



County Of Dane
Office Of The County Executive

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Dane County to Make its Largest Property Acquisition of 2020, Purchasing 295 Acres to Expand Indian Lake County Park

This Purchase will Make Indian Lake County Park the Largest Recreation Park in the Dane County Park System

Today, Dane County Executive Joe Parisi joined community partners to announce that Dane County will acquire approximately 295 acres of property in the Town of Berry to become a part of Indian Lake County Park. Acquisition of this land will expand the park to just under 800 acres, making it the largest recreational park in the Dane County Park system and the largest property acquisition by Dane County this year.

“Indian Lake County Park is one of Dane County’s most popular parks, and it has seen even more visitors this year as a result of more people heading outdoors during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said County Executive Parisi. “This purchase will allow Dane County to enhance the park’s year-round outdoor offerings and make it the largest recreational park in our system.”

Indian Lake County Park offers a variety of seasonal recreation activities including hiking, picnicking, cross country skiing, archery hunting, fishing, and a dog park. The property will allow the re-routing of trails that experience erosion issues and provide better southern access for land management purposes. The parcel is located within the Ice Age National Scenic Trail Corridor and will create additional Ice Age Trail connectivity options.

“The acquisition of this wonderful property will not only significantly expand one of the busiest parks in Dane County during a time when it’s needed most, it will create a critical off-road link for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail and eliminate a dangerous on-road connecting route along Highway 19,” said Mike Wollmer, Executive Director of the Ice Age Trail Alliance. “The Ice Age Trail Alliance greatly appreciates our strong and continued partnership with Dane County.”

The property is located on both sides of Indian Trail and includes a mix of gently rolling uplands, cropped fields, an intermittent stream, and woodland. The property also contains an existing farmstead with six functioning greenhouses. The county intends to reuse the greenhouses for future activities at the park.

“The Friends of Indian Lake could not be more excited about adding to one of the most treasured parks in Wisconsin. The overflowing parking lots each weekend say it best: people love Indian Lake,” the Friends of Indian Lake wrote in a statement. “This new acquisition means more trails, more woods, more prairies, more space for winter recreation, and more time outside for everyone. We fully support Dane County and can’t wait to help maintain and promote this critical new resource.”

Indian Lake County Park currently spans more than 500 acres. The main entrance is located on STH 19 about two miles west of US 12. The park is often cited as a top destination to view fall colors, and its trails offer recreational opportunities for all seasons. Indian Lake County Park is home to a historic chapel built in 1857, perched on a hilltop with breathtaking views. An unfenced, off-leash dog park is located adjacent to the boat launch. Halfway Prairie Wildlife Area, a 128-acre county public hunting area located immediately north of the park, offers additional recreational opportunities.

Dane County will purchase this \$2,924,460 property with funds from the Dane County Conservation Fund. A resolution to approve the purchases will be introduced at tonight's County Board meeting. It is expected to be approved in the coming weeks.

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