



ORA Trails
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: ORA Trails Celebrates June Dairy Month in a New Way

As Wisconsin rounds out the celebration of June Dairy Month, the Executive Director of The Outdoor Recreation Alliance, or ORA Trails, is adjusting to his new role as a farm owner.



The local nonprofit recently purchased a 300 acre farm along Highway 33 in the State Road Coulee near the Shelby La Crosse border. With a mission of creating happy, healthy, and resilient communities by providing equitable and sustainable access to outdoor recreation, the local nonprofit plans to create a community asset that will connect our community to nature and to each other. With a focus on conservation, education, and recreation, the new site will serve as a gateway into nature, by removing many of the barriers encountered in our quest for improved access to the great outdoors.

The property is the former home of the Chas Hass Dairy and farm as well as the Sno Bowl, La Crosse's first downhill ski area. The farm is on the banks of Pammel Creek and lies in the heart of La Crosse's Blufflands. Once developed as an inclusive and engaging park, nature education center, and trail hub, it will continue to build on the system of connected parks and trails, advocated by the Bluffland coalition, a team of municipal and private partners working to protect and connect our amazing natural resources.



ORA Trails leveraged a grant from La Crosse County, along with private contributions, to secure the property this spring while they await the results of a Knowles Nelson Grant in partnership with the WI DNR.

“As a long time participant and supporter of the Bluffland effort, I recognize the opportunity of the county to be a key player in advancing the health and welfare of our people and businesses.” -La Crosse County Board of Supervisors Member, Maureen Freedland

The organization is working with individual and community partners to develop a capital campaign and detailed site plan. Volunteer and community engagement has always been a hallmark of the organization, which only added full-time staff a couple of years ago during the pandemic.



Over the course of the next few months, ORA Trails will be engaging with the community in a process to identify barriers to outdoor opportunities and explore creative solutions to minimize them. ORA Trails is using its existing relationships with supportive partners to springboard into new relationships and creative solutions, addressing the needs in our community. Be on the lookout for opportunities to let your voice be heard, join us for a community tour of the property, join a committee, or make a contribution to the project. Community input, planning, design, and fundraising will continue through 2023 with initial site improvements happening in 2024.

"The Trail Farm is an exciting and historic opportunity for La Crosse to make outdoor recreation more available and accessible to area folks and tourists alike. ORA Trails has developed a unique opportunity for public-private partnerships that will benefit the entire driftless region. This will enhance the quality of life in our community and expand our tourism industry." -State Representative, Jill Billings, 95th Assembly District

Through the engagement process, final site and program strategies will be integrated into a plan to further create a community connected to nature and connected by nature through our thriving and diverse outdoor wonderlands.



Please visit <https://www.oratrails.org/trail-farm/> for more information on our project.