

## **BIOCORE PRAIRIE BLUEBIRD TRAIL PROPOSAL**

University of Wisconsin – Madison Lakeshore Nature Preserve

Updated and Submitted for Review April 28, 2014 by Paul Noeldner

### **PROPOSAL**

This is a proposal to install, monitor, and maintain a Biocore Prairie Bluebird Trail following BRAW (Bluebird Restoration of Wisconsin) guidelines with primary support by Paul Noeldner and Will Waller with UW Student Mitch Thomas participating.

### **SUMMARY**

This is a volunteer project as part of BRAW efforts for Bluebird and other songbird populations in Wisconsin. Our primary BRAW contact is Dr. Kent Hall ([kentsue@charter.net](mailto:kentsue@charter.net) 715-344-8081), retired Biology Professor at the University of Stevens Point who has led the successful statewide BRAW Bluebird restoration effort for many years. Bluebirds suffered major population declines with loss of native forests. These losses have been reversed with the help of BRAW's scientifically monitored and managed data about successful box designs, locations, predator control, and so forth. This has benefitted Wisconsin's Eastern Bluebird population and their natural ecological importance as well as educational and natural enjoyment benefits to thousands of people. It also benefits other cavity nesting song birds that often use the Bluebird nest boxes including Tree Swallows, Black-capped Chickadees, and House Wrens. All of these species are monitored and project goals. The BRAW data clearly supports the environmental value of doing good protocols that get sustainable results in improved song bird populations.

The Biocore Prairie Bluebird Trail will consist of a number of Bluebird Boxes using BRAW recommended designs and locations, mounted on predator resistant 1 inch steel conduit poles at a height convenient for regular monitoring spaced sufficiently apart to accommodate nesting territories. Bluebirds do not mind human activity nearby.

The proposed box locations including 3 existing legacy Bluebird Boxes of unknown attribution in various states of repair, and 9 new boxes.

The existing and proposed new box locations are all in areas adjacent to the Biocore Prairie, not in the prairie itself, to avoid impact on maintenance and burning of the prairie.

All of the proposed boxes are located near walking paths to make sure they are easy to monitor and maintain regularly.

This also serves to help educate student and public visitors as part of the natural education resources and mission of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve.

## **SCIENTIFIC PROTOCOLS**

The boxes will be monitored on average once a week by a trained adult trail monitor during Bluebird nesting season March 15 to September 1 and maintained yearly or as needed.

Monitoring consists of opening boxes to examine nests, eggs, and birds to obtain and record data counts. Monitoring is done by the designated Bluebird Trail adult monitor or a backup Bird Buddies monitor using BRAW protocols.

Monitoring does not involve banding or handling of birds or collecting of nests, eggs or other materials.

BRAW guidelines are used for removal and natural discarding of House Sparrow nests and post-fledging nests no longer used.

A Word document with a statement from RARC that no permit is required is being forwarded by Holly McEntee ([mcentee@rarc.wisc.edu](mailto:mcentee@rarc.wisc.edu) 608-265-9241).

A Word document with a statement that there is no conflict with Biocore Prairie activities is being forwarded by Dr. Janet Batzli ([jcbatzli@wisc.edu](mailto:jcbatzli@wisc.edu) 608-263-1594)

## **SUPPORT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

Paul Noeldner ([paul\\_noeldner@hotmail.com](mailto:paul_noeldner@hotmail.com) 608-698-0104) is the primary support contact for the proposed Biocore Prairie Bluebird Trail. Paul is a previous Madison Audubon board member for many years and still actively involved as a Bird Mentor and Bird Buddy in volunteer education, outreach and Citizen Science initiatives. He has successfully helped initiate proposals, obtain approvals, procure resources, install, monitor and maintain a number of Madison area Bluebird Trails and working in coordination with interested volunteers and local municipalities, parks departments, and friends groups including Madison Parks, Maple Bluff, McFarland, Friends of Cherokee Marsh, Wild Warner, Friends of Olin-Turville and more.

The proposed Biocore Prairie Bluebird Trail is being coordinated with the Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. Will Waller is providing valuable knowledge, volunteer, and monitoring assistance as an individual, but the trail is not a Friends project nor is it dependent on the Friends for sustainability.

As a long time Madison Audubon Bird Mentor and BRAW member Paul Noeldner helps train and coordinate the activities of adult volunteer Madison area Bird Buddies as trail monitors. The Bird Buddies are an informal regularly communicating group of self-motivated volunteer trail monitors who are typically Madison Audubon and BRAW members and also affiliated with the local Friends group for the park or area where the trail is located. A number are professionals in biology related fields. The Bird Buddies mission is to use BRAW trail and box design recommendations, monitoring protocols, and reporting guidelines and forms to support and sustain area Bluebird Trails.

The Madison area Bird Buddies each have a Bluebird Trail that is their primary responsibility to monitor weekly on average. They back each other up for maintenance and monitoring. This

group approach with solid organizational backing and advisors helps assure a scientifically sound and reliably sustainable long term Citizen Science initiative. As an added mission and benefit, the Bluebird Trails are often used by Bird Buddies and others to engage and educate students and adults.

### **PRIMARY MONITORS**

The main Biocore Prairie Bluebird Trail Bird Buddies trail monitors assisting Paul Noeldner with the Biocore Prairie Bluebird Trail are Will Waller ([williamwaller@charter.net](mailto:williamwaller@charter.net), 608-231-6260) of the Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, and Mitch Thomas ([mrthomas5@wisc.edu](mailto:mrthomas5@wisc.edu) 262-853-7003), a UW Pre-Veterinary Student taking Ornithology classes who helps Mara McDonald do bird banding. Mitch has joined the Friends and BRAW and has reviewed their Bluebird Trail monitoring booklet. Mitch will be participating as his schedule permits to assist Paul and Will with the installations, weekly monitoring, and maintenance. If there are any questions the primary contact is Paul Noeldner.

### **CITIZEN SCIENCE AND ADVISORS**

The Bird Buddies use Bluebird Restoration of Wisconsin (BRAW.org) guidelines, protocols and data reporting. This Citizen Science data is also posted to eBird which is a major Audubon and Cornell resource for research as well as public use. This data helps improve box designs, location recommendations, and protocols. Paul Noeldner and other Bird Buddies often consult with BRAW contacts and with local Audubon, City, DNR, Four Lakes Wildlife Refuge and University of Wisconsin bird and conservation experts for guidance and advice including Mark Martin, Pat Ready, Russ Hefty, Andy Paulios, Sandy Schwab, Anna Pigeon and others.

### **MATERIALS**

Paul Noeldner donated recycled old pine attic boards, conduit poles and other materials. Mitch Thomas and Will Waller assisted in making new Bluebird Boxes that will be used for the trail.

### **PROPOSED LOCATIONS**

As requested by Will Waller and recommended by BRAW, we looked carefully at nearby habitat along the trails and are suggesting locations including 3 existing legacy boxes in various states of repair and some new boxes spaced apart at recommended distances. A location description list and Google pin map are below in this document. All are in low activity impact areas near trails for easy monitoring and good protocol metrics for generating successful fledglings as well as for environmental and public education and public bird and nature enjoyment value.

At Paul's request Mitch has put in small recycled marker wires with plastic flags that mark the suggested box locations so you can review them in situ if desired and for diggers hotline if they need to be called.

Please see the location descriptions and Google pin map below.

## **BIOCORE PRAIRIE BLUEBIRD TRAIL**

### **EXISTING AND PROPOSED BOX LOCATION DESCRIPTIONS**

This provides a verbal location description for each box, for Diggers Hotline if they are required to be called, for proposal reviewers, and for backup trail monitors. Also see the Google Pin Map below.

**Proposed bluebird box 1:** Starting at the entrance to the Eagle Heights garden by the shed, walk straight down the path (east) alongside the gardens. Follow the path for about 900 feet until you reach a patch of pines on the right. There is a green flag on the right of the path by the patch of pines marked “BB1”.

**Proposed bluebird box 2:** Continue down the path a little over 200 feet until just before it curves to the left. On the right of the path near a woodpile is a yellow flag marked “BB2.”

**Proposed bluebird box 3:** Instead of following the main path to the left, continue on a smaller path going straight for about 250 feet with the orchard on the left and the tree line on the right. On the left behind the line of pines running along the back of the orchard is a blue flag marked “BB3.”

**Proposed bluebird box 4:** Continue walking forward about a 100 feet until you reach a larger paved path. On the other side of it is the old field. In the center of that field is a small tree about 200 feet away. Near that tree is a blue flag marked “BB4.”

**Proposed bluebird box 5:** Beyond the location for the fourth box is a group of pines that stick out into the old field. In front of these pines is another small tree, about 200 feet away from the location of the fourth box. Near it is a yellow flag marked “BB5.”

**Existing bluebird box 6:** Return to the paved path running along the old field. Follow it north and continue on it as it curves to the left. After this left curve, bluebird box 6 is 150 feet forward on the left where the path splits into two.

**Existing bluebird box 7:** Next follow the path to the right (north) about 300 feet and near a patch of trees and a picnic table in the middle of the path is bluebird box 7.

**Proposed bluebird box 8:** Move around the patch of trees and scrub and follow the path going left. Follow that path about 350 feet and on the right will be a yellow flag marked “BB8” by a small tree.

**Existing bluebird box 9:** About 200 feet ahead the path will split into two: one going straight and one going to the left. About 50 feet past this split on the path going straight is bluebird box 9 on the right.

**Proposed bluebird box 10:** Now take the path that curves to the left. Approximately 350 feet ahead is a patch of large trees.

**Proposed bluebird box 11:** Follow the path as it curves around the large patch of trees and moves up the hill, with prairie on the left and the gardens on the right. At the top of the hill (about 275 feet ahead) where the path intersects another path, there is a white flag on the left marked “BB11.”

**Proposed bluebird box 12:** Follow the same path back down the hill back to the patch of trees. Follow a path going into the garden (south) and walk towards a second patch of trees about 300 feet away that surrounds a picnic area with a rock wall. Near that rock wall is a white flag marked “BB12.”

**BIOCORE PRAIRIE BLUEBIRD TRAIL**  
**EXISTING AND PROPOSED BOX LOCATION MAP**





## **BRUNER, Catherine**

---

**From:** Holly Mcentee <mcentee@rarc.wisc.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 30, 2014 10:18 AM  
**To:** paul\_noeldner; BRUNER, Catherine  
**Cc:** WELTER, JANET M  
**Subject:** Re: Biocore Prairie Bluebird Trail Proposal  
**Attachments:** Microsoft Word - exception Noeldner.doc.pdf; ATT00001.htm

Good morning Paul and Cathie. I have read the BRAW proposal to restore bluebird nesting boxes. IACUC approval and oversight is not required for the work described in the proposal. See attached memo.

Paul, if BRAW's activities change such that birds will be trapped (e.g. mist-netted), handled, samples taken (e.g. blood samples), or deliberate euthanasia, or in any other way involve direct research manipulations, IACUC oversight will be necessary. Before engaging in such activities please contact me directly for instructions on submitting an animal care and use protocol and obtaining approval. Conducting such work without prior approval is a violation of federal animal welfare regulations and campus policy.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. And, thank you for helping the birds. (smile)

Sincerely,  
Holly



Cathie Bruner, Field Manager  
Lakeshore Nature Preserve  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

30 April 2014

This memo is in regards to the Bluebird Restoration of Wisconsin (BRAW) proposal titled “Biocore Prairie Bluebird Trail,” submitted to you for review by Paul Noeldner on April 28, 2014.

I have read the proposal and determined the work described therein will not involve direct, hands-on live vertebrate animal work that requires Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) oversight. I have advised Mr. Noeldner that if the scope of the project changes to involve direct live animal work that IACUC approval will need to be obtained prior to beginning that work.

Please contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Holly McEntee  
IACUC Administrator  
608-265-9241  
mcentee@rarc.wisc.edu

cc: Dr. Janet Welter

**Research Animal Resources Center**

396 Enzyme Institute    University of Wisconsin–Madison    1710 University Avenue    Madison, Wisconsin 53726–4087  
608/262–1238    Fax: 608/265–2698    Email: [help@rarc.wisc.edu](mailto:help@rarc.wisc.edu)    <http://www.rarc.wisc.edu>



MEMO

April 29, 2014

TO: Paul Noedler and Will Waller, project leaders

FROM: Janet Batzli, Associate Director

RE: Biocore Prairie Bluebird Trail Proposal

As part of the Bluebird Restoration of Wisconsin efforts, I am thrilled to endorse the Biocore Prairie Bluebird Trail proposal. We have reviewed proposal, examined proposed bluebird box locations, and see no conflict between the proposed trail and on-going restoration efforts in the Biocore Prairie.