



DODGE COUNTY  
LAND RESOURCES AND PARKS DEPARTMENT

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023



# Dodge County Land Resources and Parks Department

## Annual Report - 2023

April 1, 2024

Honorable Dodge County Board of Supervisors

Dear Members:

The Dodge County Land Resources and Parks (LRP) Department respectfully submits its 2023 Annual Report.

The LRP Department, operating under the direction of the Land Resources and Parks Committee, extends special thanks to the members of this committee for their interest in, support of, and commitment to the Department's missions and activities.

### Land Resources and Parks Committee:

Mary Bobholz, Chair  
Benjamin Priesgen, Vice Chair  
Donna Maly, Secretary  
Daniel Siegmann, Dale Macheel

We welcomed one new staff member to the Land Resources and Parks Team in 2023. Rebecca Glewen was hired as the first Community Development Marketing and Communication Manager. This position was added to the Community Development Division to expand the County's Community Development efforts.

The LRP Department is functionally divided into four major divisions. This report is organized in order of the divisions listed below.

A few highlights from the year are listed below:

**Code Administration** – The overall number of applications processed by the Code staff in 2023 increased about 8% over 2022 with the land use and driveway permit applications accounting for the majority of the increase. The total value of construction permitted saw a 26% increase in 2023 from \$42 million to \$53 million. However, the number of permit applications received for new homes in 2023 decreased by about 20% in 2023 and Land Division activity saw a dip of about 36%. Coming in 2024 is the implementation of an online permitting system (GeoPermits) to improve public access and ease of filing for permits and to further automate the permitting process.

**Land Information/GIS** – New aerial photography was added in 2023 along with the implementation of [Beacon](#), an upgraded web mapping system for viewing the aerials along with several land based data layers, such as floodplain, wetlands, supervisor districts and other attributes. Staff was heavily involved in addressing issues associated with the shifting of Personal Property Tax to the Real Estate Tax rolls, especially as it related to the airport hangars on County property. This will be a continuing issue into 2024 to correctly account for the loss or shift of personal property tax revenues.

**Community Development** – Community Development efforts ramped up with the hiring of a Marketing and Communication Manager position. A Marketing Plan was developed and a \$39,500 Department of Tourism Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) Grant was received to improve branding and marketing of Dodge County as a tourism destination in coordination with partnering communities.

**Parks & Trails** – Camping activity continues to be strong in the County Parks. Total campsite rental nights in 2023 just missed topping the record for most campsite rentals in a year, but did result in the highest revenue total. The total revenue of \$255,000 was about 6% higher than the previous high total in 2021 and 10% higher than 2022. The big parks project in 2023 was the replacement of 40+ year old vault toilets at Astico, Derge and Ledge Parks with new, aesthetic, better smelling and easier to maintain units, thanks to ARPA funds.

This report details these and other LRP activities and accomplishments in 2023. **Make sure to follow the [links in the online version of this report to access corresponding webpages, videos and other media that help enhance this report.](#)**

Please feel free to stop by the Department or give us a call should you ever have questions, comments, recommendations, need more information or would like a behind the scenes tour of the Department (or the parks) and to meet the dedicated LRP staff!

Respectfully,



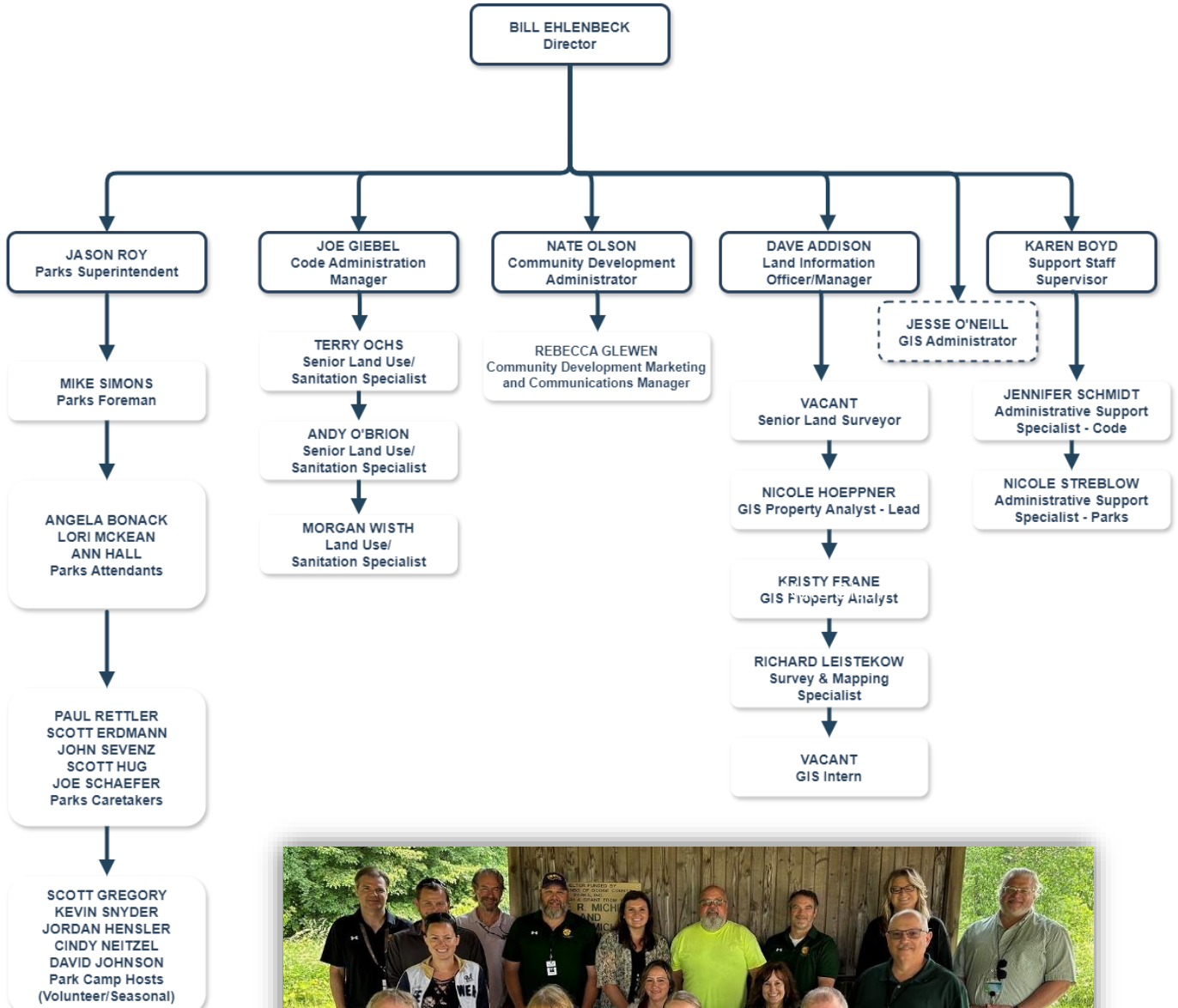
William J. Ehlenbeck  
Director

# Dodge County Land Resources and Parks Department Annual Report-2023

## Land Resources and Parks Committee

Mary Bobholz, Benjamin Priesgen, Donna Maly, Daniel Siegmann, Dale Macheel

## Land Resources and Parks Department



## Code Administration Division

[Code Administration](#) manages the County Land Use Code which includes the zoning district regulations and standards, the Environmental Protection, Highway Setback, Planned Unit Development and Land Spreading of Petroleum Contaminated Soil regulations. This unit also enforces the County Airport Zoning Ordinance, Floodplain Ordinance, Shoreland Protection Ordinance, Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Ordinance and the Sanitary Ordinance regulations and standards. The Board of Adjustment administration and clerical assistance is also a responsibility of this unit.



### ZONING

The zoning provisions of the County Land Use Code promote the health, safety, morals, prosperity, aesthetics and general welfare of the citizens of Dodge County by dividing the County into districts and regulating the use of structures, land and water within each district. Districts reflect the objectives of adopted plans of the County and its municipalities.

Zoning provisions are based on ss. 59.69 which calls for county zoning to be in effect in towns which approve it. The Towns of Ashippun, Calamus, Elba, Fox Lake, Hustisford, Lebanon, Leroy, Lomira, Oak Grove, Rubicon, Shields and Trenton have approved the County Land Use Code. Shoreland-Wetland zoning, required by ss. 59.692, requires counties to regulate development within 1,000 feet of lakes, ponds and flowages and 300 feet of rivers and streams.

The Towns of Beaver Dam, Burnett, Chester, Clyman, Emmet, Herman, Hubbard, Lowell, Portland and Theresa have enacted town zoning ordinances, approved by the County Board of Supervisors. During 2023 the staff assisted most towns having town zoning ordinances. The Town of Westford does not have any zoning regulations except within the shoreland and floodplain areas.

The Land Use Code requires that a permit be obtained before changing the use of any structure, land or water, or locating or structurally altering any structure or sign. A land use permit is required for permitted uses or structures. A conditional use permit may be granted by the Land Resources and Parks Committee after a public hearing for conditionally allowed uses specified in each zoning district, to which conditions may be attached.

Permits and Reviews		
	2022	2023
Land Use Permit	362	418
Sanitary Permit	134	125
Rezoning	18	21
Conditional Use Permit	17	21
Minor Land Division	94	69
Certified Survey Maps	69	64
Driveway Permit	41	96
Town Rezoning	11	9
Sanitary Compliance Reviews	3	4
Soil Evaluation Reviews	137	127
Violations	24	30
Plats	3	2
Variances	19	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>932</b>	<b>1008</b>

The Code Administration staff experienced an increase of 8.2% in overall review activity in 2023 from permit applications and other code approval requests. Of the 418 Land Use Permit applications received, 39 were for new homes compared with 48 new home requests in 2022. The value of construction permitted by Land Use Permits under the County Land Use Code was \$52,603,005 in

## Code Administration Division

2023 compared to \$41,804,854 in 2022. Staff also conducted site inspections, developed staff reports, drafted resolutions, and made recommendations to the Land Resources and Parks Committee concerning rezoning and conditional use permits. The staff also prepared minutes, decisions, hearing notices and agendas for each meeting. Town rezoning and/or text amendments were reviewed in 2023 for the Towns of Beaver Dam, Chester, Herman, Hubbard, Lowell, Portland and Theresa.

### FLOODPLAIN ORDINANCE

The floodplain ordinance was amended in 2023 to include the adoption of the dam failure analysis and floodplain boundaries for properties downstream of the Karsten #2 Dam located in the Town of Hubbard and included changes to the text of the Ordinance to reflect the minimum regulatory standards required in Ch. NR 116, Wisconsin Administrative Code, and those of the National Floodplain Insurance Program. Activities such as dredging, filling, excavating and construction of buildings within the floodplain are generally allowed, but may be restricted according to which flood zone the property is located in. The adoption and enforcement of the updated Ordinance provisions allow the County to continue to participate in the FEMA Flood Insurance Program.

### AIRPORT ZONING ORDINANCE

The Airport Zoning Ordinance was approved by the County Board in 2011. This ordinance regulates the height of structures near the Dodge County Airport. The ordinance also imposes additional “overlay zoning” regulations, which are in addition to those “underlying zoning” regulations that will maintain a compatible relationship between airport operations and existing and future land uses within the three mile jurisdictional boundary. Permits are required for all construction within three miles of the airport.

### HIGHWAY SETBACK OVERLAY DISTRICT

Dodge County adopted a Highway Setback Ordinance in 1952. The Overlay District establishes setback distances and requires permits for construction within 200 feet of a public road. Sixteen of the County's 23 towns have approved these district regulations.

### SHORELAND PROTECTION ORDINANCE

The Shoreland Protection Ordinance applies to all land in unincorporated areas that are located within 1,000 feet of a lake, pond or flowage, within 300 feet of a navigable river or stream, within a wetland and within the floodplain of a river or stream. The ordinance establishes minimum standards governing lot size, lot coverage, structure height, impervious surface area and water setback regulations for all development within a shoreland area. The ordinance also contains mitigation standards which allow the owner to make certain

<b>2023 Submitted Land Use and Conditional Use Permits</b>			
<b>Town</b>	<b>Land Use Permits</b>	<b>Conditional Use Permits</b>	<b>New Homes</b>
ASHIPPUN	39	2	4
BEAVER DAM	10	0	1
BURNETT	5	0	0
CALAMUS	36	0	0
CHESTER	1	0	0
CLYMAN	7	0	0
ELBA	21	2	3
EMMET	8	0	0
FOX LAKE	40	1	8
HERMAN	5	0	0
HUBBARD	34	0	1
HUSTISFORD	15	1	1
LEBANON	26	1	1
LEROY	13	4	0
LOMIRA	27	3	1
LOWELL	6	0	1
OAK GROVE	16	1	2
Juneau (C)	6	0	3
Horicon (C)	0	0	0
PORTLAND	4	0	1
RUBICON	36	1	7
SHIELDS	12	3	2
THERESA	3	0	1
TRENTON	21	2	0
WESTFORD	27	0	2
<b>2023 TOTALS</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>2022 TOTALS</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>48</b>

## Code Administration Division

improvements to a parcel located within the shoreland area that may be nonconforming to the setback, impervious surface area or the height standards in the code without a variance, in exchange for agreeing to certain mitigation requirements listed in the ordinance.

### **SUBDIVISION OVERLAY DISTRICT**

The Land Use Code contains subdivision design and improvement regulations which apply to the division of land in unincorporated areas of Dodge County. County approval is required for most land divisions.

### ***Certified Survey Maps***

A property division of four parcels or less requires the submission of a Letter of Intent. The town board and affected County agencies may comment regarding compliance with regulations and plans. The subdivider may then proceed with soil tests and a certified survey. In 2023, 69 Letters of Intent were processed and 69 certified survey maps were approved. In 2022, 94 Letters of Intent were processed and 69 certified survey maps were approved.

### ***Plat Review***

Proposed subdivisions of five or more parcels in unincorporated areas require the submission and Committee approval of a preliminary and final plats. Plats in cities and villages are reviewed by the Department, but the County Land Use Code regulations do not apply. One preliminary plat and one final plat were reviewed in 2023.

### **SANITARY ORDINANCE**

The Sanitary Ordinance protects the public health by regulating the location, construction, installation, alteration, design and use of private sewage disposal systems. Permits are required for the installation of holding tanks, septic tanks and absorption areas and systems. Sanitary regulations apply in all areas of Dodge County, including cities and villages. Administration of this Ordinance consists of site investigations, review of applications, permit issuing, installation inspections and compliance investigations. The County Sanitary Ordinance was amended in 2023 to include a series of amendments necessary in order to clarify the septic and holding tank maintenance, reporting and fee requirements for private septic systems.

### ***Sanitary Permits***

During 2023, 125 sanitary permits were processed compared to 134 in 2022. There were 127 soil test reviews completed in 2023 in comparison to 137 in 2022. State sanitary code mandates that every POWTS (septic system) in the County is serviced and inspected once every three (3) years. As part of the mandate, the County is required to maintain a database of these systems and is required to send out notices to those property owners with POWTS located within the County needing the three-year maintenance inspection. There were 5,691 maintenance notices sent out in 2023 as compared to 6,462 notices in 2022. There were also 794 septic maintenance related violation and citation notices sent out in 2023.

### **NON-METALLIC MINING RECLAMATION PROGRAM**

Chapter 295 of Wisconsin Statutes mandated that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources create regulations to ensure non-metallic mines are properly reclaimed. In 2001, Dodge County was mandated to administer NR 135. Each mine is required to have a reclamation plan that outlines the process to fully reclaim mine sites, as well as maintain financial assurance to guarantee the mine site will be reclaimed. Mines are located within 15 of the 23 towns in Dodge County. In 2023, there were 16 mine operators and 25 mine sites in the County with approximately 908.2 acres being actively

# Code Administration Division

mined and 31.2 acres currently inactive. The mines range in size from 1.3-acres to 148.4-acres. No mines are currently under reclamation or have been reclaimed in 2023.

In addition to working with mine operators, the staff works with financial institutions to maintain financial assurance for each site. Various methods are used to maintain financial assurance, letters of credit and bonds being the most popular. Currently there is approximately \$3,785,745.09 in financial assurances (as of 12/31/2023). This program is funded with annual fees that are charged to mine operators.

### BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

The Dodge County Board of Adjustment is a quasi-judicial body charged with the responsibility of deciding appeals and applications filed with it under the terms of the Zoning Codes. The Board of Adjustment acts somewhat like a court, therefore, it is vitally important that the Board follows accepted procedures and fairly evaluates the relevant facts in each case that comes before them. In order to allow for meaningful certiorari review by a circuit court, the board is required to explain the “grounds” it relied upon to make its decisions – or the reasons the application does or does not fit the legal criteria for granting a variance. The Board must, therefore, carefully document whether the requirements for granting a variance are present or not in each request. Each decision of the Board must be made on the basis of facts available and be in accordance with guidelines found in the County Codes and Ordinances, the Wisconsin State Statutes and Court decisions interpreting the Statutes. Every person who appeals to the Board of Adjustment and who is aggrieved by the Board’s decision may appeal such decision to circuit court. Cases have become more complex over the years and many decisions are being challenged in the courts. The Department staff assists the Board of Adjustment by conducting site inspections, developing staff reports and making recommendations to the Board of Adjustment concerning variance requests and appeals. The staff also prepared minutes, hearing notices and agendas for each meeting. Legal advice from the Corporation Counsel is also required at times to arrive at judicious and legal decisions. The activities of the Board of Adjustment during the calendar year 2023 as well as comparison figures for 2018 through 2022 were as follows:



## Code Administration Division

### BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT ACTIVITY:

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Meetings Held	12	14	13	10	17	18
Total Public Hearings Held	12	13	20	9	19	10
Variance Requests						
Zoning Ordinance	5	5	11	7	13	17
Shoreland Ordinance	3	6	5	2	3	3
Floodplain Ordinance	0	0	0	0		0
Highway Setback Overlay	2	3	5	1	2	3
Airport Ordinance	0	0	0	0		0
Sanitary Ordinance	3	0	0	0	1	1
Subdivision	0	0	1	0		1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>25</b>
Board Decisions on Variance Requests						
Granted as proposed	1	0	2	1	3	3
Granted with conditions	9	10	13	7	12	19
Partially Granted / Partially Denied	1	0	1	0	1	1
Denied	1	4	4	1	3	2
Decision Pending	0	0	0	0	0	0
Withdrawn	0	0	2	1	0	0
Appeals of a decision of the Land Resources and Parks Committee and / or the Land Use Administrator	0	2	0	0	0	0
Board Decisions on Appeals						
Upheld	0	2	0	0	0	0
Reversed	0	0	0	0	0	0
Partially Upheld / Partially Reversed	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pending	0	0	0	0	0	0
Appeal of a decision of the Board of Adjustment	0	1	0	0	1	0
Upheld	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reversed	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pending	0	1	0	0	1	0



## Land Information Division

The [Land Information Office](#) is responsible for the County's Land Information Program including tax parcel mapping, survey services, and real estate description functions. The Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data administration and management, mapping services and maintenance of addressing system are also identified under this division, although many functions and services are provided independent of this division and support all areas of the Land Resources and Parks Department and other County departments. Additionally, Spillman GIS Support is provided to the Sheriff's Office.

This division administers all Land Information System/Geographic Information Systems (LIS/GIS) data and software management and mapping for the Department. Other functions include maintenance and administration of online GIS mapping tool and Land Information Search Tool (LIST), and property assessment functions supporting the Dodge County Land Information Management System (LIMS).

The division is a great resource available to all County departments (including Land Resources and Parks, Land and Water Conservation, Treasurer, Register of Deeds (ROD), Highway, Emergency Management, County Clerk, Corporation Counsel, and Dodge County Sheriff's Office and Communications Center), local, regional, state and federal units of government, the private sector and the general public.

The Land Information Division is under the jurisdiction of the Land Resources and Parks Committee with significant input from the Dodge County Land Information Council. The Land Information Council is comprised of nine members: Chris Planasch, Register of Deeds; Kris Keith, County Treasurer; David Addison, Land Information Office representative; Sheriff designee Christine Churchill; three members of the Dodge County Board of Supervisors – Jeff Breselow, Michael Butler and Randall Vande Zande; Realtors Association representative, Dianne Bell; registered professional land surveyor within Dodge County, Brad Tisdale. The Land Information Council encourages the Highway Commissioner, Emergency Management Director, Land Conservationist, Land Resources and Parks Director, and any other county or municipal staff or general public with an interest in land records and land records modernization to attend their meetings.

### Revenue Sources

The main outside revenue source for the Land Information Office (LIO) (Division 8230) comes from Real Estate Recording Fees collected in the Register of Deeds Office as part of the **Wisconsin Land Information Program (WLIP)** administered by the Department of Administration (DOA). Document recording fees are retained at the county level and a portion are returned to the DOA and made available to the county thru grants. The program is governed by state statutes 16.967 and 59.72, as well as Administrative Rule Chapter Adm. 47. In 2023, Dodge County retained \$84,200 from recording fees. Dodge County was also awarded \$71,000 in WLIP Grants. The total received from WLIP from 1990 through 2023 is \$4,146,463 with \$3,363,544 from retained fees and \$782,919 from grants.

2018	12,427	99,416	NA	1,000	75,000	50% of 2017 grant rec'd for LIDAR + 2018 \$50,000 grant re
2019	13,157	105,256	NA	1,000	25,000	50% of 2019 grant rec'd for Orthos
2020	17,297	138,376	NA	1,000	68,048	\$25,000 remainder of 2019 + \$40,000 2020 (for Orthos/Drc
2021	18,430	147,440	NA	1,000	25,000	Approved \$50,000 - survey equipment & ROD scanning (f;
2022	13,125	105,000	NA	1,000	60,000	Approved \$60,000 - culvert inventory and mobile data colle
2023	10,525	84,200	NA	1,000	96,000	Approved \$70,000 - WROC and EVAAL + \$1000 Educatio
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>594,366</b>	<b>2,990,978</b>	<b>372,566</b>	<b>326,684</b>	<b>16,500</b>	<b>439,735</b>
LIO	\$6 for first page of each recorded document for modernization of land records (increased by \$2 June 25, 2010 with Act 314; original establishment October 1, 1990)					
Public Access	\$2 for first page of each recorded document for improving public access to housing data (increased by \$1 June 25, 2010 with Act 314; original establishment September 1, 2001)					
Grants	\$2 for first page of each recorded document returned to WI-DOA for distribution as grants and program administration (January 1, 2015 increased to \$7)					
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>4,146,463</b>	<b>3,363,544</b>	<b>from retained fees</b>			
	<b>from WLIP</b>	<b>782,919</b>	<b>from grants</b>			

## Land Information Division

These funds support operations of the Land Information Office, annual maintenance of GIS, CAD and GPS software, new equipment purchases, LTE's to assist with projects, contracting of professional services, and support of various land records-related projects. Funding for Division 8230 is non-lapsing and by statute must be used to support land records modernization activities. It is anticipated there will be approximately \$373,000 carried over to the 2024 budget. Funds not used in a budget year accrue in the Designated Fund Balance for future large cost projects such as orthophotography and LiDAR (elevation data), survey and computer equipment, application development and/or system upgrades. Revenues for Division 8230 are dependent upon the strength of the economy with no funding from the tax levy.

Division 8231 supports the functions of the Real Estate and Survey Office units of the Land Information Division.

There are no significant revenues received in this unit due to a strict interpretation of Wisconsin's Open Records Law. Data is freely shared and exchanged with other units of government and the private and public sectors. Numerous walk-in, email, online and telephone requests are filled daily. The availability of geospatial data online through the [LIST](#) and [GIS Web Mapping](#) tool provide 24-7 access for a wide spectrum of users and has helped reduce the work load of staff. Downloadable datasets were added in 2020 and available via the internet, further reducing staff workloads by reducing individual requests.

The Division continues to provide information and services to a wide range of users. Efficiencies have increased, duplication of effort has been reduced or eliminated, and additional land related information is made available to more people and organizations on a timely basis resulting in better decision-making.

### **Highlights and Projects – Summarized Below By Functional Area**

*Much of the work is collaborative between the various areas and staff members in the division.*

#### **LAND INFORMATION**

**Wisconsin Land Information Program (WLIP)** - In order to participate in the WLIP, Counties must meet certain requirements. Any grants received and fees retained for Land Information through the WLIP must be spent consistent with the County Land Information Plan. Requirements include: updating the County's Land Information Plan every three years; meeting of the Land Information Council at least once per year to review expenditures, policies and priorities; Grant Report on expenditures each year; submit detailed grant applications each year; complete WLIP annual survey; subscribe to DOA's land information listserv; coordinate the sharing of parcel data with DOA in a searchable format.

**Grantor/Grantee Index** – The Register of Deeds Office identified a need to develop, index and scan existing index books. This project is being funded using 2021 WLIP Grants. The office contracted this work with TriMin and scanning completed in 2023.

**Wisconsin Regional Ortho Consortium (WROC)** – Dodge County once again participated in WROC to update aerial imagery from 2020 through a contract with Ayres Associates Inc. The imagery was obtained in April during leaf-off conditions. Delivery of the final product in 6 inch pixels was in November and the imagery was incorporated into the GIS Mapping Tool and internal applications.

## Land Information Division

**Soil Erosion Vulnerability Assessment** – The assessment was completed to produce 47 HUC12 watersheds for the use of the Dodge County Land and Water Resources Department. This data to be used to produce erosion datasets and analyze erosion vulnerability. The work was done through a contract with Ayres Associates Inc utilizing Dodge Counties existing LIDAR DEM and culvert locations (previous Land Information Projects).

### SURVEY

**Survey Review** – Staff reviewed Certified Survey Maps as part of Survey Review policy. All other surveys submitted for filing (Plats of Survey, Subdivisions, Condos and CSM's that are not part of review authority) were reviewed as well. All surveys are hyperlinked into Access Database and filed in section folders. Surveys are also drawn and links to their images provided through the [Survey Finder Tool](#). Updated section corner information is made available on the County website as well as through the State Cartographer's Office (SCO) Control Finder and PLSS Finder internet applications.

**PLSS Maintenance** - Performed on-going Public Land Survey System (PLSS) section corner maintenance through contracted services with MSA Professional Services and performed site visits to check monuments. Checked with Highway Department and Townships regarding their annual notification of planned roadwork that would damage or destroy PLSS monumentation.

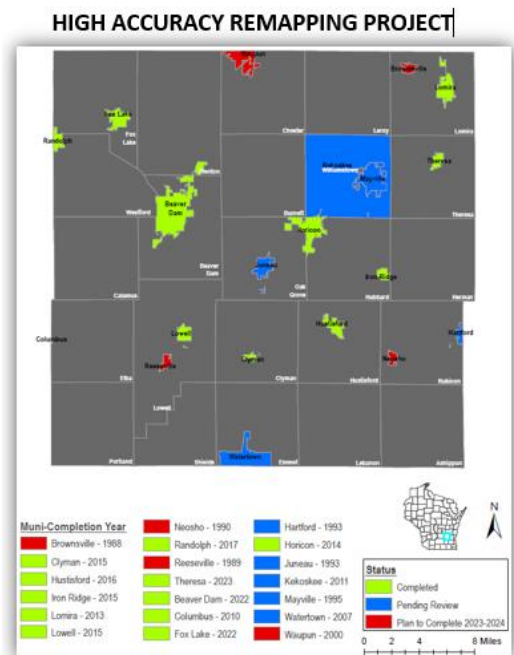
**Fieldwork for remapping project** - Finished fieldwork for the Villages of Theresa, Reeseville and Brownsville and started the fieldwork for the Village of Neosho. Fieldwork is being done as part of our high accuracy remapping project. Data acquired entered into CAD and imported into the Parcel Fabric to assist with the tax mapping.

**Technical support and research** - Provided technical support for survey-related questions and assist private surveyors and the public with any questions, corner research, data requests and locating section corners. Performed survey-related fieldwork for County departments and committees upon request.

### TAX MAPPING

**Parcel Mapping Updates** - Updates were made under the Parcel Fabric system. Updated mapping is necessary to show new lots created through the platting process (Subdivisions, Condos and Certified Survey Maps). Mapping updates are also done for existing lots and parcels that may have been changed when deeds are recorded using new legal descriptions (typically from a Plat of Survey). Miscellaneous updates are also made as staff discovers errors or discrepancies in the existing mapping.

**Remapping** – In 2023 the CAD mapping for the Villages of Theresa, Reeseville and Brownsville have been completed and will be added to the Parcel Fabric in 2024. It is anticipated that the Village of Neosho and a few smaller areas will be completed in 2024. That will leave the City of Waupun as the remaining municipality to be completed as part of this remapping project. Remapping of the County is



# Land Information Division

an ongoing project to improve boundary accuracy and will continue in the future, concentrating on unincorporated areas and pockets of development.

## DRONE PROGRAM

**Licensing** – There are currently five staff members who have received the UAS Pilot license. Licensed staff are generally available to assist when a flight is necessary. The GIS Property Analyst has been designated as the main point of contact.



**Projects** – A number of flights were flown in 2023 to assist in other areas of the department, including Code Administration and Parks. These projects include capturing the installing of new vault toilets at Ledge and Astico county parks, capturing the progress of the new solar farms in Lomira, and collecting LiDAR data of various non-metallic mining quarries and create orthophotographs to assist Code Administration.

## REAL ESTATE

The assessment cycle runs January 1st through the time tax bills are run in December and is a vital function of the office. Processed assessment roll data for Managed Forest Lands, State Assessed Manufacturing and local assessors in a timely fashion to meet assessors’ deadlines. Worked with local clerks to ensure that reports balanced with assessor data. Ran reports and files for the Department of Revenue (DOR) to assist with the determination of equalized values. Communication and contact with local and state officials ensures the data is accurate prior to running tax bills.

The office kept current on processing documents. Documents are downloaded from the Register of Deeds on a daily basis and processed in the LandNav program after comparing names and legal descriptions with the assessment records.

The office assists local assessors and the DOR by verifying Parcel ID numbers on the DOR Electronic Real Estate Transfer Return site.

DODGE COUNTY 2023 REAL ESTATE VALUATION SUMMARY GRAND TOTAL							REPORT #:	SRVALSUM1ST
							RUN DATE:	01/05/2024
							RUN TIME:	12:15:56 PM
							PAGE:	59
CODE	TOTAL	PARCEL COUNT	LAND	IMPROVE	LAND VALUE	IMPROVE VALUE	TOTAL VALUE	TOTAL ACRES
<b>REAL ESTATE GENERAL PROPERTY TAX:</b>								
RESIDENTIAL	G1	29558	29551	27735	1,116,927,800	4,718,446,180	5,835,373,980	29,617.662
COMMERCIAL	G2	2779	2774	2296	186,919,200	1,039,329,300	1,226,248,500	7,445.643
MANUFACTURING	G3	196	193	174	29,813,600	365,072,000	394,885,600	2,514.501
AGRICULTURAL	G4	13752	13752	0	100,151,500	0	100,151,500	349,038.405
UNDEVELOPED LAND	G5	11006	10908	0	62,506,700	0	62,506,700	76,866.013
AGRICULTURAL FOREST	G5M	3052	3052	0	24,213,700	0	24,213,700	20,366.836
PRODUCTIVE FOREST LANDS	G6	497	497	0	10,693,200	0	10,693,200	4,468.581
OTHER	G7	2516	2516	2490	78,276,500	408,799,500	487,076,000	5,098.239
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>63356</b>	<b>63243</b>	<b>32695</b>	<b>1,609,502,200</b>	<b>6,531,646,980</b>	<b>8,141,149,180</b>	<b>494,415.880</b>
<b>WOODLAND:</b>								
PRIVATE FOREST CROP PRE 72	8 0 0.10 W1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000
PRIVATE FOREST CROP POST 71	8 0 3.60 W2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000
PRIVATE FOREST CROP SPECIAL	8 0 0.20 W3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000
COUNTY FOREST CROP	8 0 0.00 W4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000
MFL OPEN POST 2004	8 2 1.90 W5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000
MFL CLOSED POST 2004	8 0 9.49 W6	56	56	0	2,710,400	0	2,710,400	1,207.300
MFL OPEN PRE 2005	8 0 0.72 W7	2	2	0	63,800	0	63,800	30.000
MFL CLOSED PRE 2005	8 0 1.69 W8	66	66	0	2,289,900	0	2,289,900	1,257.060
MFL CLOSED PRE 2005 MINING	8 0 7.37 W9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,064,100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,064,100</b>	<b>2,494.360</b>
<b>EXEMPT:</b>								
FEDERAL	X1	153	0	0	0	0	0	21,716.677
STATE	X2	577	0	0	0	0	0	26,978.050
COUNTY	X3	124	0	0	0	0	0	1,806.750
OTHER	X4	1819	0	0	0	0	0	11,014.495
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2673</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>61,515.972</b>
<b>** FINAL TOTAL **</b>		<b>66153</b>	<b>63367</b>	<b>32695</b>				<b>559,426.212</b>
<b>ACTUAL PARCEL COUNT</b>		<b>47818</b>						

## Land Information Division

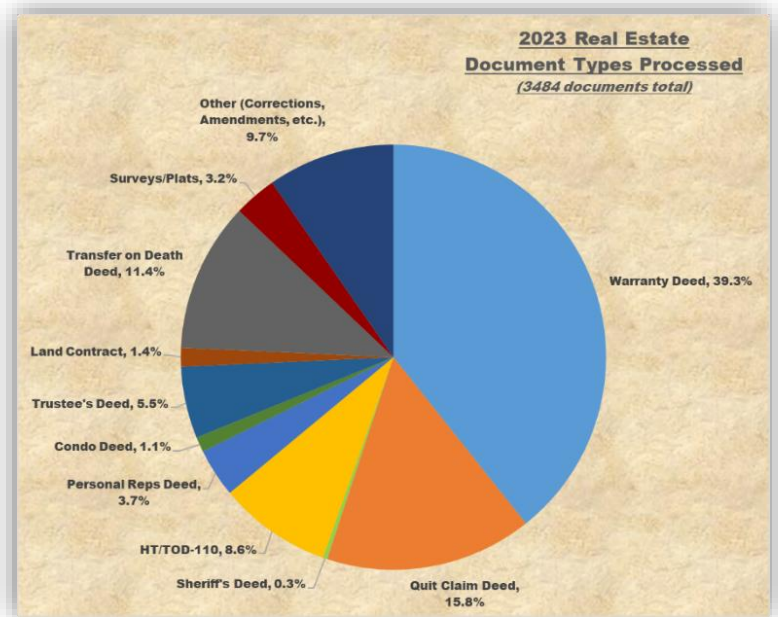
The office works with the Drainage District engineer in developing drainage district maps which helps identify these properties.

The office assists the public with general property questions at the counter, on the phone and through email and consults County Code Administration on possible land division violations.

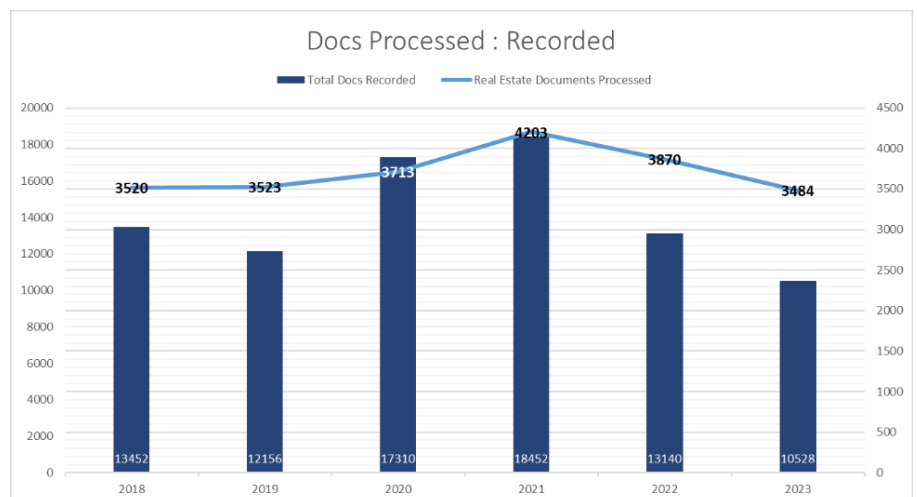
The office worked closely with the County Highway Department and Corporation Counsel to shift the airport hangars on Dodge County-owned land from the Personal Property roll to the Real Estate roll. This change was necessary due to Wisconsin Act 12 which eliminated the Personal Property tax.

### GENERAL STATISTICS FOR 2023

- 47,818 real estate parcels and 2,056 personal property accounts were maintained
- 3,484 real estate recordings from the Register of Deeds Office were processed (approximately 33% of all documents recorded in 2023) affecting 5,233 tax parcels (approximately 9% of the total parcels)
- 2,705 parcels had ownership updates
- 522 tax parcels are showing an error on a recorded document and 23 tax parcels are “on hold” (not yet updated ownership information due to significant errors)
- Staff processed 11 Sheriff’s Deeds for 12 tax parcels which accounts for approximately 0.3% of all documents processed by the office in 2023
- There were three Territory Amendments and one new TID district in 2023 (effective for 2024)
- There were no annexations in 2023 (changes effective for 2024)



\*\* One interesting thing to note is that even though recordings decreased almost 20% from 2022 (13,140) to 2023 (10,528), the number of documents the Land Info office processed only decreased 10% from 2022 (3,870) to 2023 (3,484). Similar trend in recordings from 2021 (18,452) to 2022 (13,140) - down 28% - but “processed” in 2021 (4,203) to 2022 (3,870) – only down 8%.



# Land Information Division

## GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS)

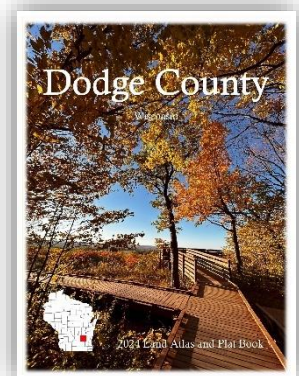
➤ Several large projects punctuated GIS activities in 2023. A new public GIS web mapping portal, a new edition of the Dodge County Plat Book, and new countywide aerial photos provided improved access to geographic information for internal county users as well as the public. As always, we continue to provide ad-hoc and project level mapping for many County departments, public agencies, and private citizens & businesses.

➤ **Beacon™ Web Mapping Portal** – We successfully migrated our public web mapping site to the Beacon™ mapping platform after our previous vendor sold their business to Schneider Geospatial. Although the transition to an unfamiliar program can be difficult for users at first, the enhanced functionality and nightly update cycle of the Beacon™ platform has helped improve access to the wide range of geographic data we have available. The Beacon™ platform is still evolving and we are working closely with Schneider Geospatial to continue improving our web mapping site.



➤ **New Aerial Photography** – Countywide aerial photography was acquired in Spring 2023 as Dodge County participated in the Wisconsin Regional Orthoimagery Consortium (WROC), which seeks to provide regular, affordable aerial photography throughout the State of Wisconsin. Due to the cost effectiveness of the program, we plan to fly again in 2026 or 2027, and then again in the Census year of 2030. Updated aerial photos serve as a foundational base mapping layer on most county mapping systems including the Beacon™ public web mapping site, Motorola FLEX software used in the 911 Comm Center, and many other mapping applications.

➤ **Dodge County Plat Book** – The 2024 edition of the Dodge County Plat Book and Land Atlas was published in December and is now available for sale in the County Clerk’s office. The plat book is designed and produced entirely in-house by Land Resources and Parks staff, then printed/bound by Westphal Printing in Brownsville. The 2024 edition is the first plat book update since 2020 and is the culmination of many weeks of hard work to perfect the text, mapping, indexes and photo layouts.

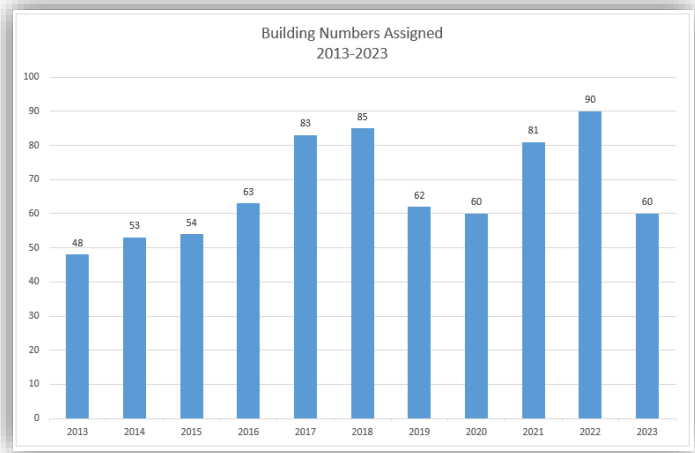


➤ **Chapter 980 Committee** – GIS was heavily involved in the activities of the Chapter 980 Committee, which is charged with identifying a suitable location to house a sex offender who is due to be released with supervision. GIS was used to delineate buffer areas around sensitive public sites, perform spatial queries based on current MLS listings, and perform

## Land Information Division

other complex spatial analyses requested by the committee.

- **Addressing** - Address assignment returned to normal levels (60 new numbers assigned) after a record year in 2022. Significant time was spent on improving the addressing database and planning for future capabilities. The Sheriff's Office 911 Comm Center is scheduled to implement NextGen 911 in 2024, a project which is in large part powered by accurate GIS data. To prepare for the NextGen 911 conversion, address points and road centerlines need to be systematically checked for errors and inconsistencies. Boundary files also need to be aligned with neighboring



counties to ensure there are no gaps or overlaps between jurisdictions. This process consumed many hours in the latter half of 2023 and will be a major focus of daily work throughout 2024.

## Community Development Division

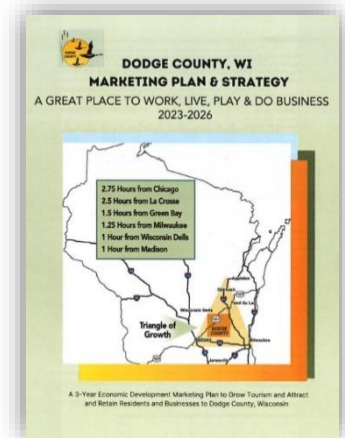
The Community Development Division is responsible for a variety of economic and community development services – including support for business growth and attraction, resident / workforce attraction and retention, community assistance, Dodge County activities, and tourism functions.

Community development in Dodge County is wide ranging, as the needs in the rural and urban communities can be very different. Providing leadership and service to all the businesses and residents in those communities can be extensive. Especially considering there are nearly 90,000 residents residing in one of the 43 cities, towns, and villages in Dodge County, which are spread across almost 900 square miles. Although the scope is large and the needs are diverse between the differing types of communities, they are very much intertwined and dependent on each other to be successful. Additionally, developing and facilitating opportunities between public and private entities is essential for success in Dodge County.

There are a variety of issues facing Dodge County, they range from resident/workforce attraction needs, stagnate population growth, aging population, supporting primary employer retention/expansion, community preparedness for business/resident attraction, childcare /housing /transportation deficiencies, implementing tools so communities can be sustainable for the future, the digital divide between the rural vs urban areas, plus many more. While there are many issues Dodge County must deal with, there are opportunities to address them and work towards positive outcomes. The Community Development Division is in a position to partner on initiatives and provide positive leadership to make businesses and residents want to call Dodge County home. The following pages are a summary of the 2023 activities within the Community Development Division.

In 2023, a Community Development Marketing and Communications Manager was hired to assist the Community Development Administrator in expanding Division activities, and developing new marketing efforts. Notably the 2023 – 2026 Marketing & Strategy Plan was developed to create a framework of initiatives to address:

- Workforce / Talent Attraction
- Tourism / Park & Recreation
- Business Attraction
- Business Retention & Expansion
- Community Assistance
- Dodge County Activities



### WORKFORCE

Maintaining a workforce pipeline is extremely important for current Dodge County employers, as well as for potential businesses. Division staff worked proactively in helping to create and maintain a workforce pipeline for the future through collaborations with a variety of public and private entities. Staff worked to increase awareness of local career opportunities and to help address employers changing needs. Some of the recent workforce activities implemented are below:

- Co-Administer the Manufacturing Business Alliance (MBA) of Dodge County Region:
  - Administered tours for over 200 High School students at local manufacturers.
  - Coordinated over 10 employer engagements at schools.
  - Developed [10 employer videos](#) that market careers to students.



## Community Development Division

- Working with Beaver Dam School District and Beaver Dam Chamber of Commerce to educate elementary, middle school, and high school students on local available careers.
  - Show pathways to different careers and employment sectors
  - Create binders that illustrate local employers for elementary students
  - Help coordinate 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Career Exploration Event over 2 days
  - Creating internship program for high school students



- Working with DodgeLand School District on their Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) program
- Collaborate with Moraine Park Technical College (MPTC) on new and changing needs in the region, promote MPTC contract training with employers
- Work with CESA 6 to promote Youth Apprentice (YA) and Inspire programing, over 200 Students in Dodge County participate in YA
- Inspire program will gain traction in 2024 and provide more options for students
- Continuously work with various k-12 schools on different activities to help educate students on local career opportunities, differs by school district



### TOURISM

There are a variety of tourism activities that are coordinated through the Community Development Division. Dodge County has a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities, including the Dodge County Park and Trail system, Federal and State Horicon Marsh Areas, Horicon Marsh Education and Visitor Center, state wildlife areas, and lakes / waterways. The extensive amount of outdoor recreational options in Dodge County is within an hour's drive of a large portion of the state's population. Hence, a significant amount of effort is put towards marketing Dodge County's outdoor recreation opportunities to the Fox Valley/Madison/Milwaukee regions.

Digital and print materials were utilized to market the outdoor recreation opportunities in Dodge County. Additionally, the annual Dodge County Visitor Guide continues to provide a marketing option for employers and communities to attract new residents and workforce. The following outlines some of the activities from 2023:

## Community Development Division

- Dodge County Visitor Guide
  - 25,000 paper guides, distribute across greater Dodge County region.
  - 4 Digital Campaigns, highlight different outdoor recreation options available in Dodge County, rotate through activities available in different seasons:
    - Horicon Marsh Education Center: 354,654 Impressions / 793 clicks to website.
    - Kayaking / Canoeing: 30,741 video views / 607 clicks to website.
    - Harnischfeger Park: 63,824 impressions / 967 clicks to website.
    - Cross country skiing campaign was suspended, will run next winter.

- Created five Promotional Videos of Dodge County Parks. These marketing videos were shared on social media and are available on their individual web pages:
  - [Astico](#)
  - [Derge](#)
  - [Ledge](#)
  - [Nitchke](#)
  - [Harnischfeger](#)



- Obtained a \$39,550 Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) Grant
  - Grant awarded to Dodge County with the goal of partnering with communities, increasing County awareness, and increase visitor trips
  - 11 Communities and 3 Marsh Entities Participating



### BUSINESS ATTRACTION

Showcasing Dodge County as a place to do business is an important part of the Community Development Division. Utilizing available resources to feature Dodge County as a great location in WI, available workforce, and a quality of life area are features that used to market Dodge County. Since Dodge County does not own any buildings or sites available for new developments, staff works with local communities to market their available building and sites. Additionally, staff works with community leaders to respond to Requests for Information (RFI) for new potential developments. Some of the activities in 2023 include:

- Building and Sites Inventory
  - 26 sites available (1 – 520 acres)
  - 22 buildings available
- Received and distributed 18 Request for Information (RFI) to community leaders
- Continuously work with Madison Region Economic Partnership (MadREP) and Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) on new development interest and options to help tell our story about why Dodge County is a good place to do business.

## Community Development Division

- Hosted MadREP and community stakeholder event, continue efforts to build regional capacity for new developments and guide activities in the region.
- Working with City of Horicon to get new developments in Marshland Crossing Industrial Park.
- Continuously provide assistance in various forms and as resources allow to communities.



### BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION (BRE)

Assisting the existing businesses in Dodge County to help them grow and thrive in Dodge County is vital for our future. Businesses have varying needs that staff assists with, such as facility expansions, business to business connections, business growth (exporting), community relations, and workforce. Developing and maintaining positive relationships with existing businesses is extremely important and critical for BRE activities. Some of the BRE activities in 2023 include:

- Over 100+ Business Contacts in 2023, talks have led to:
  - Workforce and Quality of Life Initiatives
  - Potential Facility Expansions
  - Business to Business Connections
  - Review – On-site Healthcare / Childcare / Housing
  - Business Market Growth
    - Supply Chain / Exporting
  - Community Relations
    - Regulatory Activities



### COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

There are 43 local units of government in Dodge County; 23 Towns, 11 Villages, and 9 Cities. Each community has its own unique set of issues and opportunities to work on. Dodge County serves as a partner to communities to assist with those needs and supports where able to. Some of the activities staff assists communities with is:

- County / Town Zoning, Land Division, Park Plans, Comprehensive Plans, Farmland Preservation Program, Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (planning / plat review / zoning).
  - Collaborating with public / private entities to expand childcare accessibility:
  - Connected YMCA to local employers, to create new childcare options.
- Led employer sponsored childcare discussions and exploration.
- Addressing Housing Needs
  - Connecting housing developers and communities.
- Collaborate with local Chamber of Commerce
- Create training opportunities for local officials



# Community Development Division

## DODGE COUNTY ACTIVITIES

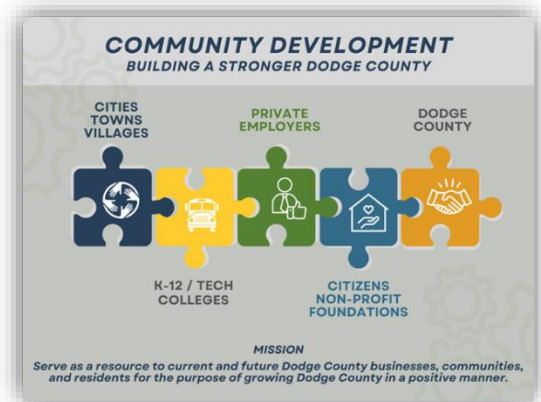
There are a wide variety of county activities the Community Development Division is involved in. These can range from traditional Land Resources and Parks (LRP) Department activities to higher level county administration activities. Below is a summary of Dodge County activities typically worked on:



- Land Resources and Parks Department
  - Land Use Code / Comprehensive Plan / Farmland Preservation Program (\$700,000+ tax credits) / Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) / Elected Official Training
- CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Programs
  - 50 Plus Loans = \$1,857,295 loaned to homeowners
- Gold Star Memorial Trail Development – connecting City of Horicon to Wild Goose Trail
- Broadband – continuous engagement with Internet Service Providers
  - 600+ sq. miles planned for fiber, 2023 – 2026 (Charter)
- Dodge County Housing Authority Projects
  - 30 Housing Units in Juneau
  - 10 Housing Units and Childcare Facility in Reeseville
- Engaging school districts, manufacturers, businesses to develop new county park and trail amenities:
  - Fish Cleaning station at Derge Park
    - Collaboration with Beaver Dam High School, Apache Stainless, and Drexel Building Supply
  - Selfie Stands at County Parks: Astico, Ledge, Nitschke, and Highway 60 WGST trailhead.
    - Collaboration with Dodgeland High School, MEC, and Breuer Metal

## LOOKING AHEAD

The Dodge County Community Development Division was very active in 2023 and the proactive approach the Division takes will lead to more in 2024! As we look forward to the upcoming year, the Community Development Division aims to build upon the successes of the previous year and address ongoing challenges while capitalizing on new opportunities. Despite these challenges, the division remains optimistic, recognizing opportunities to address them and work towards positive outcomes. By partnering on initiatives and providing leadership, the division aims to make Dodge County an attractive place for businesses and residents alike.



Overall, the Dodge County Community Development Division provides essential services to both public and private entities across the Dodge County region. Its diverse functions are interconnected, much like pieces of a puzzle, where each function represents a crucial puzzle piece. Alone, these pieces cannot complete the puzzle, but together, they form a cohesive Dodge County.

## Parks and Trails Division

**ASTICO \* DERGE \* LEDGE \* HARNISCHFEGER \* NITSCHKE MOUNDS \* WILD GOOSE STATE TRAIL  
\* GLACIAL RIVER TRAIL \* GOLD STAR MEMORIAL TRAIL \* SNOWMOBILE/ATV TRAILS**

**MISSION**

To meet the health and recreation needs and demands of the citizens of Dodge County and its visitors and to further the County’s environmental and land use goals through efficient and cost-effective operation and maintenance of a safe and accessible county-wide system of primarily resource oriented parks, trails and open space areas.

**SCOPE**

The [Parks and Trails Division](#) is responsible for planning, development, operation and maintenance of eight current parks and trails facilities, administration of the County Snowmobile and ATV/UTV Trail Programs, and promotion of regional open space recreational opportunities in Dodge County. The table on the next page identifies the amenities and features of the County Parks and Trails System.

**ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION** of the park system is carried out primarily by the Parks Superintendent and Parks Foreman and nine (9) seasonal staff assisted by Volunteer Camp Hosts (when available). Department Director provides project management and oversight on select projects and activities. The Administrative Support Specialist manages the reservation system and serves as the primary point of public contact and public relations in the office, providing a key link between staff and customers. Many projects, activities and some routine maintenance require the use of Burke Correctional Center inmates, scout troops, volunteers, contracted labor and County Highway crews to supplement park staff.



The parks remain open year-round for hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, sledding and other day use recreation. Minimal winter maintenance is currently undertaken. However, multi-use winter trails are groomed to increase trail access and use year-round. Plowing services are contracted at Astico, Harnischfeger, Ledge and Nitschke Mounds Parks to keep a minimum of roads open to parking areas in order to allow access and use of the park for day-use activities. Winter camping is not permitted in the parks. Parking lots along the Wild Goose State Trail are able to be maintained with assistance from the Highway Department as time and resources permit.

<b>Seasonal Staff and Assignments:</b>	<b>Attendants</b>	<b>Caretakers</b>	<b>Volunteer Hosts</b>
Astico	Angela Bonack	Paul Rettler	Scott & Rita Gregory
Derge	Vacant	Scott Erdmann	Kevin Snyder
Ledge	Lori McKean	Scott Hug	Cindy Neitzel/David Johnson
Harnischfeger	Ann Hall	John Sevenz	Jordan Hensler/Lauren Savidusky
Nitschke Mounds, Glacial River Trail, Gold Star Memorial Trail, and Wild Goose State Trail	N/A	Joe Schaefer	N/A

## Parks and Trails Division

The **Volunteer Camp Host** program continues to be a vital component in the parks operation. The camp hosts assist park visitors with information, campsite registrations, firewood sales, watercraft rentals and monitoring of the park when staff are not available. The camp hosts receive a campsite and firewood as compensation during their stay. The volunteer camp host at Derge Park has provided attendant like services, so we did not need to fill the vacant attendant position for 2023.

Amenity / Feature	Harnischfeger	Astico	Ledge	Nitschke Mounds	Derge	Wild Goose State Trail	Glacial River Trail	Gold Star Memorial Trail
<b>Acres</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20 miles</b>	<b>3.5 miles</b>	<b>2.1 miles</b>
Key Feature	Rock River	Crawfish River	Niagara Escarpment	Effigy Mounds	Beaver Dam Lake	Horicon Marsh Community Connectivity	Connects Wild Goose Trail to Watertown	Connects Mayville to Horicon Marsh
Campsites - Electric	6	45	23	No	20	NA	NA	NA
Campsites - Non electric	4	16	18	No	4	NA	NA	NA
Flush Toilets	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Showers	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Vault /Portable Toilets	2 Portable	4	3	1 Portable	1	1 Portable (Hwy 60)	No	No
Dump Station	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	NA	NA	NA
Canoeing/Kayaking	Rentals/Access	Rentals/Access	No	No	Access	NA	NA	NA
Motor Boat Access	No	No	No	No	Yes	NA	NA	NA
Fishing Access	Pier/Shore	Pier/Shore	No	No	Pier/Shore	No	No	NA
Biking	On Roads/ Main Trail	On Roads	On Roads	No	On Roads	20 miles	3.5 miles (6.5 miles on road)	2.1
Hiking	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	20 miles	3.5 miles	Yes
Horseback Riding	1.2 miles	No	No	No	No	14 miles	No	No
Enclosed Shelter	Clubhouse	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Open Air Picnic Shelter	2	1	2	1	No	No	No	No
Picnic Area	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Horseshoe Pits	3	0	0	0	0	NA	NA	NA
Volleyball Courts	1	1	1	0	0	NA	NA	NA
Playground	1	2	2	0	2	NA	NA	NA
Disc Golf	9 holes	No	No	No	No	NA	NA	NA
Miniature Golf	9 holes	No	No	No	No	NA	NA	NA
Boardwalk	800 ft (to river) 100 ft (woods)	50 ft (pier)	130 ft (overlook)	No	No	No	No	No
X-C Ski/ Snowshoe Access	Groomed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ATV Trail (Winter)	No	No	No	No	No	20 miles	No	No
Snowmobile Trail	379.9 miles of County trails, mostly located over private property through easements							

# Parks and Trails Division

## Park Entrance Vehicle Counts

Entrance data has been collected in the parks since 2013 through the use of pneumatic and infrared counters. Pneumatic traffic counters need to be removed for the winter, so actual year round traffic count data has not been possible previously. The pneumatic counters were becoming more unreliable as they aged and were replaced with the infrared counters, providing more accurate year round data.

The monthly counts by park for 2023 are identified in the table below. Some equipment issues were experienced at Harnischfeger Park from September to November. Therefore, the average daily traffic (ADT) counts shown were significantly lower than actual expected for Harnischfeger Park and significantly higher than expected for Nitschke Mounds Park.

### VEHICLE COUNTS IDENTIFIED ON INFRARED TRAFX COUNTERS AT PARK ENTRANCES

Year	PARKS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Actual ADT	ADTx365 (YEARLY)	Avg # of Visitors per vehicle	Total Visitors (est)
2021	Astico	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	735	579	36	12,962	2.1	27,221
	Derge	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
	Harnischfeger	1,153	550	2,140	1,681	2,164	3,273	1,718	3,163	4,720	2,276	818	829	37	13,419	1.8	24,154
	Harn North Barn	436	390	292	311	1,105	924	234	830	2,589	569	587	438	13	4,578	2.0	9,155
	Ledge	942	1,158	1,863	4,686	8,358	na	na	na	na	na	250	1,069	52	18,896	2.2	41,571
	NM	na	382	na	na	na	1,918	1,624	2,679	2,598	1,011	824	679	26	9,544	2.0	19,089
2022	Astico	794	734	1,556	3,276	7,747	10,472	1,218	na	na	4,178	1,374	1,045	48	17,491	2.1	36,731
	Derge	na	na	na	na	2,376	3,087	1,494	1,571	1,536	187	84	24	24	8,897	1.5	13,346
	Harnischfeger	582	634	908	2,368	3,830	3,555	4,475	2,906	4,610	2,685	952	761	39	14,133	1.7	24,026
	Harn North Barn	411	322	428	550	1,628	905	799	1,438	2,560	750	515	480	15	5,393	2.0	10,786
	Ledge	895	740	470	4,830	7,039	6,321	6,845	5,737	5,561	9,420	2,088	633	75	27,310	2.2	60,081
	NM	580	523	na	1,310	5,273	1,323	1,012	1,146	1,123	1,124	619	378	23	8,567	2.0	17,134
2023	Astico	1,247	1,423	2,269	4,310	8,211	8,767	10,259	7,443	7,199	4,542	1,800	1,222	80	29,346	2.2	64,561
	Derge	121	97	191	857	3,228	3,729	4,363	3,556	3,015	1,362	577	394	29	10,745	2.1	22,565
	Harnischfeger	617	718	1,011	2,092	2,578	2,988	4,150	3,367	2,540	na	533	583	36	13,236	2.0	26,472
	Harn North Barn	384	501	661	804	1,121	669	728	1,229	na	na	744	588	12	4,445	2.0	8,890
	Ledge	992	1,275	1,990	5,003	6,828	6,538	7,158	6,180	5,925	6,838	2,073	964	71	25,882	2.2	56,940
	NM	477	489	499	939	6,686	3,519	2,476	4,663	1,019	938	732	448	31	11,443	2.0	22,885

na = counts not available due to counter not installed or counter not functioning properly (or assumed malfunction due to inexplicable counts)

ADT = Average Daily Traffic

ADTx365 = Total Traffic Counts for the year based on the ADT for days that counts were available

Avg # of visitors per vehicle determined from annual customer survey where available (Astico, Derge, Ledge, Harn), otherwise an avg of 2.0 is assumed

Total Park Visitation (est.)			
	2021	2022	2023
Astico	27,221	36,731	64,561
Derge	NA	13,346	22,565
Harnischfeger	24,154	24,026	26,472
Harn North Barn	9,155	10,786	8,890
Ledge	41,571	60,081	56,940
NM	19,089	17,134	22,885
<b>Total Visitation</b>	<b>123,211</b>	<b>164,126</b>	<b>204,336</b>

ADT (Average Daily Traffic)			
	2021	2022	2023
Astico	36	48	80
Derge	NA	24	29
Harnischfeger	37	39	36
Harn North Barn	13	15	12
Ledge	52	75	71
NM	26	23	31

# Parks and Trails Division

## Trail Counts

Recognizing that trail counts are important for planning, maintenance, trail advocacy and helping to obtain grants and funding, we have made efforts over the years to identify and develop good trail user count data. Until 2019 when we purchased some new counters, we had limited success. In March of 2019, a new counter was placed on the Gold Star Memorial Trail toward the east end of the trail just after construction of the first phase of the trail was completed. A new counter was also placed on the Wild Goose State Trail near the south end of the trail just north of State Road 60. Despite an occasional inexplicable count anomaly, these counters have provided mostly reliable trail counts since installation and are building important baseline data.

Additional counters are placed at various locations for short periods to obtain additional counts that can be evaluated based on the data from the permanent counters. For 2023, the south end of the Wild Goose Trail (Hwy 60) continues to be the highest use area month over month compared to the north end of the Wild Goose Trail and the Gold Star Memorial Trail – east side.

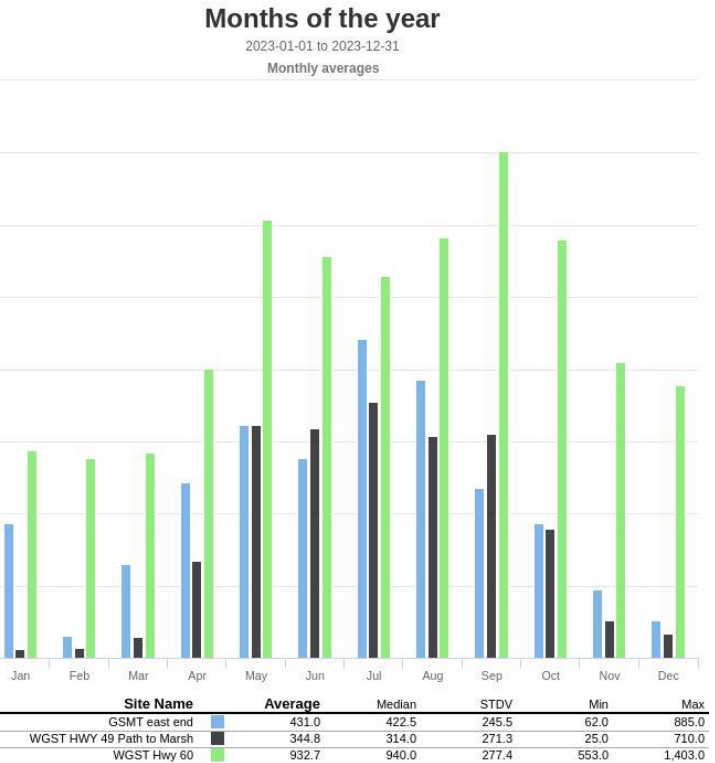
A [trail count App](#) is available for viewing current trail and park counts. The link for the App can be accessed from the [County Parks webpage](#).

## Campsite Rentals

A variety of campsite types are available throughout the Dodge County Parks system. Standard electric and non-electric sites with camping pads, picnic tables and fire rings are most common and available at Astico, Derge, Ledge and Harnischfeger Parks. Group sites are also available at Astico, Harnischfeger and Ledge Parks. Group sites primarily serve scout campouts, but are also popular for large family gatherings and organization outings.

The campsites available for rentals are:

- Astico – 45 electric, 15 non-electric, 1 group
- Ledge – 23 electric, 16 non-electric, 2 group
- Derge – 20 electric, 4 non-electric, 0 group
- Harnischfeger – 6 electric, 3 non-electric, 1 group



Campsite Rentals: 2019-2023 (Total Nights)					
Park	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Astico	2,750	2,768	3,899	4,019	3,853
Derge	1,662	1,101	3,477	1,177	1,845
Ledge	2,567	2,337	1,884	3,120	3,285
Harnischfeger	611	601	824	949	1,047
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>7,590</b>	<b>6,807</b>	<b>10,084</b>	<b>9,265</b>	<b>10,030</b>

In 2023, camping fees were \$28 for electric sites and \$20 for non-electric sites. High campsite occupancy continued at all parks again in 2023. Overall camping revenues increased by 8% for 2023.



## Parks and Trails Division

Derge Park saw the largest increase in camping for 2023 as the new rehabilitated campsites began reopening in 2023 after partial closures in 2022 during construction.

Typically, about 65% - 70% of the overnight campsite rentals in the parks are by visitors from outside of the Dodge County area. Camper visitors come from around the country and in 2023, roughly 13% travelled over 200 miles to stay in one of our County Parks. Residents, generally within a 15-25 minute drive of a park, are the primary users of the day use facilities such as the trails, fishing areas, playgrounds and picnic areas.

Camping Revenue History by Park						
Park	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	%Change
Astico	\$65,921	\$66,405	\$94,796	\$95,802	\$97,442	2%
Derge	\$41,791	\$28,886	\$39,192	\$32,142	\$49,924	55%
Ledge	\$64,747	\$60,130	\$83,730	\$79,154	\$83,257	5%
Harnischfeger	\$18,580	\$15,804	\$22,332	\$24,758	\$24,227	(2)%
TOTALS	\$191,039	\$171,225	\$240,050	\$231,856	\$254,851	10%

### Online Reservation System

An online reservation system was implemented mid-year 2018 to better meet the needs of our park customers by providing 24/7, real time - online camping and shelter reservations. In 2023, 29% of reservations were made on the weekends and 45% were made outside of regular office hours compared to 33% on weekends and 47% outside of office hours in 2022.



The fifth full year of operation under the online system was in 2023. In 2023, a total of 3,584 reservations were made online compared with 3,369 in 2022. A \$5 fee is charged per reservation in addition to the campsite fee. This fee is segregated into a future Parks Development account to cover credit card use fees with the balance of revenue remaining for future park development.

Park	Online Reservations Campsites and Shelters - 2023
Astico	1,381 – 89%
Derge	610 – 87%
Ledge	1,279 – 89%
Harnischfeger	314 – 77%

### Firewood

Firewood continues to be a major task for the park staff, both in keeping up with sales and supplies. The firewood ban first instituted in 2008 was lifted for the 2020 camping season. The lifting of the ban resulted in a decrease in firewood demand and sales for 2023. Firewood fees remained at \$5 per bundle (approximately

# Parks and Trails Division

8 pieces) in 2023 and were sold by park staff, volunteer camp hosts and on a self-service basis.

Approximately 26,726 pieces of firewood were cut, split and sold in the parks in 2023 resulting in over \$16,704 net firewood revenues (after sales tax removal), a \$205 decrease from 2022. All the firewood sold was generated from the parks utilizing dead and downed wood from throughout the park system as well as removal of undesirable and hazard trees.

Firewood Revenue History					
Park	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Astico	\$7,334	\$5,426	\$6,747	\$6,436	\$6,225
Derge	\$1,734	\$1,488	\$1,503	\$1,512	\$1,564
Ledge	\$8,449	\$6,380	\$8,138	\$7,545	\$7,791
Harnischfeger	\$1,718	\$ 924	\$1,540	\$1,416	\$1,123
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$19,235</b>	<b>\$14,218</b>	<b>\$17,928</b>	<b>\$16,909</b>	<b>\$16,704</b>

Burke Correctional Center inmates assisted park staff with firewood cutting, splitting, stacking and brushing in 2023.

Continual efforts have been taken by parks staff to inventory and remove hazardous trees in the parks and on the trails and also replanting of various tree species.

### Shelter and Clubhouse Rentals

The shelters and clubhouse rentals available in the County Parks provide a valuable service to Dodge County residents and visitors. The buildings are used for scout activities, organization outings, company picnics and family parties; such as reunions, graduations, weddings, birthdays and more. Additionally, the clubhouse serves as the hub of activities for the annual FallFest public fundraising event at Harnischfeger Park held by Friends of Dodge County Parks, Inc.

The buildings available for rentals are:

- Astico Park – 1 Open Shelter
- Ledge Park – 2 Open Shelters
- Harnischfeger Park – 2 Open Shelters and the Clubhouse
- *Nitschke Mounds Park - contains a large shelter that functions primarily for park programming and educational functions and is not available for public rentals.*

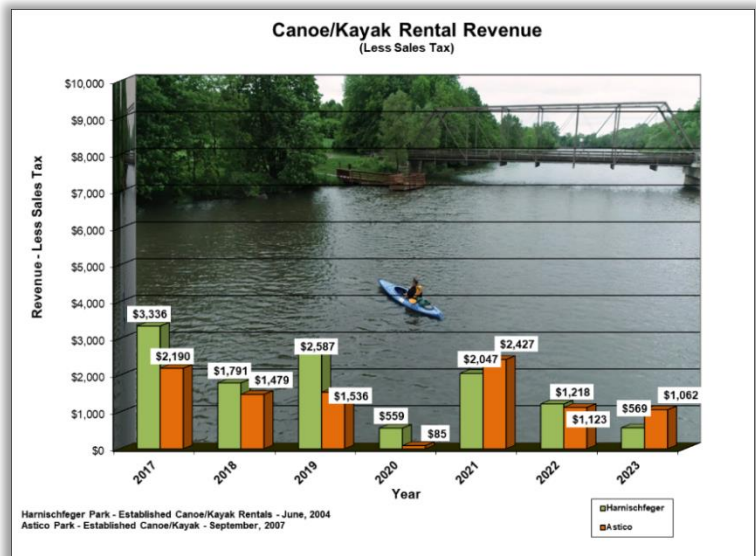
Net Shelter Revenue History By Park					
Park	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Astico	\$783	\$449	\$1,268	\$ 312	\$431
Derge	\$285	\$ 47	\$246	\$ 0	\$ 0
Ledge	\$1,038	\$188	\$654	\$1,232	\$1,564
Harnischfeger	\$2,066	\$531	\$2,715	\$3,554	\$3,496
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$4,172</b>	<b>\$1,215</b>	<b>\$4,883</b>	<b>\$5,098</b>	<b>\$5,491</b>
Harnischfeger Clubhouse	\$5,990	\$1,353	\$3,245	\$5,189	\$4,474

### Watercraft Rentals

Watercraft rentals, which include canoes and kayaks, are available at Astico and Harnischfeger Parks. Watercraft activity levels remain high, however more people continue to bring their own canoes/kayaks rather than rent from the parks. This helped decrease our rental revenues in 2023 at both parks.

Watercraft available for rentals were:

- Harnischfeger Park
  - 8 Canoes
  - 8 Kayaks (Two – two-person units)
- Astico Park
  - 4 Canoes
  - 4 Kayaks (One – two-person unit)



# Parks and Trails Division

## 2023 DODGE COUNTY PARKS AND TRAILS PROJECTS

### ***Astico Park***

Four new vault toilets were installed to replace the aging pit toilets. One of the toilets was installed on the east side of the park, which filled a much needed and requested amenity. Repairs were completed on the existing woodlot. The wooden railings on the approach ends of the historic bridge were replaced. Ash tree removal began in the fall and will continue as more trees begin to die off due to the Emerald Ash Borer. The hiking trails were brushed out and widened to accommodate our grooming equipment allowing for approximately two miles of groomed multi-use winter trails. A new drinking fountain/water bottle fill station was added to the main shower building.



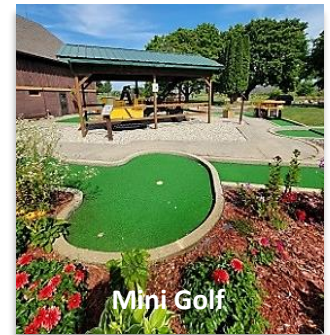
### ***Derge Park***

One new vault toilet was installed to replace the existing aging pit toilet. Repairs and upgrades were completed to the shower building with the installation of new plumbing and shower heads. The woodchips were replaced in the main playground. A new drinking fountain/water bottle fill station was added to the main shower building. Planning and preparations continued for the electrical upgrade project.



### ***Harnischfeger Park***

Staff and volunteers completed refurbishment of the mini golf course and the surrounding landscaping. A portable toilet from Ledge Park was moved to the north parking lot, filling a much needed and requested amenity. Repairs to the boardwalk were continued with park staff and the assistance of the Burke Correctional Center work crew. The dry season allowed for hiking trail brushing, leveling and widening. The Edible Harvest initiative began with the planting of several species of fruit trees in various locations within the park. A pollinator patch was added to the north fields to provide a quality habitat and food source for native pollinators. The concession stand was also upgraded and repaired with generous donations of time, material and skill from volunteers and seasonal park staff.



### ***Ledge Park***

Three new vault toilets were added to replace the aging pit toilets. The lower ledge pit toilet was closed for the past three years due to its dilapidated condition. The temporary portable toilet was then moved to Harnischfeger Park. Numerous hazardous trees and ash trees were removed. The woodchips were replaced in the upper and lower playgrounds. Park staff and volunteers spent many hours brushing and resurfacing the hiking trails with woodchips. A new drinking fountain/water bottle fill station was added to the main shower building.



### ***Nitschke Mounds***

Many hours were spent by volunteers continuing the endless battle of invasive species removal. Three additional sidewalls were added to the pavilion, this will help facilitate placing maps and park information for educational and tour groups. A pollinator patch was added to the northwest field to provide a quality habitat and food source for native pollinators. Native burr oak and swamp white oak trees were planted in several areas of the park, returning a portion back to a natural oak savanna.



# Parks and Trails Division

## **Wild Goose State Trail (WGST)**

Bridge inspections revealed rotted approach sub-structure boards on several bridges. The East Waupun Bridge was resurfaced by park staff as a temporary fix until designs and reconstruction can take place. Hwy staff completed repairs and reconstruction on the Plumb Creek and Libby Creek Bridges. Materials from the old Reeseville salt shed were reused to complete the bridge repairs. The Highway Department also completed grading and resurfacing of a one mile section of the trail from Hwy 33 to Prospect Road. Concentrated efforts were again focused in 2023 on clearing and maintenance of the horse trail. Multiple dedication ceremonies for donated memorial benches and a kiosk took place in 2023.



## **Gold Star Memorial Trail**

The Phase 2 project from Horicon to the Wild Goose Trail was awarded a \$1.1 million Federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant in 2022, administered by the Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation (WisDOT). Much of 2023 involved selection of a qualified Design and Engineering Firm and negotiating the scope and costs in coordination with WisDOT. Design and Engineering is slated for 2024 and Construction is anticipated by the end of 2025. The Phase 3 project from the Wild Goose Trail to City of Beaver Dam was awarded ARPA funds to undertake preliminary layout design and investigation to provide necessary information to seek TAP and other grant opportunities for final engineering, design and construction. This work is slated for 2024.

## **Glacial River Trail**

The Highway Department assisted with spring trail preparations with the use of a mechanical sweeper. Park staff performed routine seasonal mowing and maintenance on the trail.

## **County Snowmobile Trail System**

**379.9 miles**

## **County ATV/UTV Trail (Winter Only)**

**20 miles**

Snowmobile and ATV/UTV program grants are received from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WIDNR) and distributed as needed to operate, maintain, rehabilitate, and develop the trail systems. Dodge County receives \$300 per mile for the snowmobile trails and \$100 per mile for the ATV/UTV trail. Funding for the programs comes from snowmobile and ATV/UTV registration fees, trail pass fees and gas tax.



## **2022-2023 Season**

- Received \$113,970 snowmobile trail grant for maintenance and grooming of snowmobile trail system (\$6,273.46 for program administration).
- Received \$2,000 ATV trail grant for maintenance of ATV trail on the Wild Goose State Trail (\$1,229.38 for program administration).
- Maintained trail reports on hotline, email, Facebook, website, and Travel Wisconsin snow conditions report website to keep local media, law enforcement, the public and others informed of trail status changes.
- Due to a lack of snow and poor trail conditions, the majority of snowmobile trails remained closed for the 2022-2023 season. One zone and a portion of another zone were open for a day and a half, compared to 2021-2022 season when trails were closed the entire season. The Wild Goose State Trail was open for 22 consecutive days for winter ATV/UTV use during the 2022-2023 season compared with 58 days during the 2021-2022 season.



# Parks and Trails Division

## THE FRIENDS OF DODGE COUNTY PARKS

The Friends of Dodge County Parks is a 501c3 non-profit organization working closely with the Parks and Trails division to encourage and assist Dodge County in providing and upgrading park and recreation facilities to meet the needs and demands of County residents and visitors into the future. The Friends group also provides recommendations for new or updated park and recreational facilities or initiatives. The most visible aspect of the Friends group is in fundraising to provide a source of funds to the County to supplement public funds for park projects. The typical sources of funds for the group comes from the annual FallFest event at Harnischfeger Park as well as memberships and general donations. The Friends group has several designated funds for specific parks (and projects) allowing donors to contribute to parks or projects that especially appeal to them.

FallFest at Harnischfeger Park typically raises about \$6,000 each year for Harnischfeger Park improvements. In 2023 there was an overall increase in attendance and over \$8,000 was raised.

A permanent **Endowment Fund** with the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin was created in 2010 to provide perpetual funding support for the Friends group mission. The goal is to increase the Endowment Fund value to a level that provides significant annual funding. The Endowment Fund value increased by \$7,564 during 2023 to a year end value of \$43,302.

The group maintains a [Facebook](#) page (since 2012) to provide and promote park project and event updates, to solicit feedback, to promote parks and trails use and to encourage donations and volunteerism.

The Officers and Board of Directors of the organization promote and oversee membership, fundraising and organizational operations which includes directing the project funding where requested and needed. Currently Harnischfeger Park, the Gold Star Trail and Nitschke Mounds Park have active fundraising committees. One of the Board members conducts a field trip tour of Nitschke Mounds Park through the Natural Resources Foundation and one of the Board members is a registered naturalist providing education opportunities to the public and parks staff and helping to lead invasive management efforts along with other committed regular volunteers.

Park staff assist the Friends group in an advisory role and provide some administrative assistance, as well as making funding requests and recommendations for park projects. Input on projects and park needs are also sought from the Board during their meetings in which park staff attend.

FRIENDS OF DODGE COUNTY PARKS, INC. YEAR END FINANCIALS		
FUND ACCOUNTS	2022	2023
Administrative Fund	1,184	-1,885
Astico Fund	8,100	9,105
Derge Fund	5,952	6,579
Ledge Fund	-247	-26
Wild Goose Trail Fund	4,019	4,046
Nitschke Mounds Fund	4,476	7,823
Harnischfeger Fund	38,154	46,718
Gold Star Mem. Trail Fund	31,920	36,987
Pelican Path Fund	1,047	10,834
Future Park Fund	245	245
Endowment Fund – Temp	175	25
Undesignated General Fund	8,728	8,706
<b>TOTAL ALL FUNDS</b>	<b>103,752</b>	<b>129,157</b>
Total Revenues	36,541	42,504
Total Expenses	43,081	16,599
Transfer to Endowment	500	500
<b>NET REVENUE</b>	<b>-7,040</b>	<b>25,405</b>
Endowment Fund (Dec 31 Balance)	35,738	43,302
Beaver Dam Area Comm Foundation Fund (Dec 31 Balance)	856	965