

What is a Healing Nature Walk?

If you are here at the **Oconomowoc River Conservancy Park**, you likely already have some relationship with nature and partake in activities outside. A Healing Nature Walk asks that you become more curious about this relationship and explore the health benefits that nature has to offer you. The focus is less on destination and more on moving slowly and being present.

Throughout your walk, quiet your mind, keep your senses open, and lead with your heart.

Start with.....the Labrynth. De-stress your day by the thorough concentration it takes to navigate through this feature. You'll be able to think of nothing else except how to weave your way through it. Afterward you're ready to embark on your journey on the trail.

As you approach the entrance to the trail, take several full breaths, fully inhaling and fully exhaling. Set your intention for what you might like to receive from your time on this path. Stepping down on to the trail, give your mind permission to remain quiet – nowhere else to go, nothing else to do, just for now.

Meander through the wooded trail. Look at where the light dapples through the trees. See what stones have allowed themselves to protrude from the earth. Perch yourself for a moment in the sit-spot in the crook of the tree, if you wish.

As you transition from the woods to the prairie, pause for a moment. How does the air feel different from one landscape to the other? What do your eyes notice first as you make this transition? What sounds do you hear?

The twists and turns throughout this lush prairie-scape provide opportunity to witness both the vastness and the intricacies a prairie has to offer. Look high and wide – look low and close. What animal life has come to visit you there? What colors do you see? How many different shades of green might there be?

As you cross the threshold back into a wooded space, pause again and check your senses – Be curious. What invites you inside? Choices lay up ahead along this wooded trail.

- Do you wish to stay within the woods or explore what lays beyond the grassy path? Perhaps you hear the movement from the river? Maybe your feet would like to dangle in the cool water.
- The chaotic-looking space of rocks, logs and grape vines is called the Zen Untangle, which is designed to shake loose the gripping, limited thought patterns we tend to ruminate on. As you climb and duck, you need focus on your step, freeing your mind to consider more creative possibilities.
- The Zen Garden is nestled amongst a group of trees just before heading out of this wooded path. Allow yourself a moment to move the sand about into shapes or designs. Express, in a "picture," what you are feeling.

When ready, step back onto the prairie. This will lead you to the end of the trail. As you walk, notice what may feel different from the way in.

Please share your experience. We would love to hear from you!

