



**University of Wisconsin-Madison
Lakeshore Nature Preserve Committee
Friday December 18, 2020
8:00-9:30am
Remote WebEx meeting
APPROVED Minutes**

Present

Rob Beattie, Gary Brown, Andrew Busker, Sara Hotchkiss, Rhonda James, Karen Oberhauser, Lexi Paus, Anna Pidgeon, Stephen Sentoff, Joe Webb

Also Present

Tom Bryan (Friends), Ann Burgess (Friends), Adam Gundlach (Preserve), Connor Kotte (Preserve), Bryn Sriver (Preserve), Dar Ward (UW Transportation), Laura Wyatt (Preserve)

Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from November 6, 2020 was made by Webb and Pidgeon and seconded by Beattie. The motion was approved unanimously.

Public Comment

Ann Burgess expressed her approval for the work that was being done by Preserve staff and the Preserve Committee.

Introduction to Visitor Counter in the Preserve (Laura Wyatt, Dar Ward—Commuter Solutions Manager, UW Transportation Services, and Connor Kotte—Preserve Natural Areas Technician)

Question: How many people visited the Preserve in September 2020?

Answer: 18,527!

After seeing a trail counter at the UW-Stevens Point Schmeckle Reserve Preserve, staff have had an interest in getting a counter for the Preserve. When we discovered that UW Transportation Services was using visitor counters on campus, we asked to be part of their program. The Preserve purchased an Eco-Counter (<https://www.eco-compteur.com/en/home/>) for \$5,000 with a reoccurring annual fee of \$500 for data management paid for with gift funds. We have an agreement with UW Transportation Services to maintain the device and distribute data on a monthly basis to use.

A counter was installed in the Preserve in late August near the entrance on the main Picnic Point path. There are some challenges to counting visitors in the Preserve. While Picnic Point is perhaps the primary entrance, there are at least 10 locations where people can enter the Preserve. The plan is to have at least 1 full year of data from Picnic Point then we can move the counter to other Preserve locations.

According to Dar Ward the device was designed for relatively narrow pathways, not roads. An infrared beam shines over the path. A break of the beam equals 1 count. One deer, car, bike, or pedestrian all count as 1 break of the beam. The beam cannot differentiate between them. However, it is able to determine the direction of travel. There is an option to attach traffic tubes, but they are not intended for use in natural areas. They are best attached to concrete or asphalt. The tubes would allow for determining the difference between rolling traffic (i.e. bikes) and non-rolling traffic.

Data is uploaded in real time. If there are connectivity issues a person can go out to the counter and manually upload the data with an Android phone. Data is stored in the cloud and can be downloaded annually, monthly, daily, or as often as every 15 minutes.

Connor Kotte has developed a process to add weather data (from weather.com) to the counter numbers. There are some interesting correlations between visitation and weather.

Wyatt said knowing how many people are visiting is important for management of a facility to inform programming and event planning, land management, infrastructure issues (i.e. toilets), and public safety issues with UWPD.

Staff Reports

1) Administration (Gary Brown)
See Preserve Staff Reports – December 18, 2020

2) Program and Operations (Laura Wyatt)
See Preserve Staff Reports – December 18, 2020

Wyatt had a shout out for Tom Bryan who is helping to coordinate the transition of the CALS research site to the Agroecology Program. According to Beattie and Bryan a new "organic agricultural production" certificate is being planned and approved in CALS, and this area is planned to host a few of the new organic agriculture certificate student projects. Here's a video trailer for the new organic course: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kC06UAX0Evo>.

3) Capital Projects (Rhonda James)
See Preserve Staff Reports – December 18, 2020

4) Field Activities (Adam Gundlach)
See Preserve Staff Reports – December 18, 2020

5) Volunteers and Outreach (Bryn Sriver)
See Preserve Staff Reports – December 18, 2020

Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve report (Stephen Sentoff)
See Friends Preserve Staff Reports – December 18, 2020

The Friends board has approved a contribution of \$30,000 to support the Master Plan update process in the 2021 budget. However, Sentoff said the approval was not unanimous (for the first time during his tenure). Some Friends Board members want funding to go towards restoration and "making things happen in the Preserve." He added that the Master Plan will enable this.

Sentoff said the Friends want to stay involved in the Master Planning process. He believes Friends members as well as the Preserve Committee have expertise to contribute. Is there the possibility of a subcommittee of the Preserve Committee to have input on the Master Plan? If so, Sentoff can find a Friends member to contribute.

Review of 2020 Draft Work Plan and Budget (Gary Brown and Laura Wyatt)

Preserve staff discussed revised and new items which are highlighted in the *2021 Workplan-Draft*.

Starting this year, the Preserve operating budget will be aligned to the UW fiscal year of July 1-June 30 instead of March 1-February 28. To transition into the new accounting year (FY22), we have a carryover budget from March 21 to June 21 as well as a proposed FY22 budget. The timeline for the work plan will not change. See the *2021 Operating Budget-Draft* and *2021 Capital Budget-Draft*.

Brown reminded the Committee that these are draft documents that will be presented at the 2nd Stakeholder Meeting January 26 at 5:00pm.

Brown was asked where budget changes are likely to happen if additional budget cuts are required. Brown replied gifts funds might have to cover 101 budget items. He hopes to know more by the January Stakeholder Meeting or the February Preserve Committee Meeting. Wyatt said she would keep an eye on the Physical Plant contributed services which includes maintenance activities such as grass mowing, hazard tree removals, and more. This could be an opportunity to change maintenance procedures (i.e. reduced mowing).

Adjournment

Submitted by Bryn Scriver, Preserve Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator