

V. A.

LaFave, LaVonne

From: Barb [bjgillig@charter.net]
 Sent: Sunday, April 20, 2008 5:35 PM
 To: LaFave, LaVonne; Demorett, Joe; Schott, William
 Subject: Destruction at Quann

LaVonne,
 Please forward this message to the parks commission and the new parks superintendent
 Joe,
 Please forward to the head of your department.
 Thanks

 April 19, 2008

I was brought to tears this morning out at Quann dog park. No animals were harmed but the park itself was being wantonly destroyed. As I watched, hundreds of undirected vehicles – cars, SUVs, trucks and trailers -- drove willy-nilly across the soft ground, creating deep ruts everywhere, turf flying, spinning wheels digging in down to their axles. A mulch path that I personally spent over 4 hours of volunteer labor on - shovelful by shovelful laying down - was driven on and through, scattering the mulch and turning the footpath into a squishy morass.

What was this destructive hoard? The unknowing patrons of the Alliant Energy Center-sponsored Midwest Horse Fair. As one family came over to ask me how they could get back over to the Coliseum without having to walk across this now-reduced-to-mud field, they told me that the parking was free. Well no wonder year after year the AEC says that they don't have the money or staff to repair the damage they cause! For those who don't know, this is an old landfill site that the city and state paid oodles to remediate and have meticulously graded to prevent water puddling and infiltration. Every year since the remediation, this Dane county owned *business* blithely ignores the known fact that the ground is too wet to support vehicle traffic, and then ignores the damage they create. This dog park is an extraordinary city asset cherished by many citizens. Would this be allowed at James Madison, Warner, or Elver parks? No – of course not. How would you feel if this was *your* neighborhood park, where you put in countless volunteer hours?

It's time to stop allowing this destruction for the profit of the Alliant Energy Center. If they *must* use this parkland for overflow parking, then they *must* be held responsible for promptly repairing the damage. Last year they put down a few piles of dirt in a small fraction of the ruts and didn't bother to spread it or seed it – just dumped it. At the very least they should charge enough for parking to cover the costs of materials and labor to do the repairs. Prohibitively expensive? You bet! If they refuse to really repair the damage then get the city attorneys to find them in violation of their lease agreement and take back our parkland!

<!--[if !supportEmptyParas]-->I strongly suggest both parks and engineering tour Quann park at the earliest opportunity. <!--[endif]-->

Barbara Gilligan

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4/29/2008

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Attachments: photographs taken the afternoon of 4/19/08 at Quann park. I have over a hundred more photos showing the widespread nature of the problem.

LaFave, LaVonne

From: david and joan sample [djsample@chorus.net]
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2008 9:45 PM
To: LaFave, LaVonne
Cc: aec@alliantenergycenter.com; Widstrand, Si; erickson.chuck@co.dane.wi.us; Kerr, Julia
Subject: Conflicting uses at Quann Park

Hi,

I am a long-time, devoted, and appreciative customer of the City of Madison dog parks, Quann Park in particular. I am there M-F almost every week of the year (except for weeks when it is closed for "event parking" -- more on that below). I have in the past been very complimentary to City park staff for the great job they do managing the park and it's vegetation. They do a great job. In particular, I have commented on the diversity of grassland birds (Meadowlarks, Savannah and Grasshopper sparrows, Bobolinks, and Dickcissels) that nest in the park due to the low-intensity mowing regime the Parks Division employs.

What I am writing about today is what I feel to be the very wrong-headed arrangement for the County to use Quann park for parking and camping for various large-animal events (the Midwest Horse Fair, World Dairy Expo, etc.). These events are in complete conflict with the use of Quann park by dogs (its intended use) and birds, and harm the vegetation cover of the park. Here is why:

-the campers/parkers leave abundant human trash, and not all of it is removed. Numerous times the dogs in our walking group end up face down in doughnuts, and whatever junk food you can possibly imagine. At the very least, if these people are going to be allowed to use the park for parking/camping, they need to treat it with respect, behave responsibly, and thoroughly clean up after themselves. If this is not part of the agreement between the City and the County, it certainly should be. I have noticed and appreciated the presence of trash receptacles at some events; obviously people use them only selectively.

-there is always lots of animal waste and bedding left behind after these events. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that manure and dogs are a disasterous mix. The number of mornings I spend in the tub with my dog after she has rolled in manure and urine-soaked bedding is hard to count. Most dog owners are in the same boat, and the manure lasts for weeks. I know the County is supposed to clean this stuff up, and sometimes does remove some of it. But it is impossible to get much of it. Again, the users need to clean up after their animals, as we dog owners do! Why should they be allowed to leave all this waste?

-importantly, the use of the park in early spring (e.g., the horse fair) when the ground is soft, or in wet weather during other shows, leads to guaranteed rutting and destruction of the soil and grass. Any farmer with half a brain knows not to take farm equipment into wet fields, due to the destruction it causes to the fields. So, why let these folks with their enormous and heavy vehicles do that to Quann park? The vehicles leave muddy tracks everywhere. They also create very large muddy ruts and puddles along the edges of the gravel paths (I am guessing this happens when large vehicles/trailers have to pass by one another on the narrow paths). For those of you who are unaware of this, I invite you to walk out there this week; you will see what I mean. At the very least, the County should be required to fill in those puddles and deep ruts with gravel. Again the vehicles are destroying the vegetation and leaving muddy wet spots for dogs to lie in (more time washing up in the tub!).

-finally, the events that take place in the spring and summer (late April through July) completely disrupt the grassland birds that are setting up breeding territories and nesting in the park at these times of year. The importance of the park for bird conservation purposes -- a definite feather in the City's Parks Division's cap -- is completely negated by the high-density parking and camping with large vehicles.

I realize that there is some kind of arrangement between the City and the County that leads to these problems. What I maintain is that the the agreement pits incompatible uses against one another. The main purpose and use of the park -- as a dog park -- should be given primacy. The human trash and animal waste problems can be completely and partially dealt with (respectively) through better (much better) enforcement of the rules for camping/parking users. But, the problems of rutting, sod destruction, and conflicts with bird nesting are not

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solveable unless the use for campers and parking is discontinued or significantly reduced in area or frequency. I can't believe that with all the nearby parking lots in the area, there is not sufficient space for all the the large vehicles and trailers to park so that Quann does not have to be used. I very much hope that other options will be explored for parking and camping. What about using the mowed turf between the community gardens and the dog park?

I would not write such a lengthy letter if I did not feel strongly of the value of Quann park and a dog and bird conservation park as a true gem in the middle of the City of Madison that receives high public use. Too bad that this unwise arrangement has been made with the County. The arrangement appears to me to be only for the convenience of the County and the event attendees who park and camp at Quann. It is abundantly clear that the County and the parkers and campers are not responsible users of the park; ultimately they do not appear to care what happens to the park as a result of their activities. It only matters that they have a convenient and close by place to park or camp, then they are gone and we are left holding the bag. I cannot see that the City benefits in any way from this agreement (except perhaps via rental fees, which are not worth the trouble, if they exist at all).

I hope that the City and County can work together to solve these problems. Thanks very much for your attention.

Sincerely,

David Sample