

# Dane County Exec. Parisi: Dane County makes significant conservation purchase in Driftless Area

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Today, County Executive Joe Parisi announced Dane County will purchase 65.5 acres of property in the Town of Black Earth next to Morton Forest. The parcel will provide the public with more opportunities for passive recreation, including hiking and bird watching, and more ways to enjoy the scenic beauty of the Driftless Area.

“Morton Forest is a tranquil property in Dane County that offers scenic views of the Driftless Area and opportunities for visitors to enjoy the outdoors,” said County Executive Parisi. “With this purchase, Dane County will be able to improve public access to Morton Forest and provide more outdoor recreation opportunities.”

The 65.5-acre property is adjacent to the south end of Morton Forest on the east side of Reeve Road. Like Morton Forest, the property contains hills, rock outcroppings, attractive views, and is mostly wooded. It also contains a small area of cropland and an open area that was formerly used a small stone quarry, along with an outbuilding.

Morton Forest is named after its benefactor Steve Morton, who generously donated the 120 acres of land to Dane County over 20 years ago. Morton Forest is located about 2.5 miles south of the Village of Mazomanie within the Driftless Area of southwest Wisconsin. The park offers year-round hiking trails and two outstanding vistas overlooking the countryside.

The new property will be managed in concert with Morton Forest and the public

experience between the new property and Morton Forest will be seamless. To honor the history of the Morton Family and the generosity of Steve Morton in donating both the land and recreational features found there, such as the scenic overlook, the two properties will have distinct names.

Due to steep slopes, providing easy access on the east side of Reeve Road to Morton Forest has been difficult. This new property provides a gravel driveway that will address this access issue for the public and for land management.

Funds to purchase the \$750,000 property are available in the 2022 Dane County Conservation Fund budget. A resolution to approve the acquisition will be introduced at tonight's Dane County Board meeting.