

## **Annual Update to Residents from the Town of Grafton Open Space Commission**

### **A Little Background**

In 2003 the Town Board created Ordinance No. 60 which created the Town of Grafton Open Space Preservation Program. The purpose of the ordinance is to establish a mechanism by which the Town can generate a funding source in the form of monetary donations, park impact fees or grants and/or accept possessory or non-possessory interests in real property to preserve open space areas and conserve the natural resources of the Town of Grafton. One thing is for sure, the majority of Town of Grafton residents love the open spaces and its rural ambience. The good news on this is that the Town is being proactive to protect our treasured resource. Each year the Commission will update residents on their operation and progress.

### **Your Open Space Commission**

Ordinance 60 also created the Town of Grafton Open Space Commission, which meets on the fourth Monday of every month. You are invited to attend the meetings. The Commission works with the Town Supervisors and Planning Commission to preserve our open spaces and to find more ways for people to access it through the guide laid out in the Town's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP). The Town's Open Space Commission also supports Ozaukee County's Land Preservation Board in updating the Farmland Protection Plan that will keep our County's agricultural businesses strong, and the County's Parks and Open Space Plan to protect our conservation lands and water resources as well as providing recreational opportunities.

### **New in 2010**

This year the Town constructed and opened a non-motorized boat launch on the Milwaukee River to make it easier for kayakers and canoeists to get on the river. This launch was identified in the CORP and was the first project for the Open Space Commission. We have wonderful canoe options in this County along the river with many parks and protected lands all along its banks. The new launch is on County Trunk Highway 'O' at the north end of the Town, just across from the Witte Farm. This project was a 50% cost share project with equal funding from the WDNR stewardship Fund and park impact fees.



This year the Town began construction on the first segment of the Town's Multi-Use Trail (perhaps the trail needs a more glamorous name.) The long-term plan in the CORP is for an approximately 15 mile trail route throughout the Town for hiking, dog-walking, cross-country skiing/snowshoeing and horseback riding. The trail system will connect Public Parks, open spaces and equestrian center in the Town.

The first trail segment is almost one mile in length and runs along the south side of Falls Road from Hwy C east to Lake Shore Road and also south from Falls Road through an easement acquired from the Beach Grass, LLC development for over 1100 feet through open fields and woods. This project too was a 50% cost share project with equal

funding from the WDNR Stewardship Fund and park impact fees.



### **Funding**

Funding for these projects comes from impact fees collected as development occurs in the Town and donations. A segregated park and open space fund is reserved for park and open space projects as identified in the Town's CORP. Money from this fund is often used with matching grants, when available, from state and/ or federal programs to assist in project funding.

### **A Nod of Approval**

The Town is being applauded around the county for recognizing the horse community and creating a way to include equestrian interests in its recreational planning. Much of our town's open spaces are currently open because of local stables and families that keep horses on their own properties. *"There are actually more Wisconsin residents with horses than there are farms in the state"* (Source: April, 2008, Wisconsin Horse Council, Survey Research Center University of Wisconsin – River Falls). *"Horseback riding is one of the top four outdoor recreational industries in the state, with more riders than licensed hunters. More than just recreation, the horse industry generates between 1.6 and 1.9 billion dollars in revenues, and expenses between 2.6 and 2.9 billion dollars in Wisconsin going back into the economy"*

(Source: April, 2008, Wisconsin Horse Council, Survey Research Center University of Wisconsin – River Falls).

### **Support and Action**

Town residents can further support the Open Space Commission and protection on our rural landscape in many ways by:

- Placing their lands under conservation easement through the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust
- Making a tax-deductible donation towards the Town's Open Space Fund directly to the Town of Grafton or through the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust (OWLT), earmarked for the Town of Grafton Open Space.
- Donating a conservation or trail easement to the Town of Grafton, based on the CORP map.
- Getting involved in working with the Open Space Commission, OWLT or the Ulao Creek Partnership- a Grafton-based watershed protection organization.

### **Town of Grafton Open Space Commission**

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