

Letters to the Editor /

THANK YOU, DONORS

Editor, Daily Union: Crawfish River Park is now a reality! We would like to thank the following donors for their contributions:

Platinum (\$5,000 or more): Dr. Paul and Lee Family Fund and Miron Construction Company.

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A special thanks to: Daily Jefferson County Union; WFAW-WSJY Radio; John Foust, goJefferson.com, website development and maintenance; and Jill Nelson, photography, editing and copy.

If you already know or you happen to meet any of the above donors, please take time to let them how much you appreciate their financial and environmental support. The website will continually be updated to reflect any future donations.

There is much to be done. We welcome your ideas as we are beginning to develop a plan with the Jefferson County Parks Department for the Park.

You are encouraged to visit the website to see some of the projects we are considering and to give us your feedback and help.

If you would like to be notified about upcoming projects we would be happy to add you to our email notification list or you can find the Friends of Crawfish River Park on Facebook.

This is a four-season park, so get out there and enjoy! Snowshoe or cross country ski with a friend or your dog on the trails along the river. Bike this spring and summer with the family and have a picnic, or hike the trails and explore the high banks, ponds and woodland area.: Paul "Andy" Didion, Oconomowoc.

County offering bur oak 'cookies'

By Lydia Statz, Daily Union staff writer | Posted: Thursday, February 27, 2014 9:15 am

JEFFERSON — A tree that caused quite a stir last summer when it was cut down to make way for a new stretch of roadway will continue to live on even though it no longer stands.

The bur oak, which stood on the east side of State Highway 26 about one-half mile north of County Line Road for at least a century-and-a-half, was chop ped down in May 2013 to make way for two additional lanes under construction between Milton and Fort Atkinson.

More than 600 people signed a petition on Change.org asking Jefferson County government officials to save the tree, but the location of the highway between protected woodlands to the west and agricultural land to the east made moving the highway impossible. Moving the tree to another location was considered, but deemed too costly and risky as the tree might not have survived the trip.

However, seeing the emotional response the tree's felling evoked in the local community, the Jefferson County Parks Department saved a portion of the tree's trunk. It plans to use a "cookie" from the trunk to decorate the Glacial River Trail's parking area at County Line Road.

"We originally requested a piece of the tree, not knowing if it was going to be rotten in the middle, not knowing if it was going to be worth anything," said Kevin Wiesmann, parks operations supervisor. "We're just making a little place for it and actually preserving it, sanding it and doing a little dating and identifying some important historical facts on there."

Because it received numerous requests from people around the county who also wanted a piece of the trunk for personal projects, the department will be selling "cookies" from the trunk as a fundraiser to help replant new trees along the Glacial River Trail, in cooperation with the state Department of Transportation.

"They cut down some really nice oaks where that parking lot is down there, and that's just going to be a big, flat open space. So we'll probably replant some oaks in that space," said Wiesmann.

"I'm still working with the DOT to put together a list of trees, shrubs and other plants we might be able to plant along that corridor without compromising what they require as a clear space between the highway shoulder and where the bike trail is."

Each slice from the trunk, available for a suggested donation of \$100, averages about 50 inches across, is six to 10 inches thick, and weighs between 250 and 300 pounds. That's one big cookie.

Wiesmann isn't sure exactly how many slices will be available, but based on the interest he has seen so far, he expects them to be claimed quickly.

This is not the first fundraiser to come from the tree's demise. Immediately after the tree was cut down, Tracy Hegg, a Milton graphic designer, began selling posters of photos she had taken of the tree over the past five years.

Jane Stanger

From: Steve Sharp <steves@wdtimes.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2014 12:18 PM
To: Jane Stanger
Subject: Re: Tap Grant Article

Here you go:

By Steve Sharp
steves@wdtimes.com

JEFFERSON -- Jefferson County has received great news from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT), which has been reviewing the county's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) projects, that it is advising the county to proceed to the second round of a two-stage application process that might fund a pair of bicycle/pedestrian corridors running east and west of Watertown.

The TAP project in Jefferson County involves the Watertown to Oconomowoc Alternative Transportation Corridor and Watertown to Waterloo Alternative Transportation Corridor.

"We couldn't be more pleased," Jefferson County Parks Director Joe Nehmer said this morning.

The second application is due by March 28.

"Those of you familiar with the governmental grant process realize that a considerable amount of effort lies ahead of us," Nehmer said in a letter to county and municipal officials Wednesday. "We value your input and ideas."

Nehmer also noted that concerned parties, including the University of Wisconsin-Extension's Steve Grabow, representatives of 2 Rivers Bicycle and Outdoor, Watertown Mayor John David and the county parks committee's Augie Tietz, should contact him if they have any suggestions for strengthening the application. Discussing the possibility of the grants with the Daily Times this morning, Nehmer was obviously pleased with the situation. He said the grant amounts could total \$5 million to address a Watertown to Oconomowoc multipurpose trail and \$10 million for a Watertown to Waterloo bike path.

The Watertown to Oconomowoc pathway would utilize the former interurban rail line that runs southeast of Watertown. The Watertown to Waterloo pathway would likely utilize bike paths and the shoulders of county roads.

Nehmer said, in the best case scenario, the pathways could be usable by 2016.

Nehmer said he is optimistic about the county's chances for receiving the grants.

"In my line of work, all you have is optimism, and I am optimistic and I am hopeful," he said. "It would be a fantastic asset for the northern part of Jefferson County to have these trails in place. A lot of people come to Jefferson County from Waukesha and Dane counties, and we have a lot of comments from Waukesha County about how it would be nice (if a trail to Watertown existed).

"Currently, you can ride a bike from Lake Michigan to Oconomowoc. With the trail that is being proposed, you could ride all the way to Watertown and from there, you could make it to Waterloo. After that, there are conceptual plans to go all the way to Madison."

Jane Stanger

From: Joe Nehmer
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2014 2:16 PM
To: Jane Stanger
Subject: FW: Watertown Outboarders

12 copies for Parks Committee.

-----Original Message-----

From: Augie Tietz
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2014 1:37 PM
To: Keith Kuerschner
Cc: Joe Nehmer
Subject: RE: Watertown Outboarders

Keith:
Thanks for your input, we will use it in our discussion of the facility on Monday.
Augie

From: Keith Kuerschner [KKuerschner@temp-air.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2014 1:07 PM
To: Augie Tietz
Subject: RE: Watertown Outboarders

Augie over the years the club has been used for weddings, anniverseries, family reunions, confirmations,graduations,card parties,snowmobile meetings, boat saftey classes, the club has been used differently over the years the possility are endless for a building like this thank you keith kuerschner

From: Augie Tietz [AugieT@jeffersoncountywi.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2013 3:32 PM
To: Keith Kuerschner
Cc: Joe Nehmer
Subject: RE: Watertown Outboarders

Keith:
I talked with Joe Nehmer and we would like to get together either by phone or email as to where we go from here on the donations.
Contact me at 920-261-3740 or Joe Nehmer at 920-674-7261.
Thanks,
Augie Tietz

From: Keith Kuerschner [KKuerschner@temp-air.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 09, 2013 8:20 AM
To: Augie Tietz
Subject: Watertown Outboarders

Good Morning!

My name is Keith Kuerschner, I'm with the Watertown Outboarders we are in the process of selling the club to the Wisconsin DNR. Since the club is a non-profit group the money we make from this sale has to be donated to different groups. My question to you would the Jefferson parks allow a donation for a pier placement at the Hwy B-Rock River location in Johnson Creek. Thank you for your time. Please call me with any questions @ (920) 988-6004.

Thanks,
Keith