

LAKE SIDE PARK

Walking Tour



Soo Line Engine



Fountain Island Bridge



Bandstand



Carousel



Street Car Waiting Station



Supple Marsh

Supple Marsh is a 107 acre wetland in Lakeside Park. Named for the original owners, the Supple Family, the DNR states that the marsh was probably formed during the retreat of a glacial ice sheet. As the ice retreated, gravel and rocks were deposited, forming a large lake called Glacial Lake Oshkosh. Centuries later, this lake became known as Lake Winnebago.

The Supple Marsh adjoins Lake Winnebago which has long been regarded as an excellent haven for fish and game. Winnebago Native Americans fished and hunted in the marsh years before the settlers came. As the years progressed and the population grew, hunters and anglers came to the marsh to hunt and fish for profit, sport, and food. As its popularity grew the state leased the area as a private duck hunting ground and later leased it as one of the best areas for mallard, black duck, teal, and muskrat hunting.

Mathias Supple purchased the marsh on March 25, 1929 from Wisconsin Central Land Co., the holding firm for the Soo Line Railway. The Supple family started a fur farm in 1932, harvesting as many as 6000 muskrats in one year. In 1967 the City of Fond du Lac acquired ownership of the marsh. Hunting and trapping are no longer allowed, as Supple Marsh has become a nature conservancy for all to enjoy.

Landmarks



Train Depot

In April, 1963, the Soo Line railroad made plans to dispose of an old railroad depot. City Librarian Gene McLane suggested the depot could be preserved by the City as an example of historic architecture.

Ornamental Lagoon Bridge

The Ornamental Lagoon Bridge was constructed in April, 1926 by Oshkosh construction company J. Rasmussen and Sons, to replace the old wooden lift bridge leading from the lake to the park lagoons. The bridge is constructed on concrete, with ornamental stone and concrete railings and light posts at each of the four corners.

1860 – Bridge spanning the lagoon between Athletic and Oven Islands was constructed.

1973 – Concession stand built.

Lakeside Park Pavilion

In 1968, it was suggested that the pavilion be replaced with a new building; work began on the new pavilion in 1973. As park usage grew by leaps and bounds, it was suggested that the new building be constructed for year-round use, rather than just during the warmer seasons. As a result, a fireplace was constructed and heating units installed to provide warmth for ice skaters and snowmobile clubs who hoped to utilize the building. Upon the pavilion's completion, early reports of poor workmanship caused some delays in usage. The pavilion was formally allowed to be rented by groups year-round beginning in January, 1975.

LAKESIDE PARK

Walking Tour



Lakeside Park is the largest and most significant public park in Fond du Lac. It has been the center of city recreation for almost 100 years. In 1895, the City of Fond du Lac designated five hundred dollars for a park and purchased about 140 acres of land to create Lakeside Park. Plans drawn by landscape architect O.C. Simonds specified that all walks in the park should lead to an ornate artesian fountain. This now 400-acre showplace, is located along the southern edge of Lake Winnebago and features a lighthouse which visitors can enter to view the lake from the top deck. Summertime brings brilliant flower displays, special events, and festivals. Children of all ages visit the petting zoo; rent aqua bikes, bumper boats, and canoes; ride the miniature train; and enjoy the playgrounds and old fashioned carousel. Water recreation is also popular with two separate boat launches; one with a four-lane concrete ramp, loading piers, and parking for 20 rigs; and the other launch with two concrete ramps, loading piers, and a parking area.



Carousel

One of the few authentic merry-go-rounds remaining in Wisconsin, the Lakeside Park carousel was built out East in the 1920s by the Allan Herschel Co. The animals are wood-pegged and fashioned without nails. It uses light bulbs rather than neo lights and is operated by a simple clutch mechanism and two gears. Sam Costas brought the carousel from the Jack Vomberg Carnival in 1946 and, after three years of renovation, used it at his outdoor theater. In the early 1950s Donald Duck was added as a character. Costas moved the carousel to *Sam's Beer Hut* in 1955 and shortly thereafter, at an undetermined date, it was placed in the Park; 180,000 rides were given the first year.

Bandstand

In early 1890 one of the most needed buildings at Lakeside Park was said to be a bandstand. William McDermott, a well-known resident of Fond du Lac, gifted the bandstand to the City. Designed by architect Hiram P. Thompson the plan called for an octagon-shaped building 30' tall, topped with a 12' flag pole; the flag pole was later removed. The platform is elevated to 8' with liberal ornamentation such as beaded posts, brackets, and scroll work. A protective railing was built around the platform. Original access to the platform from the ground level is located inside the building via a stairway and trap door. At a later date an outside stairway was constructed for easier access to the platform. Sunday afternoon was a popular time for the people of Fond du Lac to meet at the bandstand and enjoy a concert by the Military Band of the City, and it was eventually named in honor of Joseph Schmitz, who conducted many concerts there. The May 30, 1959 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post* drew national attention when it featured a color photograph of the bandstand and a short article—this brought a request from the Mayor of New Berlin, New York, for the bandstand plans, but it is not known if a copy of the bandstand was constructed.

Lighthouse

Open seasonally to the public, this treasured landmark has become the symbol of the City. On September 9, 1932 local lumberman W.J. Nuss offered to donate materials to build a lighthouse for the City; it was constructed one year later on the end of the breakwater entrance at "The Big Hole" (renamed "Lighthouse Harbor" on March 1, 1933; the breakwater in front of the harbor is now known as Lighthouse Point). R.A. Sutherland prepared plans for the Cape Code design of the structure. The lighthouse is 40 feet high and 13 feet wide. The fieldstone foundation came from a farm in the Chilton area; the first 10 feet of the octagonal shaped building is flagstone, while the balance is wood. A winding interior stairway leads to the top, with a catwalk and a beacon on the roof. Construction began in March, 1933 by local unemployed men hired through the New Deal's Works Progress Administration (WPA) and supervised by Park Superintendent Frank Russell and Mr. Sutherland. There was no municipal cost because, in addition to the W.J. Nuss donation of materials, the flagpole was donated by Mr. Russell; four persons donated five dollars each for the anchor that remains in front of the building; the iron catwalk railing was made and donated by W.H. Manowske and E.A. Becker. A ceremony for the laying of the cornerstone was held on June 10, 1933 with several hundred persons participating. The Fond du Lac High School band performed a concert while the Sea Scouts and Boy Scouts were on duty. The cornerstone was laid by Mayor Albert J. Rosenthal.

Soo Line Engine

Steam Locomotive No. 2714 was built in 1911 and served the Wisconsin Central and Soo Line railroads. It was donated by the Soo Line Railroad in 1955 to serve as a reminder of the City's early days as a railroad center, and to commemorate 100 years of Fond du Lac train service. The model chosen for display was selected because of its extraordinary record; it pulled trains over one of the longest continuous passenger runs in the nation—a 1600 mile round trip route from Fond du Lac to Winnipeg, Canada and back again.

Fountain Island Bridge

Fountain Island Bridge is a rare early bowstring bridge built around 1870; the bridge immediately draws attention for its tall bowstrings and bright blue color. It is assumed to have been built by the Milwaukee Bridge & Iron Company and outfitted with Keystone and Phoenix columns. The bridge was originally used to cross the Fond du Lac River at Scott Street and was relocated to Lakeside Park in 1920. According to the Wisconsin Historic Bridge Recording Project in July 1987, the bridge may have been moved to Lakeside Park when a replacement was installed across a river in the City. It is now a pathway from Promen Drive to Fountain Island, and is a popular spot for family and wedding photography.

Street Car Waiting Station

The Street Car Waiting Station, which now sits on the corner of North Main Street and Frazier Drive, was restored in 1988-1989 as a project of the City of Fond du Lac Park Advisory Board, with City Council approval. Research has failed to determine the architect for the building. However, it is considered to be the last station of its kind in the Wisconsin, and possibly in the nation. In 1899, the City granted to the Fond du Lac Street Railway and Light Company a strip of land 50' x 200' west of the park to erect a pavilion. The station was built facing north in 1990, in what was then a marsh, where the current restrooms, west of North Main Street, now stand. In 1909, it was moved north to within 50 feet of the lake, because the tracks through the marsh which made the loop of Arndt Street and Doty Street were removed. The tracks then were laid straight north in Lakeside Park. In 1923, it again moved about 150 feet south to approximately where it stands now. In 1931, the building ceased to be used for street cars. When bus transportation began, the bus did go to Lakeside Park and stopped at the Street Car Waiting Station. In the mid-late 1930s, the station was moved back to its former location near the lake. This was a temporary location to keep it safe while the marsh (now the children's playground) was filled.



“The Hiker”

SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR MONUMENT

Standing at the North Main Street entrance of Lakeside Park, the bronze statue of “The Hiker” was planned as a monument to veterans of the Spanish-American war of 1898. It is situated on Wisconsin quarried granite; the *Commonwealth Reporter* explained the figure on the statue was meant to symbolize “the glory of achievement, rather than of war”. A metal table on the base was recovered from the sunken battleship *Maine* and honors the memory of those who died aboard the ship. The cost of the \$1600 statue was raised by donations from the public, the County Board, and many Spanish War veterans. It was dedicated on Memorial Day in 1936 at a patriotic ceremony featuring band music, a parade, flags, and the presence of many Legion members, Civil and foreign war veterans, and members of patriotic organizations.

