



County Of Dane
Office Of The County Executive

Joe Parisi
County Executive

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Dane County Parks Director to Retire After 28 Years of Service to Outdoors, Local Community

County Executive Joe Parisi announced today that Darren Marsh, Dane County Parks Director, will retire later this week, after spending 28 years working for the Dane County Parks system. He first started working for Dane County Parks back in 1993 as Operations Manager, before being selected as Dane County Parks Director in 2003. His last day will be July 1.

“We’re incredibly grateful to have had Darren serve the Dane County community and care for our treasured outdoor spaces for more than two and a half decades,” said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. “Darren’s dedication to Dane County, its natural resources, and the people who call it home has inspired many throughout his career and has helped make the Dane County Parks system what it is today. We wish him the best on a well-deserved retirement and thank him for his many years of service.”

Earlier this year, Marsh received the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association’s “Professional Award of Merit,” the highest professional award given by WPROA to a park and recreation professional in the state of Wisconsin. Marsh is responsible for developing and expanding a number of programs to better serve the Dane County community, including off-leash dog parks, wildlife areas, non-credentialed park rangers (non-law enforcement), cooperative/reciprocal park permits, premier disc golf courses, accessible fishing piers and water access, and volunteer partnerships.

The Dane County Parks system has expanded rapidly since Marsh first became Parks Director, from approximately 5,600 acres in 2003 to approximately 15,000 acres of land with an additional 2,800 acres in permanent easements in 2021. To date, the Dane County Parks system includes 26 regional recreation parks, 27 natural resource areas, 20 wildlife areas, two county forests, six historical and cultural sites, and 120 miles of trails.

Staff recently held a retirement party for Marsh to celebrate his more than two and a half decades of service to Dane County Parks. Marsh was also surprised with a resolution to name the Department of Land and Water Resources’ [Robertson Road Operations Facility](#) in his honor at last week’s Park Commission meeting. The property is used to house parks and lake management equipment, and Marsh has long been viewed as a staple of the facility. Pending County Board approval, the complex will be named the Darren Marsh Parks and Lake Management Facility.

The Foundation for Dane County Parks will be hosting an event in Marsh’s honor on September 9 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. to celebrate his retirement. Event details can be found on the Foundation [website](#). Marsh recently wrote a public letter to park users to share his retirement news, which is available [here](#).

Deputy Parks Director Joleen Stinson will serve as Interim Parks Director until the position is filled. Joleen joined Dane County Parks in January of 2021 and has previously worked in parks, recreation and natural resource management for various municipalities and nonprofit organizations, most recently the City of Sun Prairie. Earlier this year, Joleen received the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association's "Outstanding Park Professional of the Year Award."

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