

About Coughlin Community Natural Area

The Past: The land was used by Native Americans because of its proximity to Lake Winnebago and its natural resources like hardwood forests, oak savanna, wetlands and prairie. The prairie today was once used as farmland by European settlers.

The Present: Today the natural area has about one mile of mowed paths. Along the paths are trail signs educating the public about the area and its plants.

Winter recreation opportunities include marked snowshoeing routes and ungroomed cross-country skiing trails.



Memorial Tree Grove: The Memorial Tree Grove was dedicated in October of 1998. However, in recent years, many of the trees were planted by Boy and Girl Scouts for their respective awards. If you would like to make a donation or would like to make a memorial for someone, please stop by the county parks office located in the James P. Coughlin building.



James P. Coughlin

James P. Coughlin was born Sept. 10, 1918 and died Nov. 21, 2009. He was 91.

Coughlin was the second Winnebago County Executive, serving two terms from 1977-85. Prior to that, he served as a county supervisor, first being elected to the County Board in 1962.

He also served on the Winneconne Village Board and as village president for more than 50 years.

Friends and fellow officials remember Coughlin as a people person and able public servant. Although he lived in Winneconne throughout his life, he also worked for the northern part of the county and was responsible for the opening of a human services building in Neenah.

Coughlin was honored when the county built a "one-stop" agricultural services building near the Expo Center on County Y and named it after him. The James P. Coughlin Center houses state, federal, and county officials, hosts hundreds of meetings, and serves thousands of people every year.

He was honored again when the Winnebago County Board of Supervisors voted in March of 2000 to make the 35 acres adjacent to the Coughlin building a natural area.

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Winnebago County

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Natural Area**
625 East County Road Y
Oshkosh, WI 54901

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Points of Interest

Memorial Tree Grove: More than 800 trees have been planted since the spring of 2009.

Purple Cone Flower: A robust, drought-tolerant perennial native to the Midwestern and Southeastern United States.

Pond: A mallard nesting platform is located in the pond, which provides a home for small animals, amphibians and more.

Dogbane: This native perennial herb emits milky juice from its stems and leaves.

Snag: A dead tree that is a home and/or food source to many species.

Restored Prairie: The area used to be a mixture of grasses and invasive brush, but is now an open prairie.

Black-Eyed Susan: Possibly the most common wildflower in the United States.

Redosier Dogwood: A plant that helps control erosion and provides excellent wildlife cover.

Bluebird House: The diminishing bluebird population sparked the building of bluebird houses nationwide.

Wild (Common) Grapes: Native to Asia Minor and eaten by more than 100 species of songbirds.

Milkweed: The most common food for the Monarch butterfly larvae.

Black Walnut: This tree is used to make high quality furniture.

Wahoo: Historically used as a medical herb.

Staghorn Sumac: A tall shrub or tree with irregular, open, flat-crowned spreading branches.

Edge: The place where two habitats meet.

Queen Anne's Lace: A biennial herb that is a native of Southern Europe.

Poison Ivy: This three-leafed plant can cause severe skin inflammation from direct contact.