



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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LAUNCHING ACHIEVABLE AND MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES IN RECREATION AND FORESTRY EDUCATION

**Installation of an ADA compliant nature trail will provide access to the woodland
so that all abilities can explore and connect with the natural world**

Wauwatosa, WI, July 20, 2018– The Forest Exploration Center (FEC), a nonprofit organization in joint partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry, will begin a trail improvement project in early August.

Over the next few months, the FEC will rehabilitate an existing social trail network in the woodland to create a recreational trail experience that is compliant with ADA accessibility guidelines, so that all may access and enjoy the forest.

Tim Ochnikowski, Director, Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD) for Milwaukee County is excited about this new opportunity. *“Having an ADA accessible trail adjacent to Wil-O-Way Underwood will open up the possibility of new and creative programming from Goodwill and Easter Seals to the benefit of persons with disabilities. The accessible trail will also be available to the general public who are not involved with the programming at Wil-O-Way Underwood, thus offering something that is currently not available now. When we all work together with a similar goal, everyone wins. Having an ADA accessible trail in Underwood Parkway, persons with (and without) disabilities will be winners.”*

The trail will be installed under compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility guidelines and will provide approximately 0.75-miles of firm, stable, compacted crushed natural stone surface that is wheelchair accessible throughout the hardwood forest. This new experience will allow visitors the opportunity to access and connect to all areas of the property and to experience the subtle changes and beauty found in each forest stand. Trail wayfinding signs, maps, kiosks and educational

signs along the trail will allow individuals of all ages and abilities to explore and learn about the forest environment. Technology will be available for visitors with visual impairments to provide audio description for the educational exhibits and the surrounding forest landscape.

Although currently not accessible, trails will remain open during installation. The trail will be built in sections. Signs will be posted along those sections of trail that are under construction. Trail work is anticipated to take a few months.

There will be volunteer opportunities available as trail installation progresses. Watch for these volunteer opportunities on social media or sign up to receive newsletters at the FEC website.

“Our focus at the Forest Exploration Center is to sustain this unique woodland environment while providing accessible opportunities in education, recreation and stewardship. This trail improvement project enriches that focus by not only engaging and inviting the broadest spectrum of learners and diverse abilities but allowing each the freedom to learn and recreate outdoors at their own pace and ability.” Nathan Berken, FEC President.

The forest is state owned and managed by the Wisconsin DNR with a focus to deepen understanding of forest ecology and sustainable forestry management practices for current and future generations. The Forest Exploration Center strives to provide a unique woodland learning environment where meaningful opportunities in forestry education, recreation and stewardship are accessible to the broadest audience.

SUSTAINING A UNIQUE WOODLAND ENVIRONMENT
SUPPORTING OPPORTUNITIES IN EDUCATION, RECREATION AND STEWARDSHIP

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If you would like more information about the Forest Exploration Center visit:

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TRAIL
IMPROVEMENT
PROJECT

TO PROVIDE ACHIEVABLE & MEANINGFUL RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Improving trails so all will
have access to the forest experience