Spring Storm Causes Damage on Picnic Point
By Adam Gundlach, Field Projects Coordinator

As spring transitioned to summer, the air turned thick, pregnant with energy. Storms began to kick up in late May and the storms of May 21, which spawned reports of tornadoes across southern Wisconsin, resulted in significant treefall and tip-ups across the Preserve, especially on Picnic Point. Preserve staff and the UW Grounds arborist crew spent many hours clearing downed trees from the paths. Then a bucket truck was brought in to remove numerous overhead hazards of cracked, leaning trees and limbs hung up over the path. During this work barricades were put in place, detouring visitors to the beach trail along the north shoreline of Picnic Point. Thank you to those who heeded the detour during the closure.

Almost immediately after the main Picnic Point path was reopened, abundant rainfall and rising lake levels flooded a low section west of fire circle 1, impeding travel again. Additional clean-up work along the central path (north of the mounds group and south of the Picnic Point marsh) has kept that segment closed to pedestrian traffic, effectively leaving the beach trail on the north shore as the primary access out to the tip of Picnic Point for those not wanting to get their feet wet. Fire circle 1 also remains closed.

Abundant tree debris remains along the edges of the Picnic Point paths, to be removed from the site later. The job of managing an urban natural area has no endpoint. It is a constant give-and-give (not give-and-take); Mother Nature gives us what she needs to maintain her balance, whether damaging storms or sweltering summer wildfire haze, and we give what we can to assist in preserving a piece of that balance.
New Preserve Director Coming Soon  
By Laura Wyatt, Preserve Interim Director

After more than six months, the search for a full-time director of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve is nearing completion. Facilities Planning & Management initiated a national search in early 2024, with position announcements placed with leading environmental organizations across the US. We received fifty applications. A Search and Screen Committee of university faculty and staff selected 17 individuals for virtual interviews, then narrowed the selection to 3 candidates who were invited to campus (on separate days) for in-person interviews.

Each candidate started their day with a guided tour of the Preserve by Adam Gundlach and Bryn Scriver and a group conversation with the Preserve staff. Then Chief Sustainability Officer Missy Nergard hosted the candidates for a relaxing lunch with Preserve staff and Preserve Committee members. The candidates met privately in the afternoon with Missy Nergard, followed by Associate Vice Chancellor Cindy Torstveit. The day was capped off with a presentation by the candidates to representatives of stakeholder groups, including the Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, faculty and staff who utilize the Preserve, and the Physical Plant staff that serve it.

Hiring can sometimes be complicated. However, I feel this has been a complete and thorough process, and I look forward to announcing a new member of the Preserve team in the next few weeks.

As many of you know, I am at the end of a very rewarding, nearly 50-year career in land management. My journey has taken me to Morton Arboretum, Chicago Botanic Garden, University of Illinois Extension, the Klehm Arboretum and Botanic Garden in Rockford, IL (the pinnacle of my career, where I served as the founding director), WDNR Urban Forestry, and finally the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. It has been a great journey supported by my family, especially my parents, who supported my education and encouraged me to reach and work hard to achieve my dreams. My final day at the UW is October 4, 2024.

2024 Student Engagement Grants Awarded  
By Bryn Scriver, Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator

This spring the Lakeshore Nature Preserve Committee awarded Student Engagement Grants of up to $1,000 each to six projects. These small grants are made possible by the Academic Endowment Fund of the Preserve, established by former UW faculty member Robert M. Goodman and the late Professor Henry Hart to facilitate the use of the Preserve as a resource for education among UW-Madison undergraduates. Any student, faculty, or staff member may apply. Requests for proposals are due each March 1.

2024 AWARDS:

Exploring Nature’s Classroom: Adventure Learning in the Lakeshore Nature Preserve
Cindy Kuhrasch, Distinguished Teaching Faculty, Kinesiology

Digging Deep: Exploring Soil Health in Eagle Heights Community Garden
Anna Stevenson, PhD student and Research Assistant, Soil Science; Alfred Hartemink, Professor and Chair, Soil Science

Nurturing in Nature: Deepening Roots and Reaching Heights
Prisma Ruacho, Asst. Director Multicultural Student Center

Lakeshore Environmental Assessment Fellowship and Collaborative Landscape Indexing Practicum (LEAFCLIP)
Philip Townsend Lab, Forest & Wildlife Ecology

The Interactive Effects of Invasive Species and White-tailed Deer on Forest Understory Diversity and Tree Regeneration
Disturbance Ecology Lab I students; George Meindl, Assoc. Teaching Professor, Forest & Wildlife Ecology

Keep our Shoreline Clean: Earth Day Trash Dash and Consistent Conservancy
Molly O'Connor, Outing Club President; Wesley Blashka, Outing Club Treasurer; Grace Parker, Outing Club Ambassador Liaison; Pete Buscaino, Hoofer Club Advisor

Hoofers student members put their new lake cleanup equipment to use for Earth Day 2024.
This spring, we welcomed four new student Natural Area Assistants to the Lakeshore Nature Preserve who received a crash course in equipment operation, plant identification, and ecological restoration techniques to stay ahead of the Preserve’s restoration and maintenance needs. Their on-the-job learning will continue through the summer as they provide the care needed to maintain the 300-acre Preserve.

Ryan Druhot is a rising senior from New Jersey studying Conservation Biology who wanted field experience to round out his in-class learning. Ryan praised Adam Gundlach, “Whenever he shows us something new, he explains how it impacts the work we’re doing and the Preserve as a whole. Ryan has enjoyed the Preserve since his freshman year when he and his friends found a favorite spot to relax along the water on the Temin Lakeshore Path.

Vanghaum ‘Vang’ Lee is a Forest and Wildlife Ecology senior from Milwaukee. Vang said he applied for the position not only to gain hands-on experience but because nature has been integral to his life since childhood and he wants to do his part to take care of it. He is thankful to be able to enjoy the sun and the melody of bird songs while working outdoors. One of his most memorable experiences in the Preserve was being watched by a Bard owl while pruning trails at Frautschi Point.

Connor Roberson is a rising senior from Minneapolis majoring in Forest and Wildlife Ecology and Science Communication. He applied for the position because he learns best in a hands-on environment. Connor enjoys working in the different parts of the Preserve, each with distinct characteristics that set them apart, making every day feel fresh. His favorite spot is the Big Oak Trail in Frautschi Point Woods, and he’s seen a surprising number of painted turtles and turkey vultures in the Preserve.

Jude Whale, who hails from Wauwatosa, will be a junior in Forest Science and Statistics. He wanted to work in the Preserve to learn more about Wisconsin’s vegetation and gain more land management experience. Jude feels his plant identification skills have improved because he works with people who are willing to share and teach. He said there is something new to see in the Preserve every day. His favorite sightings include a baby crane, a beaver, and many beautiful oak trees.

The Natural Area Assistant positions are funded by donations to the Preserve Stewardship Fund, the Kelly Family Foundation - E. David Cronon Stewardship Fellows Fund of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, and the Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve.

As the weather warms, Madison’s lakes can be an inviting attraction for a cooling dip in the waters. And, if the blue-green algae blooms are permissive, I think it’s a great choice on a warm day. But along the Lakeshore Nature Preserve’s 4.3 miles of shoreline, swimming is prohibited. Why?

In a word, safety. Many years ago – in response to a series of tragic drownings – the University decided swimming should be discouraged in any area of the campus lakeshore not supervised by trained lifeguards. Currently, the designated campus swimming area is located at the Memorial Union Terrace. Other nearby swimming options include McKenna Park in Shorewood Hills, Madison’s Goodman Swimming Pool, and numerous private swim clubs. A list of City of Madison public beaches can be found here: www.cityofmadison.com/parks/beach.

The Preserve does not employ any lifeguards, therefore swimming is prohibited. Wander the shoreline paths and you’ll no doubt notice No Swimming signs posted in spots like Picnic Point, Willow Beach, Raymer’s Cove, and many other locations.

When you visit the Preserve, please enjoy the trails, view the flora and fauna, listen to the wind through the trees... just please keep your feet on dry land.

You can contact Officer Kirchman at jkirchman@wisc.edu or 608-264-2677.
Be a Preserve Partner

Help us meet the challenge to raise $5 million to support the long-term operations and programming of the **Frautschi Center Fund for the Future**

To make a gift online, please visit: [lakeshorepreserve.wisc.edu/donate](lakeshorepreserve.wisc.edu/donate)

To discuss giving levels and naming opportunities for gifts over $25,000, please contact the Preserve Director: [lakeshorepreserve@fpm.wisc.edu](mailto:lakeshorepreserve@fpm.wisc.edu) or 608-265-9275.

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**Bat Conservation in the Preserve**

**By Bryn Scriver, Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator**

The bat house on Picnic Point received some recent upgrades. Bat researchers from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) installed a PIT tag reader in the bat house. The reader is powered by a battery attached to a solar panel. PIT tags (passive integrated transponders) are similar to microchips used to identify pets. The PIT tag reader scans bats for tags and records when those tags are encountered. Researchers can then follow bats’ movements between critical habitats and learn more about their biology. According to the WDNR’s Heather Kaarakka, by mid-May, researchers had already recovered ten tags from last year’s work and recorded three tagged bats from a roost 1 mile west of Picnic Point.

In addition, Preserve staff are managing the vegetation around the bat house in consultation with bat researchers.

The WDNR provided an informational sign, “Help Protect Bats at Rest.” The sign advises visitors to be quiet, not to use lights or flashes, and never touch or pick up a bat. Please help us protect bats in the Preserve by following these guidelines.

For more information about bats, visit the [Wisconsin Bat Program website](http://batprogram.org).

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Student Natural Area Assistants:

- Ryan Druhot
- Vanghaum ‘Vang’ Lee
- Connor Roberson
- Jude Whale

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