



# DANE COUNTY

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County Executive

## **PARTNERS FOR RECREATION & CONSERVATION (PARC)**

**October, 2010**  
**\$1 Million**

Currently in Dane County, local governments and nonprofit organizations are working on ambitious, difficult projects with the potential to improve the environment and outdoor recreation in ways that would generate significant regional benefits. Some examples include:

- In connection with local street improvements, the Village of Cross Plains is considering the restoration of Black Earth Creek to its original streambed from its current channelized setting. This sort of restoration is highly desirable and results in much improved stream habitat.
- In connection with a need to improve water quality and outdoor recreation connected to Lake Marion, the Village of Mazomanie is considering the removal of a seriously defective dam, the restoration of Black Earth Creek, and the creation of a recreational trail from Lake Marion into Mazomanie. Dam removal and stream restoration are extraordinarily effective and important in improving the basic health of the stream. Creation of the trail will add to developing a network of trails linking Mazomanie to thousands of acres of public land and the Lower Wisconsin River.
- The Madison Area Youth Soccer Association (MAYSA) is proposing a significant improvement and expansion of the Reddan Soccer Complex to improve the opportunities for young soccer players throughout the area and to better attract regional sporting events.
- Many of the roads most important to daily recreational bicyclists are town roads and some of these are also key to national events such as the Ironman and Centurion. When it is time to resurface or repair these roads, a few changes -- wider, paved, marked shoulders, for examples -- would make these roads safer for drivers and bicyclists. But such changes can be difficult for a town to fund alone.
- Bicycling groups have great ideas and some specific suggestions on how more signage could make popular bicycling routes safer for all the users of our roadways.
- Finally, volunteer groups have some great, affordable projects that can help in conservation and outdoor recreation. The Capitol Water Trails have, for years,

worked to open many miles of canoe trails on a variety of Dane County streams and rivers. They have learned firsthand how important it is for folks to know what streams and rivers are in their neighborhoods. They have identified where every significant river or stream in Dane County crosses a state or county highway. Signage marking these streams could create a much greater awareness of the important water resources in or near our communities.

In those cases where local governments and nonprofit organizations are willing to take on worthwhile, ambitious projects with significant regional conservation or outdoor recreation benefits, I think the County should be willing to be a strong partner. For that reason, I am proposing the creation of Partners for Recreation and Conservation (PARC) in the Land & Water Resources Department's Capital Budget with initial funding of up to \$1 million. Its purpose is to provide capital assistance for local government or nonprofit conservation projects that meet the following criteria:

- The sponsor must be a local government or nonprofit organization with the capacity to plan, implement, and maintain the project.
- The project must restore or improve a natural resource or an outdoor recreational facility to create a demonstrable, regional benefit. Those parts of road projects that improve safety for bicyclists and other vehicles are eligible for funding if the sponsor can show that the road is an important regional bicycle route.
- The maximum amount of assistance to any one project will be \$250,000 and the amount can be no more than 50% of the costs of the project.
- The Parks Commission will review applications and recommend grants to the County Board and County Executive. Each project will be approved by the County Board and County Executive via the normal resolution process.

In addition, from the \$1 million, PARC will fund \$10,000 for the county to begin signing the County's rivers and streams with the advice of Capital Water Trails and \$20,000 for the county to improve bicycle signage on county and town roads. The Land & Water Resources Department and the Public Works, Highways & Transportation Department will cooperate in the administration of these efforts.

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