Friends members attended the Friends of Wisconsin State Parks meeting on November 4th to learn about issues facing other groups and share ideas about best practices