



Nature Walk Suggestions

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Madison's Shared-Use Paths

Madison has more than 60 miles of shared-use paved paths and many travel through wooded areas, lakeshores or other areas that make for a great nature-themed walk.

- **Highlight Walk:** The [Wingra Creek Path](#) follows the creek between Lake Wingra and Lake Monona. The path starts in [Olin Park](#) with underpasses of John Nolen Dr. as well as Olin Ave and ends at the west entrance to the UW Arboretum and at the Mills St entrance to Vilas Park. This path is 1.8 miles one-way and is paved.
- **Highlight Walk:** The [Starkweather Creek Path](#) follows the creek, which flows into Lake Monona, north from the Capital City Trail through Madison's eastside neighborhoods. The trail features two dedicated bridge crossings over East Washington Ave. and Aberg Ave. This trail is an especially great nature walk starting at Milwaukee Street and walking to Madison College where you follow the creek and after crossing over Aberg Ave walk along the woods between Carpenter-Ridgeway Park and Bridges Golf Course. The path is 3 miles total (1.8 miles from Milwaukee St. to Anderson St.) and is paved.
- Find more interesting shared-use paths by visiting the [Greater Madison MPO's Featured Pedestrian & Bicycle Trail Story Map](#) or looking at the online [Bicycle Map](#) for the shared-use paths. (Note: Use the Layers feature to uncheck bike lanes and other features so you can more easily view the path system).

Madison Parks



Conservation Parks: Take a walk in one of the Madison Parks conservation parks as these parks primary purpose is to preserve natural landscapes, plants and animal populations. Conservation parks are open from 4am until one hour after sunset and offer trails of varying distances (see below). [Conservation Park Information](#)

Park	Miles	Trail Descriptions
Acewood	0.36	A short (0.4 mile), level trail detours off of the bike path to bring visitors close to the pond, where a great number of migrating waterfowl can be seen in spring and fall.
Cherokee Marsh - North	4.12	More than 4 miles of trails let you explore prairies, wetlands and woodlands. Most are flat, but there is also a loop that crosses over a drumlin - a hill formed by the glacier during the last ice age.
Cherokee Marsh - South	3.91	4 miles of moderate trails let you explore prairies, oak woodlands, and ponds. Enjoy the sunset over the river from atop the hill by the boat launch.
Cherokee Marsh - Mendota	0.7	An easy walk through the woods on a 0.7 mile trail that links Westport Meadows Park and Meadow Ridge Park .
Edna Taylor	1.18	A series of ponds surrounded by woods and savannas can be explored on the 1 mile of easy trails here.
Elvehjem Sanctuary	0.64	Short, steep trails through mature woods bring you along the edge of the Starkweather Creek watershed. Glimpses of sandstone outcrops can be seen on the hillside.
Heritage Prairie	0.23	Short, steep walk through a "goat prairie."
Heritage Sanctuary	0.51	A short, easy walk through a neighborhood forested oasis that is rich with wildflowers in spring, and colorful foliage in autumn.
Hiestand Woods	0.26	A short, moderate walk through the mature forest on the north side of "Radar Hill."
Kettle Pond	0.46	A short loop around this glacial feature takes you from the ridge down to the pond and back.
Knollwood	0.67	A moderate hike climbs from a stream through oak woodland along the edge of a sandy moraine.
Meadow Ridge	0.42	A short, steep loop trail brings you around a sandstone knoll. Be sure to look for the former house site and the old quarry.
Owen	3.24	More than 3 miles of trail loops let you explore this 100 acre farm that has been restored to prairie and savanna. Moderate difficulty.
Prairie Ridge	1.46	A moderate walk through prairie and oak savanna on a hillside with stunning views.
Sandburg Woods	0.86	A nearly 1 mile trail through mature forest on the north side of a drumlin. Hilly, but not too strenuous.
Stricker's Pond	0.18	A short, flat trail through the wooded conservation park is part of a popular network of sidewalks and paved paths that circle the pond.
Turville Point	2.63	A series of loop trails bring you through prairie and oak woodland and down to the shore of Lake Monona and a classic Madison skyline photo opportunity.
Total Mileage	21.83	

Other Madison Parks

Madison Parks are located throughout the city and offer a variety of options for getting out into nature beyond just the conservation parks. Many large parks have walking paths and some have both paved and off road paths for you to enjoy. [Madison Parks Hiking Information](#)

Highlight Walk: Warner Park is known for its natural beauty and its beach. It is also a great place to walk and look for birds. Paved paths wind through the park to make it easy to reach from local neighborhoods and to allow for exploration of the area. [More Information](#)

Highlight Walk: Elver Park is the largest community park in Madison and has a variety of great trails to enjoy. Elver's [winter trail map](#) is a great resource as it includes mileage for the ski trails many of which are also hiking trails. This is a great location for a more challenging walk as Elver Park has very hilly terrain and you can easily do a walk of 3, 4, 5 or more miles. There is a short paved path that goes from McKenna Blvd to S Gammon Rd but the last part up to S Gammon Rd is steep. There is also a paved path around the softball diamonds that is flat.

[Find a Madison Park near you!](#)

UW-Madison

Lakeshore Nature Preserve – The Preserve is situated on the south shore of Lake Mendota on the UW-Madison campus. It includes the [Howard Temin Lake Shore Path](#), which extends along Lake Mendota starting from the Limnology Lab, near the Memorial Union, and traveling west to Oxford Rd. You will also find the path to Picnic Point, one of the most popular walks in Madison. Starting just past the Lakeshore Dorms, the Lakeshore Path is paved heading west and has a separate walking path and bicycle path space. The path to Picnic Point does not allow bikes and is a hard pack gravel. [More Information](#)

Arboretum – The Arboretum features distinct ecological communities, horticultural collections, effigy mounds, trails and wildlife. Many visitors enjoy a walk along the road where you can offer see turkeys and a variety of plants. There is also a native plant garden and a horticultural garden. There are also 17 miles of trails for those who are able to get off road. [More Information](#)

Outside Madison

There are also some great walks in the communities surrounding Madison. These might be convenient locations for you depending on where you live or may offer an opportunity to walk somewhere new that you haven't been before.

Dane County Parks

Dane County Parks offers a variety of recreational activities at their parks including great trails for walking. To find the park closest to you that has walking trails visit the [Dane County Parks search page](#).

Highlight Walk: The [StoryWalk](#) at Dane County’s Lussier Family Heritage Center is located just outside Madison on the Capital City Trail. This fun, educational activity places the pages of a book along a walking path. Combine the joy of reading with your child with the benefits of being active in an outdoor environment. As you walk along the path, discover the story unfold page after page!



Books on the Storywalk

- October: **Count Down to Fall** by Fran Hawk
- November: **Goodbye Autumn, Hello Winter** by Kenrad Pak

Highlight Walk: The Pheasant Branch Conservancy in Middleton has wetlands, spring, bird watching opportunities and interpretive signage. [Map](#)

Ice Age National Scenic Trail

The Ice Age National Scenic Trail is located entirely within Wisconsin and travels through 31 counties following the edge of the last continental glacier in Wisconsin. The trail provides great opportunities for viewing nature and bird watching. [Explore the Trail](#)

Holy Wisdom Monastery Nature Trails

The public is welcome to [explore the nature trails at Holy Wisdom Monastery](#), which is adjacent to the North Mendota Wildlife Area. Restored tall grass native prairie dominates the landscape, and vistas overlook Lake Mendota and the City of Madison.

WALK-TOBER PARTNERS



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