

## Equestrians at Governor Dodge State Park

Have you visited Governor Dodge State Park lately? One of the largest parks in the state, Governor Dodge is located just 48 miles west of Madison in Iowa County. It boasts over 5,000 acres of prairie, savannah, forest, marshes, and rocky outcroppings as well as two lakes and even a waterfall! Visitors at Governor Dodge State Park enjoy picnicking, canoeing, kayaking, camping, hiking, biking, skiing, riding horses, swimming, and fishing. Neighboring communities also have much to offer.

The horse trails at Governor Dodge are among the finest in the state. With approximately 25 miles of well-maintained trails, riders enjoy a variety of beautiful landscapes. The 15.3-mile Outer Loop trail winds its way through some of the most scenic and remote areas of the park. The Interior Horse Trail system includes several trail segments that allow horse riders the option of making several shorter loops from the campground or day use area. No matter the trail, the rolling hills take riders in and out of wooded areas and offer spectacular views.



What you might not know is that there is a newly formed group dedicated to making equine experiences at Governor Dodge State Park even better. The Governor Dodge Equestrians ([www.governordodgeequestrians.com](http://www.governordodgeequestrians.com)) was established in 2015 as a committee of the Friends of Governor Dodge State Park. Through several fundraisers, the group was able to fund a porta potty at the day use parking area last season. The group also purchased and installed five sturdy mounting blocks located strategically throughout the park.



More fundraisers are planned for 2016. Last year the Governor Dodge Equestrians hosted an event called "Let's Get the Ball Rolling" where both equestrians and hikers enjoyed scavenger hunts, a picnic lunch, and silent auction. On **June 5, 2016**, the group will be hosting a similar scavenger hunt and picnic called "**Let's KEEP the Ball Rolling.**" What is especially exciting is that June 4-5 is a Free Fun Weekend at WI State Parks. All state park vehicle admission fees are waived and all state trail pass fees are waived! It's a perfect opportunity to come out and support long overdue equestrian projects at Governor Dodge State Park while enjoying the wonderful trails and beautiful scenery.

If you've camped at Governor Dodge State Park you've probably noticed quite a disparity between the Governor Dodge horse camp and other horse campgrounds around the state. Despite the fact that the DNR Master Plan for Governor Dodge, dating back to 1984, calls for the development of a new horse camp, campers continue to make use of what was supposed to be a temporary site on an asphalt parking lot. The Governor Dodge Equestrians are determined to see a new campground become a reality. We are proud to say that because of our efforts, the DNR landscape architects have resurrected the project and are currently working on plans for a NEW 20 site horse camp! Once those plans are available (which should be soon), we can offer feedback, begin to set goals, and launch major fundraising campaigns. It won't be easy, but it has to start somewhere.

If you would like to become a part of the Governor Dodge Equestrians or would like more information, please contact [govdodgehorses@gmail.com](mailto:govdodgehorses@gmail.com) or visit [www.governordodgeequestrians.com](http://www.governordodgeequestrians.com).

