July 2025 Newsletter

Sustain Dane is the sustainability organization of Dane County. *Join us* and get involved in accelerating community well-being.

Welcome to Sonali

Welcome to Sonali Bhikha, Sustain Dane Program Coordinator!

Sonali (she/her) is passionate about the intersection of collaboration, sustainability, and equity. She is dedicated to fostering inclusive and community-driven climate solutions. Her past experience focused on environmental justice programming in Duluth, MN.

At Sustain Dane, Sonali coordinates programs that build connections and inspire action, including the Sustainable Breakfast Series, All Around Dane County, volunteer initiatives, and educating youth in schools. She also leads participant outreach and develops messaging that highlights community stories and program impact.

She holds a bachelor's degree in Sustainability Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. Sonali is especially excited to advance sustainability efforts that center equity and justice through collective action. In her free time, she

enjoys spending time with her friends and family, reading, and exploring
Madison's parks and trails.

Efficiency Navigator Program - Building Spotlight

Sustain Dane and partners are hard at work with the Efficiency Navigator
program, supporting small to medium-sized affordable apartment housing to
become more efficient, affordable, and resilient.

In Madison, we recently completed work on a 4-unit building built in 1958.
Implementations at the building include weatherization with air sealing and
insulation, boiler optimization, mold removal, gas leak repair, and other
measures.

The efficiency upgrades performed will have an estimated annual cost savings
of $1,009 and estimated annual CO_2 emissions savings of 4,064 kg. This is the
equivalent of reducing 10,432 vehicle miles traveled per year.

Do you know an eligible apartment building? Learn more or apply on
the Efficiency Navigator page.

New Member Recognition

Sustain Dane recognizes the businesses, organizations, and individuals who value sustainability and are a part of our membership.

Sustain Dane membership offers inspiring education and professional development, powerful connections through networking and volunteering, and customized support to help you accelerate sustainability actions for community well-being.

Membership is rolling throughout the year and all are welcome to join. Recent new members include:

- Catalent
- Nowlan Personal Injury Law
- Pellitteri Waste Systems
- Adobe Acrobat
- ZenBusiness
- + Three New Individual Members

Powerful Teen Leaders

Powerful Teen Leaders Program

In July, Powerful Teen Leader participants continued their summer youth workforce development program. Just this month, participants took part in many fun and informative experiences that helped to provide exposure to different careers in the green economy.

- Solar panel installation lab at Madison College
- Tour of Epic System's campus and careers
- Geographic Information System (GIS) workshop with the Capital Area Regional Planning Commision and the State Cartographer's Office
- Tour of Exact Sciences lab and farm
- Cleanup day with Dane County Parks
- Tour of Arboretum land and operations
- Outdoor recreation and college information with Color in the Outdoors

Each week the participants complete reflections. In one reflection, Keymontae shared, "I thought engineering and things like that weren't something I would want to do, but now that may have changed." Additionally, Jeremy wrote, "Pulling the invasive plants was really cool because we could actually see that this work does make an impact."

Arielle V. King

Environmental Educator &
Host of "The Joy Report"
Podcast

Sustain Dane Summit Keynote Speaker

Meet our 2025 Summit Keynote Speaker, Arielle V. King

We are delighted to announce our 2025 Sustain Dane Summit keynote speaker
Arielle V. King, environmental educator & host of "The Joy Report" Podcast.

Arielle King is an environmental attorney, educator, and strategist who works to
make environmentalism irresistible. She is the host of The Joy Report podcast,
which explores the people, stories, and solutions making an impact. With a
background in environmental law and a deep commitment to education, Arielle
brings a powerful blend of joy, truth, and grounded history to her work.

At the Summit, Arielle will draw from conversations with changemakers across
the country—from ocean conservationists to brands prioritizing circular
economies. She will facilitate conversation on emerging climate trends, the
challenges today, and how we can each find our climate-forward niche. Her
keynote will energize us to lead with resilience and purpose in building a more
equitable, sustainable future.

Reminder: The Live Forward Award application is open now until August 17.
Nominate a local changemaker and inclusive leader who are promoting local
sustainability and community well-being.

Register for the Summit

Recycle Better - Picnics

Recycle Better Q & A – Summer Picnics

Question: What picnic related items can I recycle?

- Paper plates: Yes, paper plates can be recycled if they are clean and dry. If there is food residue on the plate, then place them in the trash.

- Red solo cups: No, red solo cups are not recyclable. Check out aluminum cups as an alternative.

- Bug spray: Yes, bug spray cans can be recycled if empty. Make sure to use it all up before putting it in your recycling bin.

- Plastic silverware: No, plastic silverware is not recyclable.

To be most environmentally healthy, consider reusable items for picnics such as reusable plates, cups, and silverware, as well as cloth napkins.

Check out answers to common recycling questions and see local guidelines at sustaindane.org/better and on social media #recyclebetter.

The Future of Farming in Dane County

The Future of Farming in Dane County

Join us at Vitruvian Farms in McFarland on Tuesday, August 12 to learn more about our local food system and the Dane County Food Action Plan.

Food brings us together—at the table and in our community. Have you ever wondered where your food comes from? Or how local farmers are working to grow it sustainably and make it more accessible to our community? This program aims to bridge the gap between growers and consumers, strengthen local food networks, and support a thriving, inclusive regional food system.
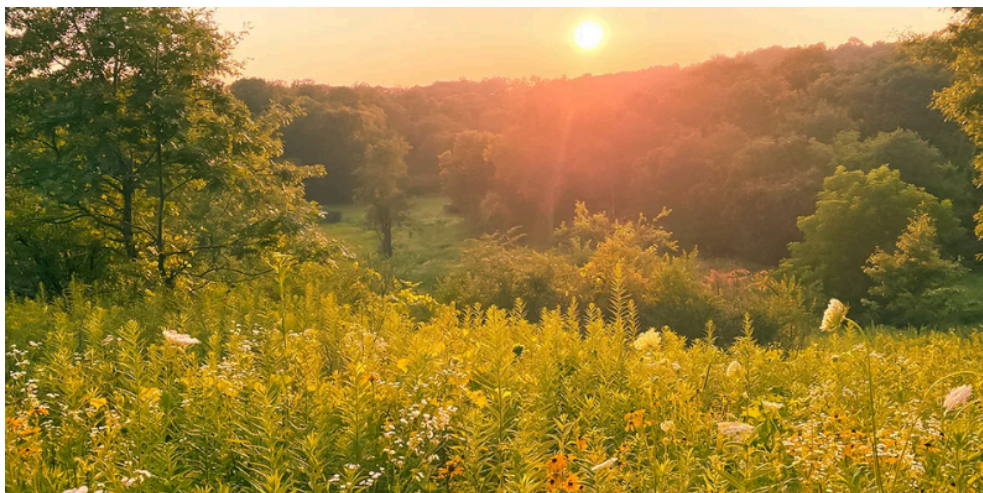
Where: Vitruvian Farms: 2727 US-51, McFarland, WI 53558

When: Tuesday, August 12, 5:30–8:00 PM

What: introduction to the Dane County Food Action Plan, panel of local farmers, Vitruvian farm tour, local food, and time to connect with fellow attendees

Register: [Register Now](#)

Register

Walking All Around Dane County

All Around Dane County – Cross Plains: Rescheduled - Thursday 8/21

Sustain Dane [Walking All Around Dane County](#) (AADC) network gathering along the Ice Age Trail in Cross Plains is rescheduled to Thursday August 21.

AADC provides a free opportunity to come together with individuals who care about the environment and community, learn from local success stories, and share ideas on sustainability. This program builds off the 2024 Sustain Dane Summit keynote presentation with Ice Age Trail Executive Director, Luke Kloberdanz. Video of his keynote available [here](#).

Where: Table Bluff Segment of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, parking lot coordinates: 43°07'18.8"N 89°40'17.8"W. We will meet at the picnic shelter atop the bluff above the parking lot off Scheele Rd., Cross Plains.

When: Thursday, August 21 from 5:30—7:00 PM

What: Networking, brief sustainability stories from local Cross Plains organizations, and a short, guided hike by Ice Age Trail. The program is also in partnership with Dane Buy Local.

SBS Recap -Tourism Trends, Tips, & Sustainability

Sustainable Breakfast Series: Tourism Trends, Tips, & Sustainability – Recap

At our July Sustainable Breakfast Series, we explored the intersection of tourism and sustainability—unpacking the global and local impact of how we travel. With Dane County seeing a record-breaking $1.55 billion in tourism spending last year and tourism representing 1 in 10 jobs worldwide, it is important to think about how we interact with tourism.

Attendees reflected on how sustainability has shown up in their own travel experiences and gained practical tips for being thoughtful, responsible travelers. Some of our favorite sustainable travel tips include:

- Visit natural areas to support their conservation.
- For transportation, consider direct flights to reduce CO2 from air travel. Look into trains when feasible or considering renting an electric car.
- Support local businesses, tour companies, and try local foods.
- Look for eco certifications for lodging.

Our travel choices can be a powerful force for positive change.

Volunteering & Social

Volunteer and Social at Olbrich Park

On Tuesday, July 22, we hosted our Sips for Sustain Dane program at the Biergarten at Olbrich Park.

The afternoon began with volunteers doing a trash collection around Olbrich Park and on the shores of Lake Monona. Volunteers removed over 50 pounds of trash from the park.

The social was a great opportunity to connect with each other and support Sustain Dane's work through donation of a portion of each sale. Attendees shared sustainability stories, soaked up the sunshine, and enjoyed being in community with other Sustain Dane Members.

Sun Prairie Sustainability Fair-Sat, 8/2 at 10 AM to 4 PM

Join us at Wetmore Park for a free, carbon-neutral, and low-waste fair! Engage with sustainable vendors, activities, and demonstrations covering topics ranging from renewable energy to zero-waste practices. Enjoy a vegan or vegetarian food truck, listen to live music, view Sun Prairie's new mural, and stop by Sustain Dane's table. For more info: City of Sun Prairie's Website.

Handmade in Bangladesh Film Screening-Sun, 8/17 at 5:30 - 7:30 PM

Enjoy a screening of the documentary film [Handmade in Bangladesh](#) at the Arts & Literature Lab at 111 S. Livingston St, produced and directed by Liz Bachhuber and Florian Wehking. The film tells the story of working people who creatively reuse trash to make a living from the resources available to them. Free and open to the public. [Registration encouraged](#). In addition, the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters are exhibiting work by artists Jill Sebastian and Liz Bachhuber at the James Watrous Gallery from August-October. Much of their artwork centers on waste, consumerism, and reuse.

In the Community

August 1: [Butterfly Action Day](#) & [Wisconsin Insect Fest](#) at Olbrich Botanical Gardens
August 2 & 9: [Free Bike Valet Parking & Tune Ups for Blooming Butterfly's](#) at Olbrich Botanical Gardens
August 3: [Family Nature Walk](#) at UW Arboretum
August 3: [Bird and Nature Outing](#) at Cherokee Marsh
August 6: [Green Fire Cafe](#) – Virtual
August 7: [Couillard Solar Foundation Solar Series: How to Cope with Climate Anxiety](#) at Madison Public Library – Central Branch
August 10: [Nature Walk](#) at Aldo Leopold and the Lakeshore Nature Preserve
August 12: [The Future of Farming](#) at Vitruvian Farms
August 13: [Conservation Park Tour](#) at Moraine Woods Conservation Park
August 17: [Farm-to-Table Soul Food Brunch](#)
August 20: [Dragonfly Walk](#) at UW Arboretum
August 21: [Walking All Around Dane County](#) at Ice Age Trail in Cross Plains
August 22 & 29: [Bat Walk](#) at Cherokee Park
August 23: [Dane County Humane Society Garden Workday](#)

Sustain Dane Forest & Tree Members and Partners.
Join the Sustain Dane Membership at the Forest, Tree, or Leaf level.

Support organizations that value sustainability:

Copyright © 2025 Sustain Dane, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.