



DREW HOWICK

The Hogan House was built to resemble a Native American council structure. Constructed in 1950 and originally part of Camp Wakanda, it is located in Gov. Nelson State Park.

KNOWLES-NELSON STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Friends of Gov. Nelson park to begin Hogan House restoration

DNR grant matching grant OK'd

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The Friends of Gov. Nelson State Park can soon start on renovations planned to the Hogan House at the park in Westport, thanks to a matching Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grant. The Friends group received \$20,000 from the \$500,000 Department of Natural Resources (DNR) stewardship program to help nonprofits improve facilities on state recreation and conservation lands. It is just one of the grants available through the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program that, since it was founded by Gov. Tommy Thompson in 1989, has provided funding for conservation land acquisition and preservation of natural areas, along with playgrounds and shelters at state parks. The \$20,000 for the Westport project has been matched, according to Drew Howick of the Friends of Gov. Nelson State Park. Howick said the \$40,000 will allow the first phase of the restoration project to begin this year. The DNR grant is renewable for the next two years, provided the Friends group can continue to match it.

The Friends of Gov. Nelson State Park formed last year after members learned that the DNR was considering demolishing the Hogan House, a structure built in 1950. The Hogan House is a 600-square-foot octagonal structure designed by Madison architect William V. Kaeser. It was built as a bunkhouse and gathering space for campers when the site was owned by YMCA Camp Wakanda, one of three summer camps once located where the park is today. It has sat vacant since the DNR acquired the land in the 1970s. Several Westport residents consulted with a builder and architect last year, and after the building was found to be structurally sound, they formed the Friends group as a nonprofit and began raising funds to restore it. “We’re hoping to have it available for meetings... for a warming house and also potentially for an education center, we’re thinking for school children in particular,” Howick said. In the first phase of the project, the fireplace will be restored. Howick said the fireplace is the only heating source for the building. A firm is donating the insert box, and the group will hire them to make the fireplace functional again. The electrical will also be updated, and the interior pine boards will be replaced and stained a lighter tone. As part of the project, the DNR is installing an accessible path from the nearby parking lot, Howick said. The Friends are now raising funds for the next

phase of the restoration, which calls for replacing the doors and windows. The architect suggested removing one door facing Lake Mendota and replacing it with a window for a view of the lake and more natural light, Howick said. Lighting upgrades are also planned, along with more repairs and maintenance. The Friends group held their first annual meeting in early May when Jim Buchholz, a former 40-year state park ranger and author of a recently published book: “Wisconsin State Parks, Forests, and Recreation Areas- A Ranger’s Guide,” spoke. The hope is next year, the annual meeting can be at the Hogan House, Howick said. While the Friends group continues its work to restore the unique structure, the future of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program remains uncertain. State funding for its continuation is set to expire in June 2026, and as part of the biennial budget deliberations in the next few months, the Legislature will consider whether to reauthorize it, how much to authorize and for how long. Local municipal boards, along with nonprofits throughout the state, are advocating for its renewal. Recently, the Waunakee Village Board voted to approve a resolution supporting reauthorization of funds for the DNR program. The village’s resolution notes that, “the village of Waunakee has benefited over the years having received \$316,048 in Stewardship grant funds for multiple projects in the village including purchase of the O’Malley Marsh property, acquiring land to develop the Village Center Pond trailhead and expand Castle Creek Conservancy, and funding part of the original development of Ripp Park.” Previously, the DNR funding was renewable every 10 years. But in the 2021 budget cycle, the program was authorized at \$33 million per year for just four years. The DNR is requesting \$100 million of annual funding for the next 10 years. Community members interested in joining the Friends of Gov. Nelson State Park visit the website, <https://friendsofgovnelson.org>

*Thank You!!*

To the wonderful and generous garage sale neighbors of Waunakee that donated a ton of clothes, shoes, children's items, food and many toys to Psychological Addiction Services. We are so proud to be part of such a giving Community. The over 300 people we serve who have Opioid Addiction are so excited about all the great stuff they now have.

**Don & Lisa Zukowski**



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