

Lakeshore Nature Preserve Committee
Friday May 1, 2015
10-11:30AM
Memorial Union T.I.T.U.
Approved MINUTES

Present:

Gary Brown, Kelly Ignatoski, Rhonda James, Ken Raffa, Sissel Schroeder, Phil Townsend, Alan Turnquist, Mattie Urrutia

Also Present:

Kris Ackerbauer (Physical Plant), Ann Burgess (Friends), Glenda Denniston (Friends), Kennedy Gilchrist (Friends), Rowyn Noe (Preserve), Bryn Scriver (Preserve), Aaron Williams (Campus Planning and Landscape Architecture), Laura Wyatt (Preserve); Campus Master Plan Consultants: Jon Hoffman (SmithGroupJJR), Mary Jukuri (SmithGroupJJR), Eric Schuchardt (SmithGroupJJR), Stan Szwalek (Hoerr Schaudt)

Minutes

A motion was made by Turnquist and seconded by Urrutia to approve the April 10, 2015 minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment Period

Denniston said the wildflowers in Bill's Woods are spreading tremendously. Ten years ago she planted 3 patches of spring beauty and now there are many patches.

Staff Reports

1. Director Report (Gary Brown)

We are continuing to monitor the budget. The Preserve budget remains as approved for now.

2. Program Manager Report (Laura Wyatt)

Thanks to Glenda Denniston for planting native plants that she starts as seeds in a greenhouse here on campus.

Suzy Will-Wolf will be developing a vegetation monitoring protocol for Eagle Heights Woods. Glenda Denniston and Ann Burgess will be joining Suzy to sample the vegetation. With this information we'll be able to identify what is there before invasive species removals and what is released from the seed bank after they are removed. We have student vegetation data for Eagle Heights Woods but it's not all in the same format.

The broken gates at Picnic Point will be fixed. The plan is to rebuild the pillars for a cost of \$70,000. The gates will be reinstalled in August or September.

We recruited four Vet School students to help us get the word out about dogs on leash in the preserve. Officer Jean Van Den Bogart gave a training session on how to approach people to the students and Preserve staff. The students will be out the next two weekends rewarding people who have their dogs on leash and alerting people with dogs off leash about the policy.

We are taking bids for a new pest plant contractor since our current contractor's business is disbanding. The contract is worth about \$20,000.

3. Capital Projects Report

The West Campus Storm Water Projects at lot 60 and the University Bay ditches will get some extra seeding this spring and the contractor will be weeding them.

The West Natatorium Recreation Fields design process will start in a week or two.

The Height Road project and Housing Storage Area project are in design.

The City of Madison is funding a project to trap sediment at Willow Creek. The environmental impact assessment process started 2 weeks ago.

4. Field Activities Report (Laura Wyatt)

Adam Gundlach has been busy working to prepare for prescribed burns. We plan to burn Biocore Prairie on Saturday. He has also been working with some of our researchers to help locate transects in the Preserve. Gundlach and Rowyn Noe spent some time mitigating hazard trees in West Bill's Woods in preparation for a volunteer event. Gundlach also gave a tour of Eagle Heights Woods as part of the Friends field trip offerings.

5. Volunteers and Outreach Report (Bryn Scriver)

On Earth Day we had a group of volunteers from Spectrum Brands who came to us through the Clean Lakes Alliance. We recruited experienced Friends volunteers to help us supervise the volunteers who planted native plugs at the Heritage Oak project site, cut buckthorn and mulched trails. Wyatt created a ½ sheet flyer for participants that included a map of the Preserve and info on the Preserve including how to donate.

We have a busy volunteer weekend coming up with the Friends of the Preserve garlic mustard pull at Frautschi Point, Blackhawk Church LOVE Madison event, and students from the GreenHouse residential Learning Community. Volunteers will pull garlic mustard and plant native plugs.

The Friends of the Preserve have been doing a lot of great outreach for the Preserve. They had an informational booth at the Nelson Institute Earth Day Conference and arranged for their Eagle Heights Woods slideshow to play on a loop at the UW Health Earth Week events.

Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve report (Will Waller)

No Friends report. Will Waller not present.

Subcommittee Reports

1. Information Dissemination/Education - No report
2. Planning and Implementation - No report
3. Communications and Archives - No report
4. Development - No report

ACTION ITEM: Invasive Plant Control Guidance and Strategies Handbook (Laura Wyatt)

Wyatt highlighted changes in the Invasive Plant Control Handbook based on comments from the last meeting. Changes included: the section titled “What’s the deal with invasive species” was removed; priority invasive species were listed and ranked with ranking criteria provided; a list of low priority “watch species” was added; the example of aspen in the “girdling” section was removed.

Raffa thought the changes addressed the concerns brought up in the last meeting, and thought the document was consistent with NR40 the Invasive Species Identification, Classification and Control Rule.

Wyatt reminded the Committee that the handbook is meant to be a living/changing document.

A motion to approve the Invasive Plant Control Handbook was moved by Raffa and seconded by Townsend. The motion passed unanimously.

Campus Master Plan Discussion Session

The last time the Campus Master Plan was updated was 2005. The current plan will focus on four areas: transportation and parking, utilities, storm water, and open space and landscape. The Master Plan focuses on just the main campus—not the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, the Arboretum or Research Park. The planners are in month 3 of an 18 month Master Plan process. They will present a draft Master Plan in spring 2016 and will be looking for review and input throughout the process.

The Master Plan team is interested in hearing the Preserve Committee ideas for three areas that interface with the Preserve—the Willow Creek corridor, Observatory Hill, and Lot 34.

General comments about the Preserve by those present:

Townsend: The Preserve is a place to teach, to collect data, and do basic research on forests in an urban environment. It is so unique to have a nature preserve and forest right in the city and on campus. Not a believer that there is a pristine state. Natural areas need active management.

Turnquist: As a Housing employee he uses the Preserve with 1st and 2nd year students as a space to understand the history of humans on the landscape. It’s a useful place for people to go to escape to learn and do research. This year a Housing seminar focused on phenology in the Preserve.

Wyatt: Thinking about current and future regulations on storm water, etc... There are economic benefits to having a natural area on campus (e.g. carbon sequestration). The Preserve is a place for mental and physical wellness.

Urrutia: Uses the Preserve as a tool to teach soil science. Without bussing out of town she can bring students every semester to show them a natural soil profile.

Raffa: The Preserve is an educational lab where students can connect to the active land management world. He did gypsy moth studies in the Preserve. He also uses the Preserve as a recruiting tool for graduate students and faculty. Loves the wellness component of the Preserve—likes to take walking meetings on the Lakeshore Path.

Schroeder: Her area of research specialty is in Eastern North America native people and she uses the Preserve to show off archeological sites (e.g. the mounds) and to teach about the long history of human occupation going back 12000 years.

Burgess: As past Director of the Biocore Program found the Preserve to be an amazing teaching tool. They used to model systems in the lab but it didn't engage students in the same way. In the real world there are no clear cut solutions.

Gilchrist: The Preserve shelters a breeding pair of Sandhill cranes which give the Preserve a sense of wildness. The Eagle Heights Community Gardens located in the Preserve is a fantastic culturally rich place. Visiting faculty love the Preserve.

Comments on conceptual map presented to group:

Townsend and Raffa: The proposed Preserve outreach center is a fantastic idea; good location with road pushed towards the marsh.

Raffa: The Lakeshore Path is the connective tissue between the campus and the lake. He believes the visual access to the lake has declined over the years due to the built environment including structures like the roundabout on Walnut Drive and the placement of the Porter Boat House.

Gilchrist and Burgess: Pointed out the improved views of the lake from the Lakeshore Path and on Picnic Point.

Question from Planners: Is there a difference in function or role (of the Lakeshore Path or of the Preserve?) going east from Picnic Point versus going west?

Raffa: See more families and strollers on the paved portion east of Picnic Point, especially on weekends. See more trail runners and people hiking longer distances going west.

Question from Planners: Do you consider the Lakeshore Path as a path with nature on the side or is it a nature preserve with an artery going through it?

Raffa: The main use of the Lakeshore Path is as an artery for people and bikes.

Townsend: But the Lakeshore Path also has the lake and nature.

Discussion of lighting path...

Townsend: In late spring and early summer he sees a lot of questionable behavior along the shoreline on the Lakeshore Path. He thinks if the path were lighted the issues of drinking and smoking weed and swimming will increase.

Burgess: UW Police have been opposed to lighting path because it gives people the impression that it is safe to be there after dark when it may not be. A 'no lights' strategy makes it seem unsafe so students will stay away.

Schroeder: There is a push to get more summer enrollments. If so we will have more people who are not as familiar with campus. Safer to keep them off the path at night.

Denniston: Has wildlife concerns with a lighted path. Wants to keep it wild for fox and coyotes. The path has gotten wider over the years.

Discussion of making Willow Creek a North-South pedestrian corridor...

Raffa: Encouraging more pedestrian traffic along the Willow Creek corridor is a good idea. Only remove tree snags along and in the creek if absolutely necessary; turtles use them.

Turnquist: Expand greenspace along Willow Creek.

Townsend: Putting meanders in the creek would cost a lot of money. Adding trees is a low cost alternative. Trees will cut the wind in winter.

Discussion of removing Lot 34 and making into a greenspace...

Ignatoski: Would like to see a mix of both active and passive spaces.

Brown: There are nice shade trees on west end of Observatory hill. Do we stop mowing that area?

Townsend: Would be ok to stop mowing some of that area (reduces carbon footprint, increases nutrient retention on the slope), but it's also a good place to sit. Suggests having mowed and un-mowed areas.

-End Master Plan Discussion-

This is Sissell Schroeder's last meeting as Chair. She has severed the maximum number of three terms. Ken Raffa's term is also ending and he is rotating off the Committee. Therefore we will be looking for 2 new faculty members.

Laura presented Sissel with a temporary plaque thanking her for her service to the Preserve. The real plaque will be an engraved piece of the President's Oak which was taken down for safety reasons this winter.

Phil Townsend has agreed to chair the Committee through the end of his second term which ends July 2016.

A motion to adjourn was moved by Townsend and seconded by Turnquist.

Adjournment

Submitted by Bryn Scriver