

**COUNTY PARK INFORMATION**

**Park Hours**

*Dawn to Dusk  
Unless Otherwise Posted*

**Gun Deer Hunting Season**

*Hunting is prohibited in all Dodge County Parks.*

Nitschke Mounds County Park is closed to the public during gun deer hunting season in late November for safety reasons.



**Nitschke Mounds Park**

W5934 County Road E  
Burnett, WI 53922

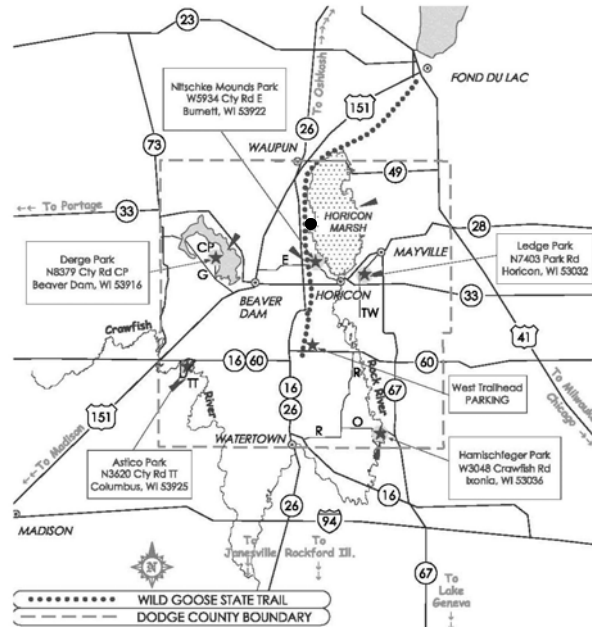
Park Office ..... (920) 386-3700  
(Office Hours: 8:00 am - 4:30 pm - Mon-Fri)

Sheriff's Department..... (920) 386-3726  
**EMERGENCY - 911**

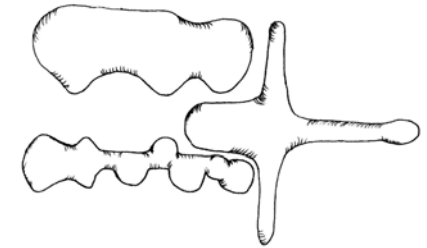
**PARK MAPS**

Nitschke Mounds Park  
W5934 County Road E

- 3 Miles - West of Horicon
- 6 Miles - East of Beaver Dam
- 4 Miles - North of Juneau



# Nitschke Mounds County Park



Nitschke Mounds Park, Burnett  
Dodge County, Wisconsin

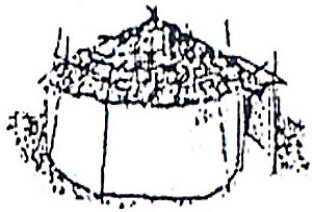
**Parks Central Office:**  
Dodge County  
Land Resources and Parks Department  
127 E. Oak Street  
Juneau, WI 53039

(920) 386-3700 x1  
Fax: (920) 386-3979  
Email: parks@co.dodge.wi.us

Visit us at...  
[www.dodgeparks.com](http://www.dodgeparks.com)

## ABOUT THE PARK

The Nitschke Mounds County Park opened in 2003. Located adjacent to the Wild Goose State Trail, the park grounds consist of 54 acres containing wooded areas, agricultural land, wetland and a pond with natural springs. The park also preserves an important pre-historic Native American archaeological site, referred to as the Nitschke Mound Group. Records of the first official investigation of the Nitschke Mound Group by archeologists dates back to 1892. Further



exploration, mapping and documentation was done in 1927 by W.C. McKern, an archeologist with the Milwaukee Public Museum. At that time the group consisted of 62 identified mounds. It

is believed that the group may have originally contained as many as 100 mounds. Forty-six of the identified mounds in the group were on what is now the park property. However, due to cultivation it is believed that about ten of those mounds have since been destroyed. The effigy mounds were believed to have been constructed between 800 AD and 1200 AD by the Late Woodland Culture, otherwise known as the Effigy Mound Builders. Most of the existing mounds at Nitschke Mounds County Park are covered in brush and downed trees. Using mostly volunteer help, clearing brush and downed trees from the mounds was started in 2003 and will continue as needed. Hiking trails past the cleared mounds and throughout the property are available. Interpretative signs along the trail help provide some understanding and education about the mounds.

### Important Note!

Since many ancient villagers are buried here, the site is considered sacred by modern Indian tribes. Please treat the area with respect, stay on the trail and do not walk on the mounds. **It is illegal to remove artifacts or otherwise disturb archaeological sites on county lands without a permit.**

## THE EFFIGY MOUND BUILDERS

The Effigy Mound Builders were located primarily in southern Wisconsin and adjacent areas of Iowa, Illinois, and Minnesota. The Effigy Mound Builders adopted the use of the bow and arrow, stone tools and also grew corn. Pottery was also an important part of their culture. A garden bed was also identified on the property near the springs. A possible pre-historic encampment or village site is believed to have been associated with the garden beds.

The Effigy Mound Building culture is distinguished most by the existence of numerous mounds. Many of these mounds were shaped to resemble birds and mammals. The Nitschke Mound group also contains linear and conical (round) shaped mounds.

The mounds were constructed for a variety of purposes. Many were constructed for burial purposes while others were built to represent religious spirits or the supernatural world. Some shapes may be linked to various clans, used as symbols, travel guides or resource markers. The truth is, no one really knows what the mounds shapes meant to those who made them.

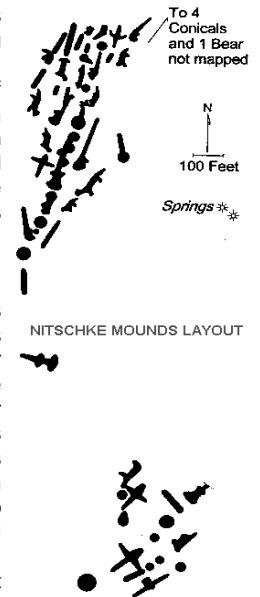


## INTERESTING FACTS

- The conical (round) mounds tend to line up along the ridge of the hill.
- The effigies tend to have their legs to the downward slope of the hill.
- "Turtle" mounds are believed to be "birds-eye" views of the water spirit, while "panthers" are believed to be the side view of the same animal.

## THE MOUND SHAPES

Many mounds groups, such as the Nitschke Mounds, contain a variety of shapes with varying sizes, two exceeding 200 feet in length. It is believed that most effigy mounds fall into three classes corresponding to the three natural realms - air, earth and water. The cosmology of many Midwest Native American tribes consider these realms in terms of the upper world (air) and lower world (earth and water). Some of the prominent shapes in this particular grouping include turtles, panthers, canines, buffalo (bear), deer and birds. Long-tailed effigies, such as turtle and panther mounds are believed to be representations of powerful (lower world) water spirit-beings. Often times they are oriented toward a spring or water source. Turtle mound #1 appears oriented toward the springs southeast of the park on the south side of HWY E. Canines, buffalo (bear), deer and other legged animal effigies are associated with the (lower world) earth. Spirit beings and birds are classified in the upper world (air). The water spirit effigies tend to be more common in this part of the state, however, mound groups usually contain effigies from all spirited realms signifying an attempt to be in balance and harmony with the natural world.



## THE BURIAL MOUNDS

Many of the Nitschke Mounds contained burials. The burials usually contained the remains of more than one individual and were usually found in flexed "in the flesh" or clean bundle of bones burial configurations. The pattern of effigy mounds burials suggest that burials were usually not made immediately after death. Rather they were done at certain appointed times with appropriate ceremonies. Corpses would be brought from other temporary resting places, such as scaffolds, for final burial. Burials are characteristically located in the head and/or heart regions of the effigies and were often found in burial pits below the mound. Often times artifacts such as bone awls, arrowheads, shells and stones were found buried in the mounds as well.