

Dane County Land & Water Resources Dept.: County parks staff recognized by Wisconsin Parks and Recreation Association

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On Feb. 11, 2021, two Dane County Parks professionals Darren Marsh, Parks Director and Joleen Stinson, Deputy Parks Director were recognized by the Wisconsin Parks and Recreation Association (WPRA) and its 1,250 members at their virtual award ceremony.

Marsh received the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association's (WPRA) "Professional Award of Merit," the highest professional award given by WPRA to a park and recreation professional in the state of Wisconsin. As an active member of WPRA, Marsh has impacted the park and recreation field with his tireless leadership and participation, both within his community and the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association.

Marsh has worked for the Dane County Parks Division for 28 years where he began as Operation

Manager in 1993 and took over as the Parks Director in 2004. Previously, he was Assistant Administrator for Jackson County Forestry and Parks Department from 1988-1993. As a member of WPRA for 33 years, he has organized and presented numerous professional training sessions, bringing forth new ideas and vision for parks and recreation initiatives to his community and throughout the state. Always serving WPRA, he was the Park Section Chair in 2014 and was the past recipient of

the Park Section “Professional of the Year” in both 2004 and 2015.

Stinson received the Parks Section Professional of Year award. This award recognizes a park professional who has shown leadership and dedication to their community and to WPRA. Stinson recently finished a term as the WPRA Park Section Chair and had previously served on the Parks Section and Recreations Section boards. Stinson recently joined Dane County Parks, but has had a long career in parks, working for the City of Sun Prairie, the Village of DeForest, Rock County Parks and the Village of Waunakee.

Dane County Parks has been a state leader in the development of premier park programs and partnerships. The County Park system boasts of over 13,000 acres of land with 26 Recreation Parks, 20 Wildlife Areas, 14 Natural Resource Areas, 4 Historic Sites, 2 Forests and over 100 miles of trails. Dane County has been a national leader in the development of dog parks, premier disc golf courses, trails systems, cooperative fee programs, land management and the use of volunteers and partner groups to support their park system.

Background:

Professional Award of Merit

This is the highest professional award given by WPRA to an active Association member. The nominee must hold current professional certification by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) as a Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP). Nominees are judged on specific accomplishments and service performed for the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association and the leisure services profession.

Park Section Professional of the Year Award

The Parks Section Professional of the Year is presented to a WPRA Park Section member who is currently working as either a full-time or permanent part-time professional in the field, with more than ten years of service.

About Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association

WPRA is a statewide, non-profit service organization dedicated to extending the social, health, culture and economic benefits of parks and recreation through its network of recreation/park professionals and civic leaders. There are approximately 1,200 WPRA members who include state and local experts on recreation, urban planning, aquatics, at-risk-youth and parkland development and services.

About Dane County Parks

Dane County Parks offers a variety of recreational opportunities for the outdoor enthusiast and natural environments for quiet getaways or special events. Dane County Parks takes an active role to enhance and preserve the county's finest natural resources.