Moving the Preserve Forward
Laura Wyatt, Interim Director

On numerous levels, 2023 was a transformational year for the Lakeshore Nature Preserve with a new administrative alignment, an updated Master Plan, and the opportunity for an Outreach Center. There is much to celebrate, but this is just the very beginning! Significant engagement, decision-making, and support will be needed to continue our forward movement to make the Preserve the best it can be.

Following the retirement of former Preserve Director Gary Brown in 2022, the Preserve transitioned from Campus Planning and Landscape Architecture to the Office of Sustainability, both within Facilities, Planning & Management (FP&M). Chief Sustainability Officer Missy Nergard, PhD now provides administrative oversight for the Preserve. Additionally, for the first time, the Preserve has a full-time Director. While we’re in the process of filling this position, I have been serving as Interim Director. We anticipate the new Director to be on board in late summer 2024, as I look forward to retirement.

In July 2021, we embarked on a comprehensive process to update our Master Plan. This involved in-depth conversations with numerous groups, both in person and online, in over 40 meetings. The result is a robust document spanning over 80 pages, which will serve as our guide for the next 10 to 25 years as we restore, develop, and manage the land. We’re currently in the final stages of review and approval by the Preserve Committee and FP&M administration.

An Advanced Outreach Center Plan was completed by The Kubala Washatko Architects thanks to a generous million-dollar gift from W. Jerome Frautschi. University administration and Mr. Frautschi are currently reviewing initial plans. The proposed site for the 10,000-square foot Outreach Center is southwest of the main Picnic Point entrance, outside the historic stone wall, on land currently occupied by the existing parking lot, roadway, and pedestrian/bike path. The project avoids known archaeological sites and will showcase sustainable design and building principles. If approved, the following steps are developing construction plans, final reviews, and approval.

The Preserve alignment with the Office of Sustainability supports the reality that the Preserve serves as an integral part of UW academics. In partnership with the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, two post-doc projects have been awarded for Preserve research that will support campus sustainability and future natural area restoration in the Preserve through surveying and monitoring.

The first project will design and implement an academic study of UW-managed lands to document natural capital assets, quantify ecosystem benefits, and estimate emission reductions toward meeting or exceeding net-zero carbon goals by 2048. We are working with Dr. Phil Townsend from the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology, who has expertise in forest remote sensing and spatial analysis.

The second project will develop a methodology and assess areas of importance for biodiversity, including the main campus and some outlying university lands, at least every other year. We are working with Dr. Ellen Damschen from the Department of Integrative Biology.

In addition to plenty of visioning and planning for the future, our small team of three full-time Preserve staff, four student Natural Area Assistant interns, and hundreds of volunteers, the Preserve has facilitated and hosted a growing number of requests and uses. Kudos to Adam Gundlach, Field Projects Coordinator, and Bryn Scriver, Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator, for serving as such wonderful stewards of the land. Please read on for highlights from 2023.

Thank you to Rhonda James, FP&M Landscape Architect, who served as project manager for both of these projects. She has been a dedicated advocate for reaching out and ensuring as many folks as possible had opportunities for comment.
Outdoor learning is our Point!

Student Engagement Grants Support Learning

One way the Preserve supports learning is to award small grants, of up to $1,000, annually to undergraduates or graduate students, faculty, or staff working with undergraduates to utilize the Preserve for teaching, research or outreach. In 2023, the Lakeshore Nature Preserve Committee awarded five Student Engagement Grants. Grants are made possible through the Preserve’s Academic Endowment Fund at the UW Foundation, established by former faculty members Robert M. Goodman and Henry Hart.

2023 Awards:

Bird watching educational series: Expanding Bird Observation and Accessibility through Scope Spotting
Audubon Society, UW-Madison (ASUM)
Advisor: Dr. Anna Pidgeon, Dept. of Forest and Wildlife Ecology

Community Science Series: Insect Education, Engagement, and Contribution to Science
Celeste Huff, MS student in Agroecology and Entomology and Insect Ambassadors Co-coordinator
Advisor: Dr. Shawn Steffan, Dept. of Entomology

Flowering Phenology in the Lakeshore Nature Preserve
Ronan Montgomery-Taylor, Botany, Honors Biology Cert.
Advisor: Seth McGee, Biology Core Curriculum

Assessing the accessibility of Lakeshore Nature Preserve for individuals with mobility issues using GPS monitoring and GIS
Brianna Stevens, The Environmental Design Lab, Dept. of Planning and Landscape Architecture (DPLA)
Advisors: Edward Boswell, Samuel Dennis Jr and Emma Castiblanco, DPLA

Nurturing in Nature: A Playing, Growing, Reflecting Experience for BIPOC students
Prisma Ruacho, Asst. Director, Operations and Outreach Multicultural Student Center

Nurturing in Nature Series
Prisma Ruacho, Multicultural Student Center Assistant Director

Rarely do communities of color see themselves in outdoor spaces, possess the skills and confidence to engage outdoors, or feel safe in predominantly white spaces. As someone fitting this description, I created the Nurturing in Nature series to instill confidence and understanding of the benefits of the outdoors for students of color at UW-Madison. Specifically, the project aimed to offer Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) students affiliated with the Multicultural Student Center (MSC) the opportunity to learn about nature's benefits, share cultural practices, gain foundational skills, and explore the Lakeshore Nature Preserve.

The 5-part series took place during the Fall 2023 semester. We partnered with Color in the Outdoors to teach wilderness safety and engaged with members of Wunk Sheek to discuss food sovereignty and harvest crops. Students learned how to build a fire and set up a tent. The Lakeshore Nature Preserve Student Engagement Grant was instrumental in providing supplies and snacks for our adventures, and enabled the MSC to explore this programming and draw lessons for future engagement with the Preserve.

Student Grant Project for the Birds
Trenton Bauer, Audubon Society at UW-Madison President

In spring 2023, after researching the threats posed to tree swallows by climate change, urban sprawl, and non-native competitors like house sparrows, students in the Audubon Society at UW-Madison (ASUM) installed five tree swallow nest boxes in the Picnic Point Marsh. Within a month of installation, ASUM began receiving reports of tree swallow habitation in four out of the five boxes.

ASUM secured the supplies for nest box construction and installation through a 2022 Student Engagement Grant. The project has relied on at least a dozen ASUM members to research and construct the boxes, attach predator guards, deploy the boxes in the marsh, and monitor and record bird sightings from its membership and other Preserve birders.
Teaching and research permits: 73
Issued to 37 UW departments & programs, 3 government agencies, and 6 community organizations.

Preserve Provides Important Training
The Preserve is dedicated to providing students and recent graduates in conservation-related fields with paid learning opportunities. While working to restore plant communities and maintain the 300-acre nature preserve, students develop plant identification skills, learn vegetation management techniques, and gain experience using equipment like brush saws, utility vehicles, and herbicide applicators. They also hone their communication skills as they work as a team and interact with Preserve visitors.

In 2023, the Preserve employed four full-time summer student Natural Area Assistants (two stayed on part-time during the academic year) and a 5-person Prairie Partners intern crew who worked 1 day a week for 12 weeks over the summer. Both crews endured a summer with high temps and poor air quality due to wildfire smoke. The Natural Area Assistant positions were funded by donations to the Preserve Steward Fund, the Kelly Family Foundation, and the E. David Cronon Stewardship Fellows Fund of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. The Prairie Partners were funded by a gift from the Friends of the Preserve.

Summer Insect Community Science Series
Celeste Huff and Eliza Pessereau, Insect Ambassadors

In summer 2023, Celeste Huff and Eliza Pessereau, Insect Ambassadors coordinators and second year master's students in the Agroecology and Entomology programs, were awarded a Student Engagement Grant to develop an Insect Community Science Series to engage UW-Madison students and the Madison community in the scientific process while learning about insects and the natural world. Insect Ambassadors is a graduate-student-led outreach group from the UW-Madison Department of Entomology dedicated to sharing insect science with the Madison community.

The 2023 Insect Community Science Series showcased seven different insect-related community science projects, including the Wisconsin Butterfly Monitoring Program, the Bumble Bee Brigade, and the Dragonfly Monitoring Program. Each event included a talk from an expert on the featured organism and training on how to collect data for the given project. Exactly 100 people registered for one or more events. Results from a follow-up survey on the series found more than half of the participants had never participated in community science before, and almost 90% said that they would participate again.

2023 Summary of Birding Activity
David S. Liebl, Faculty Emeritus, UW-Madison

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Lakeshore Nature Preserve comprises woodland, old-field, wetland and aquatic habitats, and is a popular destination for birders. Many of these use the Cornell Lab of Ornithology eBird data tool to record both species and numbers observed during their visits. These eBird “checklists” are sorted by general observation location (hotspot) and made available online. During 2023, 339 birders submitted 2,397 birding checklists for eBird hotspots in the Preserve, comprising 211 avian species. Learn more and view a list of avian species observed in the Preserve during 2023.
2023 volunteers by the numbers...

<table>
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<th>530 volunteers</th>
<th>2,176 service hours</th>
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<td>72% UW students, faculty, staff</td>
<td>54 campus &amp; community groups</td>
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Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve

The [Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve](lakeshorepreserve.wisc.edu) is a non-profit, volunteer-run, membership organization that has supported the Lakeshore Nature Preserve since 2001. In 2023, Friends volunteers organized 17 field trips and 3 events with 560 participants. In addition, Friends President Will Vuyk worked with Preserve staff to add ten new stops to the Preserve Audio Trail featuring recordings of poetry performed by the authors at the Friends annual “It’s in Our Nature” poetry open mic events.

Friends volunteers also coordinate citizen science projects—a Bluebird Trail, a Purple Martin house, and Lake Mendota water quality monitoring (with the Clean Lakes Alliance). In 2023 they helped kick off the Friends of Amphibians initiative led by Dr. Jessica Hua in the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology.

The Friends contribute financially to the Preserve. In 2023 they funded the Prairie Partners internship program ($7,177), gave a matching gift for the Day of the Badger ($4,000), and purchased plants for a planting event in Frautschi Point woods ($1,200).

Volunteer Support

Bryn Scriver, Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator

We are fortunate that so many people, especially UW-Madison students, feel drawn to support the Lakeshore Nature Preserve with their time, skills, and hard work. In 2023, 530 volunteers, including individuals and members of 54 campus and community groups, provided 2,176 service hours to support the Preserve. Volunteers fill the gap between available labor and land management needs. Volunteers also bring fresh energy, curiosity, and new perspectives to the work of caring for the Preserve!

In 2023, volunteers:
- Cut 9 acres of invasive woody plants
- Planted 640 native plant plugs
- Collected native plant seeds and sowed ½ acre
- Maintained 4 entrance/rain gardens
- Collected litter from roadways and parking lots
- Searched for and pulled garlic mustard and other invasive plants across 150 acres

If you want to experience the Preserve through volunteering, visit our [events calendar](lakeshorepreserve.wisc.edu) for volunteer event dates.
Scout Rebuilds Picnic Point Firewood Racks
Landon Koch of Boy Scout Troop 628 rebuilt three firewood racks on Picnic Point for his Eagle Scout project. He raised the funds, worked with UW staff on the design, and recruited scouts, family, and friends to help him build and install the new racks which feature a roof to keep wood drier.

Landon poses with one of the new firewood racks.

Volunteer Sews Bags for Future Sowing
Preserve supporter Monica Sentoff put her sewing skills to work creating 25 bags for collecting native seeds in the Preserve. The bags, made of bright yellow ripstop nylon fabric, can be slung crosswise over the body, making seed collecting easier and even more fun!

Two School of Education volunteers model the new seed collecting bags.
2023 Donors

**Gifts to Stewardship Fund:**
- Fernando & Carla Alvarado
- Rochelle Anderson
- Barrie Anderson
- Colleen Anderson
- Dan Anderson & Joan Nugent
- Jerry Aul & Melissa Ernest Aul
- Jean Bahr
- Amy Banta
- Carol & Paul Barford
- Amy Barger
- Lauren Bayer
- Tracy Benton & William Bodden
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- Michele Bilodeau-Lanne & Patrick Lanne
- Christine Blaumueller & David Venzke
- Boeing Company
- David Boutwell
- Terrace Bradshaw
- Mei Li Brown
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- Shirley & Jerome Scrivner
- Monica Sentoff
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- Henry Shaw
- Deborah Shields & Robert Feldman
- Ajay Singh
- Ralph Smith
- Edward Snyder
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- Heidi & Marc Stolt
- Lea & Rick Sund
- Millard & Barbara Susman
- Marcia & Anthony Temol
- Kyle Webert
- Craig Williams
- Laura & Dan Wyatt
- Amy Zabel

**Gifts to Endowment Fund:**
- Paul Evans & Elizabeth Truslow-Evans
- Ann Heaslett
- Evelyn Howell
- Gretchen Manthei
- Lea & Rick Sund
- Patricia Tuckwell & William Mueli
- Paul & Coe Williams
- Levi & Janet Wood
- West Side Garden Club

**Gifts to the 1918 Marsh Healing Path Fund:**
- Blair Mathews & Karen Johnson Mathews

**Gifts to Friends Eagle Heights Woods project:**
- Andrew Crummy
- Joan & George Hall
- John Parker
- Anne Tigan

**Stephen H. Sentoff Fund - supporting student internships:**
- Monica Sentoff

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Private gifts are vital to the Preserve's ongoing success.
To become a donor, visit supportuw.org/giveto/lakeshore/

lakeshorepreserve.wisc.edu
2023 Land Management Report

Adam Gundlach, Field Projects Coordinator

Herbaceous invasive plant removal: 150 acres
Staff, volunteers, and contractors pulled, mowed, cut, and treated invasive herbaceous plants like garlic mustard, dame's rocket, and hedge parsley across 150 acres. A long history of volunteer effort aided by drought conditions reduced garlic mustard populations across the Preserve in 2023.

Brush removal and resprout control: 34 acres
Preserve staff and interns removed invasive woody brush across approximately 25 acres, and volunteers removed an additional 9 acres. In 2023 removal efforts targeted common buckthorn and bush honeysuckle in portions of Bill's Woods and Frautschi Point Woods.

Native seed collected: 59 species
Seed quantities per species varied from a few seed pods to large bags. The collected seed is supplemented with seed purchased from native plant nurseries and fed back into recovery efforts on the land in various management areas.

Native seed sown: 15.5 acres/ Native plugs planted: 640
Seed is sown across the Preserve to hold the soil in shady woodlands recently cleared of invasive brush and to increase biodiversity in established plantings. Prescribed fire conducted prior to seeding is one of the best site preparations. We saw some good results from the previous years seeding despite droughty conditions. Native plant plugs are planted by volunteers when we have special projects. The Friends of the Preserve donated funds for a planting event in Frautschi Point Woods.

Prescribed fires conducted: 15.5 acres
The Preserve continued to support course objectives for LA 581 (Prescribed Fire: Ecology and Implementation). Preserve staff assisted with live fire exercises at the UW Arboretum, and utilized the newly trained students to burn Preserve lands. Students need to participate in at least 3 prescribed burns to fulfill course requirements. Preserve interns also received prescribed fire instruction as part of their on-the-job training and assisted staff with burns.

Hazard tree removal:
The UW tree contractor removed hazard trees in Muir Woods and along the Temin Lakeshore Path and the main Picnic Point path. The UW Grounds arborist crew addressed trees adjacent to the Picnic Point burial mounds group. When possible this work is conducted when there is frozen ground to provide protection for sites where machinery needs to operate off-trail. Most of the dead and dying trees are ash species affected by the emerald ash borer.

Stewardship of campus lands

Student volunteers from the Aspiring Physician Assistant Association cut and pile invasive honeysuckle in Frautschi Point Woods.

Adam Gundlach provides instruction to Preserve intern Soleil during a prescribed burn along the Frautschi Point shoreline.

Left: Prairie Partner intern Krister mows a stand of Canada goldenrod to promote other species.

Right: UW Grounds staff remove hazard trees adjacent to the Picnic Point burial mounds group.
Lakeshore Nature Preserve Committee

Established by the UW provost in 2000, the Lakeshore Nature Preserve Committee is charged to ensure the integrity of these cherished campus resources through the provision of necessary and appropriate oversight, policies, guidelines, stewardship and management. We thank the committee members for their service to the Preserve.

2023-24 Preserve Committee

**Voting members**
- Robert Beattie, academic staff/Chair
- David Drake, faculty
- Brayden Fry, student
- Claudia Guzmán, academic staff
- Cole Koffron, student
- Anna Pidgeon, faculty
- Elmo Rawling, faculty
- Evie Sellers, student
- Kyle Webert, academic staff

**Non-voting ex-officio or consultants**
- Kelly Ignatoski, ex officio, Director, University Apartments
- Rhonda James, consultant, Senior Landscape Architect, Campus Planning
- Missy Nergard, ex officio, Director, Office of Sustainability
- Josh Goldman, ex officio, Interim Director, UW Arboretum
- Will Vuyk, ex officio, President, Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve
- Laura Wyatt, ex officio, Interim Director, Lakeshore Nature Preserve

2023 Lakeshore Nature Preserve Staff

- Laura Wyatt, Interim Director, laura.wyatt@wisc.edu
- Bryn Scriver, Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator, bryn.scriver@wisc.edu
- Adam Gundlach, Field Projects Coordinator, adam.gundlach@wisc.edu

Student Natural Area Assistants:
- Soleil Bieniek
- César García
- Parker Gimbel
- Ana Michaelson

The Office of Sustainability, under the direction of Missy Nergard, PhD, serves as the administrative home for the Lakeshore Nature Preserve.

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2023 Visitor use by the numbers...

**Visitor trips recorded to Picnic Point:**
- 158,800

**Fire circle reservations:**
- 1,840
  (not including use of fire circles without a reservation)

**Minimum estimated number of fire circle guests:**
- 26,206

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