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County Executive Joe Parisi, Former Parks Commission Chair Bill Lunney Receive Statewide Recognition for Longstanding Conservation Efforts & Environmental Stewardship

MADISON, WI – November 8, 2019: Dane County Executive Joe Parisi and Former Dane County Parks Commission Chair Bill Lunney received statewide recognition for their longstanding conservation efforts and environmental stewardship at last night’s annual Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association (WPRA) Awards Program. During the ceremony, Parisi was honored with WPRA’s 2019 Elected Official Award, and Lunney received WPRA’s 2019 Fellowship Award.

“WPRA honors the incredible efforts by local elected officials to promote the benefits of park recreational, environmental, and cultural services in communities across the state,” said Jake Anderson, 2020 President of the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association. “We appreciate all the efforts County Executive Joe Parisi has done for Dane County parks and ability to lead this effort in Wisconsin.”

In the area of park development, Parisi has also created a unique county grant program that provides local community assistance for parks and trail developments. To date, the program has provided matching county grants of over \$4.5 million—supporting more than 50 park projects and assisting over 30 local governments and nonprofit organizations.

One of Parisi’s most notable accomplishments is Phase 1 of the Lower Yahara River Trail, which opened to the public in 2017. This nearly 2.5-mile long trail provides an off-road trail connection that did not previously exist and includes a mile-long boardwalk bridge—considered the longest in North America constructed solely for non-motorized transportation.

Lunney served on the Dane County Park Commission for 32 years, including 30 years as Chair. Under Lunney’s leadership, Dane County park land and natural resource areas have increased in size from 3,500 acres to over 15,000 acres. To honor his service to the community, Dane County renamed Lake Farm County Park the William G. Lunney Lake Farm County Park earlier this year.

As Chair of the Dane County Park Commission, Lunney helped advance development of the park classification system to organize and define park uses and types, oversee parks and open space committees that led to the adoption of six Dane County Parks and Open Space Plans, create some of the first dog parks in the nation, and advocate for the important role of volunteers, friends groups, and partner organizations in the success of Dane County Parks.

Over the years, Lunney and his wife, Judie Pfeifer, have partnered on a number of projects to benefit Dane County Parks. Together, the two co-founded the Foundation for Dane County Parks, the major

private fundraising arm to support the Dane County Parks System. They also helped co-found the Friends of Capital Springs State Recreation Area, where Pfeifer has served as Board Treasurer since 2004.

The Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association (WPRA) is a statewide voluntary organization dedicated to enriching the professional and educational opportunities available to leisure service personnel in parks, recreation, therapeutic recreation, and related fields, so that they may better service the needs of their communities and or participants, and to advocate and promote the benefits of parks and leisure services to the general public. This membership association represents over 1,200 individuals delivering a broad spectrum of services in Wisconsin.

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About Dane County Parks

Dane County Parks offers a variety of recreational opportunities for the outdoor enthusiast and natural environments for quiet getaways or special events. Dane County Parks takes an active role to enhance and preserve the county's finest natural resources.