



Spring 2015 Park People Newsletter

New Milwaukee County Trails and Park Guide Maps are Popular Items

The Park People made a great showing at the Wheel & Sprocket 2015 Bike Expo again this year and found many new fans of the updated map and passport. The **2015 Oak Leaf Discovery Tour Passport and new full sized Milwaukee County Trails Map and Park Guide** went on sale on April 10th. This year's passports have neat little historic and cultural trivia statements about each park in the passport.

Our generous volunteers (Ramsey Radacovich, Amber Vavrusa, Barbara Ali, Katie Williams, Sue Spoerk, Jim Cuirlik, Staci Treolo, Harold Schmidt, Kate Cuirlik, Jim Goulee, Cheri Briscoe, Naomi Michel and Joe Michel) helped make this a successful event and deserved a huge thank you! Special thanks is also in order for the County Parks Marketing Department graphics designers, Emily Heller and Marie Kerzner, for their beautiful work in creating and designing the new map in a very short time. Another shout out goes to Amelia and Tessa Kegel for their graphics and map work in the passport design. It really is all about people working together for our parks.



Stamping kiosks and keyword mailboxes will be available for all passport participants beginning May 1 to start your 2015 Oak Leaf Discovery Tour exploration.

The 2015 passports have twenty-six (26) opportunities to get stamps or keywords while exploring our beautiful trails and parks. This year we added a new corridor, the Kinnickinnic Corridor, which includes McCarty, Jackson, KK Sports Center and Humboldt Park for collecting Keywords.

Additional parks in the passports this year include Jacobus, Kulwiki and Rainbow Parks. Lake Park is also back in due to popular request.

Given that the County will be reconstructing the Menomonee River Parkway between Congress and Church Street beginning in June, we have omitted the Little Menomonee River Corridor this year from the passports. The new parkway will be designed to provide for safer pedestrian crossing.

The maps feature the Oak Leaf Trail, with colored dots along the trail, to coordinate with the color designations of the five corridors that participants can travel to collect their stamps and keywords. Of course the Hank Aaron State Trail (in green) is in there too because the Oak Leaf Trail has several connections to it. City trails are designated in light pink.

The maps contain detailed streets and also include designations for Nature Trails, Birding Hot Spots, the Urban Water Trail, Mountain Bike Trails, the Forked Aster (hiking) Trail System, Golf Courses and much more.

You can purchase both the passport and the map together for only \$5! Definitely a great deal and an opportunity to contribute to our trails as well as doing something healthy and fun. They also make nice gifts for friends.

Make this year the year that you discover new parks and adventures in our Milwaukee County Parks.

Spring into Action

Our parks are in their full glory. Who doesn't love the four seasons and the birth that Spring promises us all. If you are reading this newsletter you have an interest in our Milwaukee County park system. As I write this perspective on a rainy Spring day, I often ask myself "why" I choose to spend my volunteer time for The Park People when there are many other worthy non-profits out there, and the parks should be maintained by taxes and user fees. But then I remind myself of the reality that our parks compete for the County tax dollars allocated to them and that is why the The Park People was established with the mission to preserve, support and enhance Milwaukee County Parks while building an effective volunteer organization. There are almost a million people who live in Milwaukee County and of course, there are many from outside of Milwaukee County who enjoy Milwaukee County parks. We all benefit from the parks whether we play in them, enjoy the green buffer as we drive by them, or appreciate the economic impact parks have on the surrounding neighborhoods. Parks are good. I have yet to meet anyone who questions our mission and we take our corporate purpose very seriously.



I learn a lot from the cycle of Mother Nature in our parks. I, along with the board and our Executive Director, wish we could wave a magic wand and have a foundation that attracts large donations to our parks, a membership that covers our operating costs and allows us to hire a second staff person, and that every park would have an active friends group. At our meetings, we make sure our actions are aligned with our goals and we work hard (and smart) to create programs to promote our visibility (Arts in the Parks, Oak Leaf Discovery Tour, Run for the Parks, Weed Out!), do our best to create and support Friends Groups (our annual Friends Group Gathering) and prove to our members their dollars are well spent with our one staff person who works tirelessly to help serve our mission. And then I remind myself that if each year we blossom, and through the seeds we plant, we grow a little larger the next year, then we are on track.



I invite any of you reading this newsletter to contact me, a board member or our Executive Director on how you might "spring" into action. We have many volunteer opportunities to help with our events, to assist with clerical work (from the comfort of your home) or maybe you are looking to get more involved and could join a committee or the board. And if time isn't your long suit, please know that your membership dues and donations are very much appreciated by those of us volunteering our time. All it takes for me to be reminded of "why" I serve is a walk through my neighborhood park. I live in a dense neighborhood with little green space, but I'm walking distance to Jackson Park. I have walked through that park hundreds of times. I appreciate the tranquility the park offers me as I walk by the pond, the flag pole, the pavilion facing the lagoon (you do know you can rent these out for private events, right?) and the statue of commerce (it's amazing how many cool statues are in our parks) and the woods. Others go there to play basketball or tennis or swim or picnic. We all nurture our souls in our own way in the park. Parks are priceless. I call upon you to spring into action to find your way to help the mission to preserve, support, and enhance Milwaukee County Parks.

Annual Friends Group Gathering, April 23, 2015

Thank you to everyone who attended the Friends Groups Annual Meeting at the Mitchell Park Conservatory (The Domes). Your strong attendance and participation helped to make this meeting a success. A special thank you to John Dargle, Milwaukee Parks Director, and representatives from the Parks

Department for attending.

Dr. John Jordan, professor at UW Milwaukee, was the keynote speaker for the evening. His presentation included an overview of important current popular social media uses including advice on their pros and cons relating to social groups such as The Park People (TPP). Many attendees have had little or no experience



working with several of these tools. Hopefully, everyone was able to return to their Friends Group and share new and low cost ideas for helping to spread the word about upcoming events happening within their park.

The Friends of Estabrook Park was the recipient of the 2015 Friends Group of the Year award. This group has achieved so much with fundraising success, collaboration, and dedication. This board is very much engaged and works closely

with the Parks Department and park employees. They are an excellent example of what hard work and creative ideas can accomplish.



Susan Spoerk, TPP President, and Jim Goulee, TPP Executive Director, caught the group up with 2014 accomplishments and upcoming goals for 2015. Some of these goals involve our members including their submission of events for the calendar on TPP's website and "wish list" for their park.

Overall, it was a great evening filled with connection, education, food, friends, and tours of the new Domes' greenhouses. We look forward to seeing you next year!

Weed-Out!

Many of you are already aware of our Weed Out program so you understand the necessity of removing invasive plants from our parks; however, perhaps you have the same problem in your yard. The question then is "what should I replace those invasive plants with?"

Consider WHY we plant flowers, shrubs, and trees. Just for show? Or, a life sustaining garden? When considering what to plant please think of insects, birds, and other animals that may drop in for a visit. What attracts them? We're all familiar with the plight of the Monarch Butterfly, but did you know ALL species are on the decline? And all insects are part of the food web that sustains us!

Two-thirds of our 15,000 acre park system is "natural areas", but most of that is sod which has no value to wildlife. The staff is doing a great job of converting more of it to native plant habitat, but more needs doing - in the parks and in our own yards!

So this spring please consider planting for the creatures that are so necessary for our survival. Indeed, plant as though life depends on it, as in fact it does!

Contact us if you would like to know how to get started!

Happy pulling and planting!



2015 Friends Group of the Year

Friends of Estabrook Park

At the annual Friends Group meeting on April 23, our Friends of Estabrook Park (FOE) were presented with the 2015 Friends Group of the Year award.

This is an amazing group of volunteers who with hard work, collaboration, and dedication have accomplished so much. Some of the many highlights of this group include:

-Since the inception of the Beer Garden, this group has worked closely with its operator. Together benches have been painted, grounds assistance provided, and an agreement made to supply FOE beer steins at cost as a fundraiser plus discounted beer to mug holders. Together enough funds were raised to restore the stone stairway connecting the beer garden to the riverwalk. This 1930s vintage stairway had been neglected and was unsafe for years. This is an excellent example of a public and private partnership!



-This group assisted the Milwaukee County Historical Society in their renewal of the Benjamin Church House. This included a major weeding of the surrounding area and other restoration projects.

-Together FOE worked with the Metro Milwaukee Mountain Bikers to repair and build trails along the Milwaukee River in effort to prevent others from creating "ad hoc" trails causing erosion and other damage to the environment.

-They assisted with the installation of the popular Frisbee Golf course in Estabook Park. This brought many new park supporters including one new Board member. These players have also been active in removing invasive plants along their course and regularly attend weed outs.

Harold Schmidt, Gil Walter and the entire FOE board are very engaged and have demonstrated just how successful collaboration truly can be. Congratulations to all of our Friends of Estabook Park!

Wheel & Sprocket awarded David Kinnamon Park Partner Award

Wheel & Sprocket was chosen by The Park People to receive the 2015 David Kinnamon Park Partner Award.

This award is given to a Corporation, Business or Organization that has demonstrated exceptional commitment to improving our Milwaukee County Parks. Wheel & Sprocket (W&S) has been partnering with both The Park People and our Milwaukee County Parks Department for many years, sharing their precious talents and time as well as being financial sponsors.

Chris Kegel, owner of W&S, was one of the initiators of the concept of an Oak Leaf Discovery Tour passport in 2008. After the initial push for the project, it stagnated for a while until 2011 when Cheri Briscoe mentioned it as a potential signature project for TPP.



When contacted, Chris immediately joined the committee. When financing was needed, Wheel & Sprocket offered to be the Presenting Sponsor and has paid for printing the passports every year. Making this a family affair, Amelia and then Tessa Kegel, Chris's daughters got involved in using their mapping and graphic skills to create the 2014 and 2015 passports as further contributions by Wheel & Sprocket.

Chris Kegel and Amelia Kegel have also served on the Milwaukee County Trails Council, where their skills and knowledge have been valued by council members. In fact, Amelia stepped up to serve as Chair of the Milwaukee Trails Council this year. Another

family member, Julian Kegel, who has a degree in Urban Planning, has also been involved on advisory committees related to road planning for pedestrians and bicycles such as the Menomonee Parkway reconstruction.

Wheel and Sprocket is an excellent example of a local business committing time, energy, and resources to our Parks.

The Park Market: Making Giving Simple, Yet Memorable

April and May are often considered the season of showers supporting flower growth in our beautiful parks but also the anticipation of the birth of a new child or of a marriage. The season also marks the celebration of wedding anniversaries, mother's day, commencement and father's day. Finding the right, personal gift can prove challenging. You want a gift that shows you care about the individual, the special occasion and the impact the individual makes in life. The Park Market can help.

The Park Market helps beautify our parks while also providing individuals with a unique way to honor special people and events in our lives. By gifting a tree, bench or brick, an enduring commemoration of an event in one's life is possible.



The Tree Donation Program enables an individual to select an ornamental, evergreen or shade tree to be planted or to 'adopt a tree' in a park and location* of the individual's choice. The selected tree is marked with a commemorative tag. The Park Market Bench Program places a bench in your favorite park. Three different bench styles are available to choose from. Similarly, the personalized brick program at O'Donnell Park allows the purchaser to choose one of three brick options, each with your personal message. The Park People also work with donors who envision a larger scale commemoration achieved through a park enhancement.



All funds generated from the Park Market Programs are redirected into the beautification of our precious treasure, the parks. The Park People would be honored to commemorate your special event. For more information, visit the Park Market on the web. http://www.parkpeoplemke.org/park_market

*Subject to confirmation of location by Milwaukee County Landscape department; alternative location may be recommended based on assessment of location vs needs of tree

The Park People - Something to Smile About!

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support The Park People every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchase supports The Park People. Tens of millions of products on AmazonSmile are eligible for donations. You will see eligible products marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail pages. You can use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile. On your first visit to AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com), you need to select Park People of Milwaukee County, Inc (note, please do not confuse with The Park People which is Denver) to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping Amazon will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation to The Park People and yes, you can change your charity any time.



TPP is seeking volunteers!

We all know there is a lot to do in your Milwaukee County Parks, but did you know there is a lot YOU can do to help improve, protect, and promote them?

The Park People is seeking volunteers and could use your help. Volunteers are needed for tabling at community events, assistance with mail collation, and light office work. Training will be provided. Shifts vary, but are generally short in length of time commitment. Call 414-273-7275 for more information

Seeking Two New Board Members

The Park People is a board comprised of volunteer board members who share a passion for the parks and a willingness to make the parks better for today, tomorrow and future generations. We are seeking two new board members. Check us out, our bios are listed on the [website](#) and we think we are a pretty fun group. Board meetings are the 4th Thursday of each month from 6:00- 8:00 and board members usually spend about 2-5 hours per month on other board related duties. Our very capable Executive Director Jim Goulee keeps us on task and a cooler of cold beverages and homemade cookies can be found at most meetings. If you are interested, contact board President Sue Spoerk at 414.649.0440 or susan.spoerk@thomsonreuters.com.