

## 2020 Annual Report

### General Work Events

APF adjusted its' usually strategy of work events to comply with Dane County Park guidelines established due to the COVID-19 virus. Work events were not publicized after March to reduce the number of volunteers working at a single event. An average of 2-3 days per month were scheduled on an ad hoc basis with the Anderson Park Friends (APF) Board and core members. The size of most work groups was between 2-7 people and in compliance with DCP guidelines. Work was conducted in the Arthur Sholts Memorial Woods, West Woods, and Sholts Prairie.

### Woodlot Restoration - Arthur Sholts Memorial & West Woods

1. **Dane County Chainsaw Day:** The event was held on March 6, 2020. The crew successfully cleared about one acre of forest. Buckthorn and other invasive plants were cut and burned.
2. **Basic Forest Restoration Workdays:** APF volunteers worked throughout the year to cut, remove, and burn invasive plants such as buckthorn, honeysuckle, and multi-flora rose. Two partner events were held with two Boy Scout Troops (150 & 68) on April 14<sup>th</sup> and Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>.
3. **New Picnic Area:** General maintenance of weeds and grass was completed throughout the year.
4. **Shady Grove:** General maintenance of weeds and grass was completed throughout the year.
5. **New Section of Poplar Hiking Trail:** (parallel to north boundary of the park): APF created a new section of the Poplar trail and installed wood chips. The old section of the trail was closed, and signs were installed.
6. **Ridgeview Lane Entrance Area:** APF volunteers planted ground cover and wildflowers to enhance appearance of the walk-in entrance. The area was maintained throughout the year. Fencing and a small berm will be improvements for 2021. Annual flowers will be added for color.
7. **West Woods:** A position paper was created in July 2020 and served as the basis for several assessments of the woods by both APF volunteers and several DCP staff. Volunteers created a basic walking path by removing a limited number of native plants. Limited discussions with DCP staff were held about options related to restoring the forest, access to the forest, and related turf trails west of Union Road. Additional meetings will be held in spring 2021 to assess needs, potential strategies, and 2021 activities
8. **Wetlands Next to West Woods:** In fall, APF volunteers completed a limited burn. The activities were coordinated with DCP staff prior to the burn.

### Arthur Sholts Prairie

**Parcel #A (2.5 acres)** (Seeded: May 2016) APF volunteers worked with DCP on spring maintenance and throughout the summer to remove weeds. Excellent growth occurred in 2020. General maintenance is planned for 2021. APF coordinated prairie seed collection activities with volunteers from the Exact Sciences Corporation on October 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. **Parcel #B (2.5 acres):** (Seeded: December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017): See the above comments from Parcel A. Excellent growth in 2020.

**Sholts Savannah Project.** APF planted prairie seed in the parcel just East of Union Rd in the northwest corner of the woods on December 8, 2019. Lars Higdon assessed the growth in summer of 2020. He confirmed little maintenance was needed in 2020. Another assessment will occur in 2021.

# Garden Projects

## Rain Gardens

APF enhanced and maintained two rain gardens in the Arthur Sholts Memorial Woods. Native plants from the Plant Dane program were planted.

## Pollinator Garden

APF maintained the pollinator garden and an informational sign during 2020. The burr oak is established and flourishing. The garden was designated as a Monarch Way Station in 2019. The garden is designed to demonstrate plants and flowers that support butterflies, insects, and birds. APF hopes it will also be used for educational projects for K-12 students in 2021.

# Bluebird Trail

APF maintained a blue bird trail in 2020. The results below were reported to the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin. APF conducts citizen research on topics such as eggs laid, eggs hatched, bluebirds fledged, tree swallows fledged, chickadees fledged, and house wrens fledged.

Since 2016, APF has fledged 159 bluebirds on the trail.

The statistics for the 2020 bluebird trail stats are:

Bluebirds fledged:	45
Tree Swallows fledged:	5
Chickadees fledged:	6
House Wrens fledged:	26

APF plans to support these houses in the park again in 2021.

# Dog Park

Dane County began a two-year construction project to create a new dog park and bike path. DCP completed excavation work for the bike path, parking areas (2), and drainage basins. The first-year growth of the new 38-acre prairie was excellent. APF assisted DCP by helping to plant 7,000 native plants in a drainage basin. The APF Board worked with DCP and over 40 volunteers from Exact Sciences, Operation Fresh Start, and other APF volunteers. APF will assist in maintaining the native plant areas in 2021.

# Educational & Outreach Events

## Maple Syrup Event

APF needed to cancel the 2020 event originally scheduled for March 13<sup>th</sup> because of the COVID virus. Plans for 2022 will be reviewed in December 2021. Plans depend on DCP guidelines for group events.

## Arbor Day-Forest Education

APF needed to cancel the event originally scheduled for April 24, 2020 because of the COVID virus. Plans for 2021 will be reviewed in March 2021. Plans depend on DCP guidelines for group events.

## Eagle Scouts

No individual Eagle Scout projects were completed in 2020. Plans for 2021 include two projects. One project is to build Kestrel houses and a second project is to build and install 6 Aldo Leopold benches at the park. Several benches will be targeted for the new Dog Park.

## **Candlelight Walk & Bonfire**

APF needed to cancel the event originally scheduled for November 7, 2020 because of the COVID virus. Plans for 2021 will be reviewed in September 2021. Plans depend on DCP guidelines for group events.

## **Prairie Seed Event for Oregon High School National Honor Society Students**

APF needed to cancel the event originally planned for October 2020 because of the COVID virus. Plans for 2021 will be reviewed in September 2021. Plans depend on DCP guidelines for group events.

## **Snapshot Wisconsin**

For the third year, APF was a local observation station for a Wisconsin DNR citizen science project. APF collaborated with Snapshot Wisconsin to monitor wildlife year-round, in the park. We used a trail camera to capture photos of wildlife. The camera is in the small wetlands area next to the West Woods. The project provides data needed for DNR wildlife management decision support and monitoring the park's valuable natural resources.

## **Signs**

APF is working with Lynette Anderson and DCP to install 5-6 informational signs at the park. Jeff Durbin, graphic designer, is working with Lynette and DCP staff on the sign layout and locations in and around the Arthur Sholts Memorial Woods.

## **Art Donation**

APF is working with the Kalscheur family on a metal art donation to the park. The design and plans were approved by the Dane County Parks Commission in December. The installation of the art piece will be sometime in mid-2021.

## **Agriculture**

### **805 House**

**Security:** 1) A low level of security was maintained at the house during 2020. No incidents to report. The system was not upgraded to an "alarm mode" in 2020. The house was used to store squash from the Food Pantry Garden between August and November 2020. 2) Curtains and lights were installed in 2018 to deter vandalism. Lights are set to automatic timers that go "on and off" to give the impression that someone is living in the house. This was continued in 2020.

**Landscaping Around the House:** 1) Trees were maintained around the house by APF volunteers and an Eagle Scout (Scout Troop 50) volunteer. 2) The flower beds around the house were improved by weeding. 3) The weeds around the damaged, field stone, fireplace were removed. Repairs are needed for the exterior fireplace (front yard). 4) APF volunteers also cut tall grass and weeds adjacent to the agricultural fields and community gardens.

### **Community Gardens**

During 2020, APF worked with DCP, UW-Extension Dane County and Rooted to implement a new community garden program. Planning for the gardens started in February. In April 2020, Rooted facilitated the placement of vegetable growers at Anderson Farm County Park. Twenty-three ¼-acre plots were plowed and tilled. Growers came from the Oregon and Fitchburg community, food pantry gardeners, and Hmong growers. Seventeen plots were tended by Hmong growers who either had lost land access or struggled to find land access due to limited lease agreements, high cost of renting or purchasing land in Dane County, and a lack of infrastructure and support. The season was highly successful. Hmong families were able to grow culturally relevant food during the COVID 19 epidemic, filling a great need for food security. Every gardener has expressed interest in returning for the 2021 season. APF will work with these partners again in 2021.

### **Food Pantry Garden**

APF partnered with the [Oregon Area Food Pantry](#) to use a food pantry garden to grow fresh produce. APF volunteers grew over 1,200 pounds of fresh produce (11 vegetables) for three food pantries in Oregon, Belleville, and Verona.

APF expanded the number of gardens from one to two. The 2019 garden consisted of 6 raised beds. The second garden was started in 2020 as an “in-ground” garden and consisted of a ½ acre plot. The plans for 2021 include maintaining the ½ acre plot and increasing the number of raised beds from 6 to 8. In addition, APF became an affiliated garden within the Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens Association.

## Administration

### General

1. Board meetings (12) were held the 3rd Wednesday of each month. An extra Board meeting (13<sup>th</sup>) was held on October 6<sup>th</sup>. After April, all meetings were held with a Zoom format. Minutes and treasurer reports are available upon request.
2. Annual Meeting (Zoom Format): September 16, 2020; attended by 14 people. Progress report provided to participants by Roe Parker, APF, and Darren Marsh, Dane Co. Parks on 2020 accomplishments and potential activities for 2021. The featured speaker was Yimmujang Yang, Hmong Consultant. She spoke on Hmong cultural topics and their connection to gardening. Roe Parker was re-elected unopposed for 3-year term as President. Barbara Hill was re-elected unopposed for 3-year term as Treasurer.
3. APF worked with Lars Higdon and Shane Otto to develop our second land management work plan. The meeting was conducted on January 7, 2020. The plan was reviewed on January 9, 2020 with DCP managers and staff. A draft 2021 land management plan was created on January 13, 2021.
4. APF was featured in over 7 newspaper articles during 2020. (Oregon Observer).
5. Anderson Farm County Park (Sholts Memorial Woods) was featured on the front cover of the 2020 “Town Planner” commercial calendar distributed to hundreds of households in the Oregon area. Photo by Windi Fountraine, Oregon, WI.
6. In 2020, APF Supported the partnership between DCP and the Town of Oregon-service agreement for snow plowing and grass cutting.
7. APF printed thank you cards and envelopes for use to recognize donations and volunteers.
8. APF maintained its website with information and calendar events.
9. APF successfully used Facebook to keep members and the public informed of APF activities. Our post on the new bike path reached 658 people. The November fundraiser received donations of \$225 for the food pantry garden.

## Grants

APF received a \$1,100 grant from the Dane County Environmental Council for a brush mower and pallet forks. The approved proposal called for the purchase of a 3-point brush cutter and a set of pallet forks compatible with a Kubota Tractor. APF used the mower to cut grass and weeds between August and November 2020. The pallet forks were used to move a water tank to supply water to the community and food pantry gardens.

APF received a \$960 grant award in December 2020 from the Foundation for Dane County Parks for the purchase of a new rear-tine rototiller for the food pantry garden. The new equipment will be purchased in February. The garden will start in April 2021.

## Volunteers & Membership

- A. The total number of 2020 volunteer hours (All activities): **3,300 hours**.
- B. For reference, listed are the total number of volunteer hours for the last several years:

2017 - 1,823 hours

2018 - 2,936 hours

2019 - 2,695 hours

- C. Value of In-Kind Donations to DCP: **\$49,500**. (3,300 hours x \$15/hour).
- D. APF memberships as of January 23, 2021: **156 members**.

RP/01/29/21