



# Friends of Governor Dodge State Park

4175 State Highway 23 • Dodgeville, Wisconsin 53533

• [www.friendsofgovdodge.org](http://www.friendsofgovdodge.org)

*Supporting Recreation, Education and Environmental Stewardship*

## Welcome Back to Governor Dodge State Park

Happy Summer from the Friends of Governor Dodge State Park. After months in which the Corona virus pandemic pushed the pause button on activity at the park, the gates are open and visitors are again able to enjoy all that the park has to offer.

If you visit the park this summer, many things will be the same, but you will also see some notable changes. The DNR has instituted operations changes to increase safety for both visitors and staff, including capacity limits, contactless campsite reservations and check-in, and canceling programs such as Naturalist talks that would typically fill the park amphitheater on summer Saturday evenings. Signage reminding of the need for social distancing and good hygiene, as well as parking restrictions at popular attractions such as Stephens Falls and the Cox Hollow Beach are among the changes instituted to ensure a safe outdoor recreational experience for all.

In light of the ongoing pandemic, the Friends have, with sadness, canceled our summer events, including the ever-popular Smokey Bear Birthday party and the Share the Trails open house. We are hopeful that both of these fun and educational gatherings will return next season.

## FRIENDS FIREWOOD IS BACK!

With camping again open at the park, campers are invited to purchase their firewood from the Friends. All money raised through firewood sales stays at the park, allowing the Friends to continue their mission by funding needed projects and programs that are beyond the park's budget to provide.

This year, firewood sales look a little different, with adoption of a self-service, cash only honor system. Firewood is sold at the green garage just across the parking lot from the park office daily from 9 am-7 pm and Fridays 9 am-9 pm.

Getting this new system up and running before the busy 4th of July weekend required effort and ingenuity from the Friends group who devised the firewood Concession reopening plan AND from our amazing park maintenance team, who fabricated the money drop box, christened "Fort Knox" from the base of a discarded water fountain. Duane and Ray, hats off to you for your speedy work and excellent result!



Senior park maintenance worker Duane Deutmeyer at work



Pictured is Friends first summer firewood customer making his "touchless payment"



## Equestrian Day Use Trailhead Project Gets Finishing Touches

A trailhead on the park's north side that is shared by horse day riders and hikers/rock climbers received major upgrades last year with installation of a handicapped accessible vault toilet, water fountain, information kiosk, new entrance drive and designated car parking area. This \$80,000 project, funded by the Friends equestrian committee through a combination of private donations and grants from the Wisconsin Horse Council Trails committee and the Knowles Nelson Friends Stewardship fund is being enjoyed by large numbers of users this season. The Friends remind users to please observe car parking instructions and take care not to block trailer access.

Last season, an anonymous donor placed \$110 in the Friends "iron ranger" secure donation box at the site, with a note requesting that the money be used to plant flowers in a small triangle area between the kiosk and the vault toilet. Recently, volunteers Denise Marino and Herb Paaren assisted park maintenance wizard Duane Deutmeyer in making this wish come true. Highlighted by an artistic rock sculpture and featuring native plants, this small area will only look more striking as the flowers grow and bloom. Sincere thanks to the generous anonymous donor whose gift got this project started and to Denise, Herb and Duane who got it done!

## Equestrian Campground Moves Closer to Reality

For five years the Friends equestrian committee has worked diligently to plan and fundraise for the equestrian campground that was described in Governor Dodge State Park's 1984 Master Plan. Over \$300,000 of an estimated \$550,000 full build project cost has now been raised. The \$80,000 trailhead vault toilet project described above was built and funded by the Friends and constitutes Phase I of the planned campground. The Friends equestrian committee is now working with the DNR to explore Phase II options to build 10-14 of the eventual 20 sites, with construction of the remaining sites to occur as soon as fundraising allows.

Covid-19 has posed huge fundraising challenges for non-profits, and the Friends group is no exception. Recognizing that circumstances have changed for many, our group remains hopeful that potential donors will continue to step up to support this major project. To date, 51 individuals have donated or pledged \$1,000 to our 100 Extraordinary Women campaign. Recognizing that these are extraordinary times in which we are truly "better together", we have chosen to revise this campaign to include all Extraordinary Friends- so if there is an extraordinary friend, whether man, woman or animal companion you would like to honor or memorialize with a donation, please visit [www.GovDodgeEquestrians.com](http://www.GovDodgeEquestrians.com) for details. Individualized bricks at the campground will create a lasting tribute to all Extraordinary Friends.