

## Graber Pond Accessible Trail, Middleton, WI

When Graber Pond melts in Spring, 2014, trail users in Middleton, WI will welcome the installation of an ADA accessible kayak/canoe port and fishing pier, by the Eagle Scouts of Middleton, that is the first of its kind in the State. The EZ Dock Launch uses an innovative adjustable bench and guide rails to accommodate users of all ability. Rollers along the kayak/canoe port allow the use of guide rails, allowing users to maneuver with their upper body as they enter and exit the pond. Because the dock is floating, the water level relative to the pier remains unchanged, and, because the dock only requires a little over an inch of depth to float, ice cover will not damage the structure during the northern winter.



**An ADA accessible EZ Launch kayak/canoe pier makes Graber Pond accessible to all trail users. Photo provided by EZ Dock, Inc.**

The pier is accessible through a recently established 0.35-mile multi-use cycling and pedestrian trail that will connect the Pond, and neighboring subdivisions, with Middleton's extensive trail network. The Pond loop will link the Pheasant Branch Conservancy Trail, Pheasant Branch Conservancy Area, and a 22-mile regional trail that will soon connect Middleton with a string of municipalities along USH 14 in western Dane County, as well as with the bike-friendly State Capital, Madison, a few miles to the East.

The 33-acre, bowl-shaped Graber Pond Conservancy area contains one of four Kettle Ponds protected by the City. Surrounding vegetation consists of oak/ hickory forests with large cottonwood and cherry trees located on surrounding slopes. Ecological restoration efforts were undertaken to establish native species such as milkweeds, rushes, and blue lobelia along the Pond's boundaries. The Pond is home to a long list of waterfowl including the blue-winged teal, great blue heron, and green heron, as well as the regionally threatened Blanding's turtle. Native species help to maintain the habitat required to support the varied animal life.



**Restoration of the project aimed to reintroduce Oak Savannah vegetation in the upland areas.**

Great care was taken in the design and layout of the trail alignment in order to preserve well-established hardwood trees including oak, hickory, cherry, and cottonwood while maintaining ADA accessible gradients on the steeply-sloped southern flank of Graber Pond.



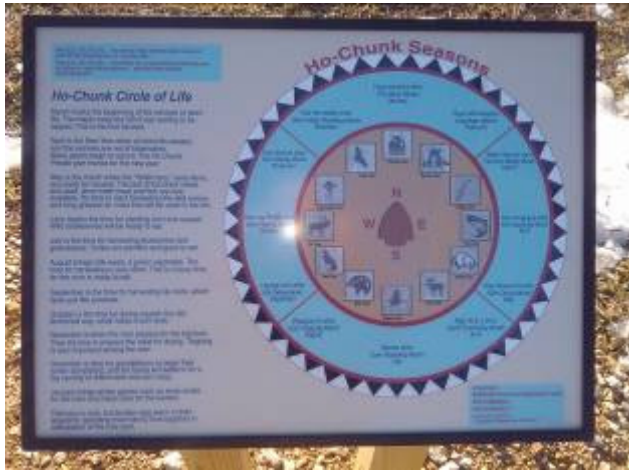
**ADA maximum 5% longitudinal slopes required a sinuous alignment to navigate the rolling terrain on the south bank of Graber Pond.**

The Graber Pond Trail project was paved with porous asphalt. The locally-produced porous surface incorporates recycled materials and open-graded aggregate to produce a product that allows surface water to infiltrate the pavement. This reduces surface water build-up and makes the trail safer for all users. (<http://www.americantrails.org/resources/trailbuilding/Porous-asphalt-Middleton-Wisconsin.html>).



**The Graber Pond Trail features porous asphalt that reduces surface water and is softer on runners' joints.**

Included along the trail is interpretive signage providing information on the animals that can be seen on or near Graber Pond and historical information on Native American culture.



Finally, the trail connects the north and south ends of the trail through a wetland adjacent to Graber Pond via an 850 ft., ADA approved, steel-framed, wood-decked boardwalk such that no excavation or habitat disturbance occurred to the protected wetland.



The Graber Pond Trail project was realized through grants from the Wisconsin DNR Recreational Trail Program (RTP), and the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund.

***For More Information:***

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