



5201 FEN OAK DRIVE STE 138
MADISON WI 53718-8827

PH: 608/224-3718
FAX: 608/224-3727
711 (Wisconsin Relay)

Website: www.countyofdane.com/commissions/environmentalcouncil
Staff: Mindy Habecker e-mail: habecker@countyofdane.com

2012 Environmental Grant Program Annual Project Summary

As a part of the Dane County Land and Water Legacy initiative, the Dane County Environmental Council competitively awards grants to support projects that improve, protect, and enhance land and water resources to the benefit of Dane County residents. Environmental Grants are awarded in two categories:

1. The **Capital Equipment Program** provides funding to assist with equipment purchase, rental, or lease; construction of conservation measures; or maintenance of previously constructed conservation measures that improve, protect, and enhance land and water resources in Dane County.

2. The **Community Partners Program** provides funding for projects that promote environmental education, conservation, and restoration.

In 2012, the Environmental Council awarded a total of \$15,790 in grant awards for 17 projects that restored natural areas and promoted conservation in Dane County. We are pleased to report that these projects have been a tremendous success.

Here are some highlights from this project reports we received this year:

Friends of Donald Park -

The Friends of Donald Park is deeply appreciative of the support received from two 2012 Dane County Environmental Council Capital Equipment Program grants. These grants provided funding for the purchase of two key pieces of equipment---a riding mower and a pole saw---that play a critical role in enabling our Natural Areas volunteer group to perform their work safely and efficiently.

In an agreement with Dane County Parks, the Friends Natural Areas volunteers group is responsible for maintaining all hiking trails within Donald Park (now totaling more than 2.5 miles). Thanks to these two grants, we now have a good-quality sit down mower to keep these trails regularly mowed and a pole saw, to remove difficult-to-reach overhead branches as needed. In addition, the mower allows us to keep open the two-acre area around the apple grove at the historic cabin foundation site. This site is the focus of a long-term Friends archaeology project. In the near future, interpretive features will be installed here to enhance public appreciation of the site's history and uses. The mower is also being used to clear the ground around trail signs and the 26 houses on the bluebird trail.

Buckthorn Removal at Hofstetter Conservation Park, Mount Horeb

The 21-acre Duane R. Hofstetter Conservation Park contains approximately 7 acres of dense invasive species which is primarily buckthorn. High School ecology classes and other volunteer groups have not been able to make much progress in removing the buckthorn due to the size of the plants and the labor required to remove them. The grant allowed the Parks and Forestry Department to contract with a company to forestry mow a significant portion of the buckthorn stands – approximately 3-4 acres.

The long-term goal for the project area is to convert the invasive species into an area comprised of native plant communities. The short-term goals, in which the grant was the key, include removing the dense buckthorn, improving the aesthetics of the park, improving the access to the park by creating additional trails, providing educational opportunities and increasing park usership. The project parallels the Environmental Council's mission of protecting and restoring the county's natural areas and providing educational opportunities in the process.