

Moraine Woods Conservation Park

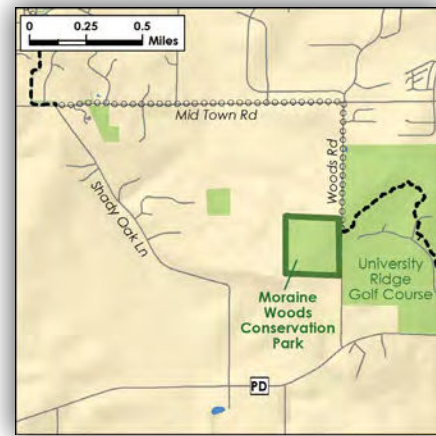
KEVIN THUSIUS, DIRECTOR OF LAND CONSERVATION

Moraine Woods Conservation Park. It has a nice ring, doesn't it? October 2018 welcomed the culmination of decades of effort to protect a key property along the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. This could not have happened without the strong commitments of our partners at the City of Madison and Dane County. To secure the land for the Ice Age Trail, Madison provided \$1.5 million while the County kicked-in an additional \$500,000.

The City of Madison has the distinguished honor of being the largest of the municipalities the Ice Age Trail passes through. The Trail crosses along Madison's southwestern extent between the City of Verona and Town of Verona. With the fast-paced development of these communities it is easy to see why this property was so important to protect. As City of Madison Parks Division Superintendent Eric Knepp stated to the Wisconsin State Journal, "We had the opportunity with Dane County and the seller to acquire property for generations of Wisconsinites to enjoy. It is too good to pass up."

Identified in the Ice Age National Scenic Trail corridor planning process in the mid-1990s, the 40-acre property lies just behind the terminal moraine. It is a beautiful piece of land. Approximately three-quarters of it is filled with mature oak trees. A small agricultural field offers scenic diversity and allows summer breezes to blow away pesky mosquitoes. "It's a keystone to ensuring the trail is providing a connection...and everybody agrees it's the right place for [the trail]," said Knepp. County Executive Joe Parisi agreed, "Dane County is excited to add land to the beautiful Ice Age Trail."

Inspiring plans are in the works for Moraine Woods Conservation Park including the location of the Ice Age Trail, a possible loop trail, and small parking area. The Park will connect east to the University Ridge Golf Course – current home to the Ice Age Trail where an easement preserves its perpetual existence. As an added bonus, the creation of this Park also gets the Trail closer to a property further west which was previously donated to the City of Madison. The Alliance and its partners will continue to work with willing landowners to weave together a tapestry of properties to host the Trail.



The Ice Age Trail Alliance is grateful to our partners at the City of Madison and Dane County for their dedication to protecting land for the Ice Age Trail. The Alliance is also gratified by the conservation-minded patience of Charles and Bonnie Dykman and their willingness to work with our partners. The Park will be an oasis of quiet and calm, providing an important buffer and green space in a highly developed urban area.



An expansive view at the edge of the Moraine Woods Conservation Park is one reason the opportunity to build trails on this property is so exciting. Photo by Kevin Thusius.



The snowy woods on this property will continue to provide an important habitat for birds and animals, and a place to hike and explore for humans, throughout the seasons. Photo by Kevin Thusius.