



Lakeshore Nature Preserve
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2025 Annual Report



lakeshorepreserve.wisc.edu - lakeshorepreserve@fpm.wisc.edu - 608-265-9275

Director's Message

Spring has officially arrived (we think) at the Lakeshore Nature Preserve! Trout lilies carpet swaths of Frautschi Point, pairs of sandhill cranes forage in the marshes and look for the perfect spot to build their nests, and garlic mustard reminds us that the important work of invasive weed control and ecological restoration is never complete.

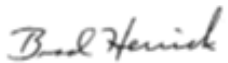
In 2025, we continued our legacy of ecological restoration, made new discoveries, built new partnerships, and engaged with new and longtime friends to sustain the 300-acre Preserve as campus' living laboratory.

Four undergraduate student interns assisted with all aspects of land management. Anna, Eden, Andi, and Leah did a phenomenal job, and by their own admission learned a lot from Adam Gundlach (Preserve Field Projects Coordinator) about all that goes into managing a natural area. Bryn Sriver (Preserve Outreach Coordinator) once again almost single handedly engaged nearly 700 volunteers who contributed over 2,000 hours of invasive species control, seed collecting and sowing, and other restoration activities.

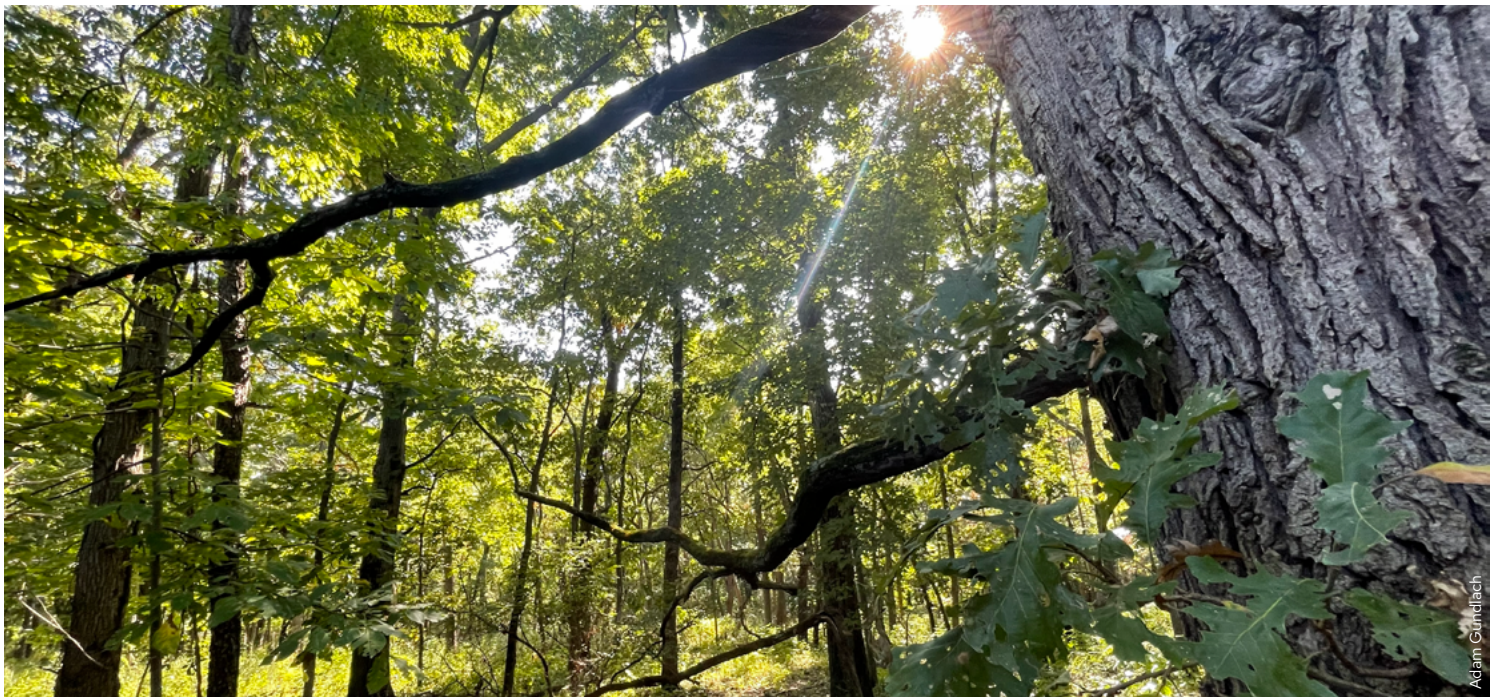
In June we held the first ever bio-blitz at the Preserve. Led by Dr. Christopher Warneke, over 150 volunteers recorded 985 species of plants, birds, mammals, insects, fish, and fungi...including two species previously unknown to science! Look for information soon about a [second bioblitz](#) to be held on September 26th, 2026. Please join us!

The Preserve partnered with colleagues at University Health Services and the Student Multicultural Center to develop green space-based programming and opportunities to support student mental health and wellbeing. Thanks to this partnership, UW–Madison is now a member of the Campus Nature Rx Network, a global consortium of colleges and universities dedicated to addressing student mental health challenges through nature-based experiences.

In a world full of change and uncertainty, the Preserve continues to offer a space for campus and the community to participate in on-the-ground conservation and restoration activities, learn about the natural and cultural history of this beloved urban natural area, and find respite among the towering trees, stout prairie grasses, and expansive lake views. Thank you for your support of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve.



Brad Herrick
Director, Lakeshore Nature Preserve



Teaching and Research

2025 permits by the numbers...

59
total permits

16
UW depts/
programs

25
unique courses

4
external orgs/
agencies

Lakeshore Nature Preserve Student Engagement Grants Support Learning

Each year, the Lakeshore Nature Preserve Committee awards multiple small grants of up to \$1,000 to undergraduates, or graduate students, faculty, and staff working with undergraduates, to utilize the Lakeshore Nature Preserve for teaching, research, or outreach.

In 2025, the committee awarded eight [Student Engagement Grants](#). Grants are made possible through the Preserve's Academic Endowment Fund at the University of Wisconsin Foundation, established by former faculty members Robert M. Goodman and Henry Hart.

2025 Student Engagement Grant Awards:

A Guidebook to Connection: Collaborative Book-making in the Lakeshore Nature Preserve

Alyssa Rooks, Forest Science and Studio Art undergrad; Lynda Barry, Assoc. Professor in Interdisciplinary Creativity

Establishment of an Acoustic Bat Monitoring Station at the Biocore Prairie

UW Bat Brigade – Makeela Magomolla, Tayah Dean, and George Whitney; Seth McGee, Biocore Lab Instructor

Life Cycle Stage, Weather, Diet, and Habitat Effects on Baseline Immunological Measures of Resident Migrant Songbirds

Biocore Prairie Bird Banding Observatory Team – Yushi Oguchi, Jacqueline Sandberg, Mark Berres

Nurturing in Nature

Prisma Ruacho, Asst. Director Multicultural Student Center

Plantcrobomics: A Lakeshore Nature Preserve Plant and Microbiome Summer Research Experience for Undergraduates

Christine M. Hustmyer, Post-Doctoral Research Assoc. and Robert Landick, Prof. Biochemistry and Bacteriology

Proposal for Invasive Plant Technician and Research Project in the Lakeshore Nature Preserve

Matthew Wallrath, Outreach Specialist, Renz Weed Science Lab

The Impacts of Invasive Plants Species and Deer Browse on Native Spring Wildflower Abundance and Diversity in Forest Understory

Maxton Strait, undergrad; George Meindl, Forest and Wildlife Biology

Water Maps: Writing Lake Mendota in the Lakeshore Nature Preserve

Noreen McAuliffe, Lecturer in English and Academic Research Specialist at Nelson Institute

UW Bat Brigade Supports Bat Conservation in the Preserve

The University of Wisconsin Bat Brigade is enhancing bat conservation efforts at the Lakeshore Nature Preserve through student-led acoustic surveys. With a 2025 Lakeshore Nature Preserve Student Engagement Grant, they deployed a stationary acoustic recorder at the Biocore Prairie, greatly increasing the volume and consistency of bat data collected. This initiative supports statewide bat monitoring, provides students with hands-on research and data analysis experience, and expands outreach to the broader community. Activities like public bat walks help raise awareness about bat ecology and conservation.

[Learn more about the UW Bat Brigade in an Inside UW News feature with video and photos](https://news.wisc.edu/uw-bat-brigade-blends-curiosity-and-conservation/) (<https://news.wisc.edu/uw-bat-brigade-blends-curiosity-and-conservation/>).



The UW Bat Brigade led a public bat walk in the Preserve for the 2025 Wisconsin Science Festival.



Undergrads Use Campus as Living Laboratory to Investigate Root Microbiomes

Last summer, undergraduate students Alaynah Smith and Alex Taylor conducted research in the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, collecting and identifying bacteria from the roots of two native Wisconsin grasses. With support from a Lakeshore Nature Preserve Student Engagement Grant and guidance from postdoctoral researcher Christine Hustmyer, the students gained hands-on research experience in both the field and the lab. Their research identified over a hundred bacterial species in the soil, highlighting the microbiome's diversity and importance.

[Learn more about the project and its ongoing impact on student learning in the full article by Renata Solan \(https://biochem.wisc.edu/2026/01/26/undergrads-use-campus-as-living-laboratory-to-investigate-root-microbiomes/\).](https://biochem.wisc.edu/2026/01/26/undergrads-use-campus-as-living-laboratory-to-investigate-root-microbiomes/)

Postdoc researcher Christine Hustmyer, center, with undergraduate student researchers Alex and Alaynah.

Lakeshore Nature Preserve by the Numbers

300 acres



1/3 of campus
is the reserve

8



bat species

40+



archaeological
sites

4.3



miles of Mendota
shoreline

10+



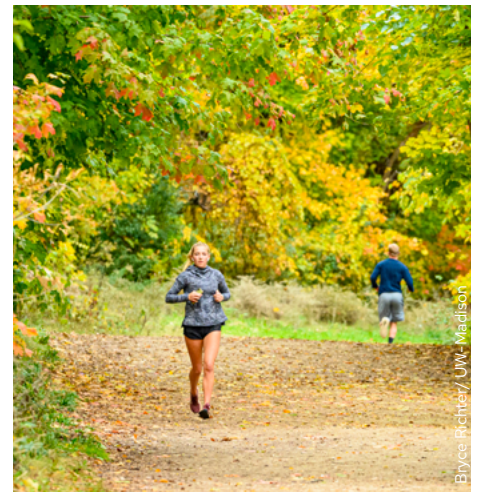
trail miles

10



globally threatened
species

6 reservable
fire circles



Engagement

2025 volunteers by the numbers...

690
volunteers

2,123
service
hours

82%
UW students,
faculty, staff

57 campus
& community
groups

Volunteer Contributions

Bryn Scriver, Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator

Volunteers are vital to the success of the Preserve! They serve several critical operational and educational functions.

Land Stewardship and Maintenance – Volunteers perform essential physical labor that the Preserve cannot complete with staff alone, such as removing invasive plants to prevent them from excluding native species; collecting, sowing, and planting native seeds and plugs to foster biodiversity; and maintaining 10+ miles of trails and other infrastructure to ensure a clean and safe visitor experience.

Capacity Building – In 2025 alone, 690 volunteers contributed 2,123 hours of service. Volunteers' efforts expand the Preserve's capacity to manage its land beyond what its budget allows.

Educational Mission – As a living classroom, the Preserve uses volunteering as an experiential learning opportunity for community members and students (who make up 82% of the volunteer base) to study natural areas management and land stewardship.

If you want to experience the Preserve through volunteering, visit our [events calendar](#) for dates and times.

Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve

Anne Pearce, Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve Board of Directors

The Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve is a non-profit, volunteer-run, membership organization that has supported the Preserve since 2001.

2025 Friends' highlights:

- Approved a \$75,000 gift to the UW Foundation for the Frautschi Center
- Funded new \$1,500 Purple Martin house complex;
- Supported two Preserve workdays for garlic mustard removal and prairie seed collection
- Produced two "[Preserve!](#)" newsletters for members
- Introduced "Indoor Expeditions" lectures alongside twice-monthly [field trips](#)
- Provided matching gift for Lakeshore Nature Preserve Day of the Badger fundraising campaign

2025 focal points for Friends' Board of Directors:

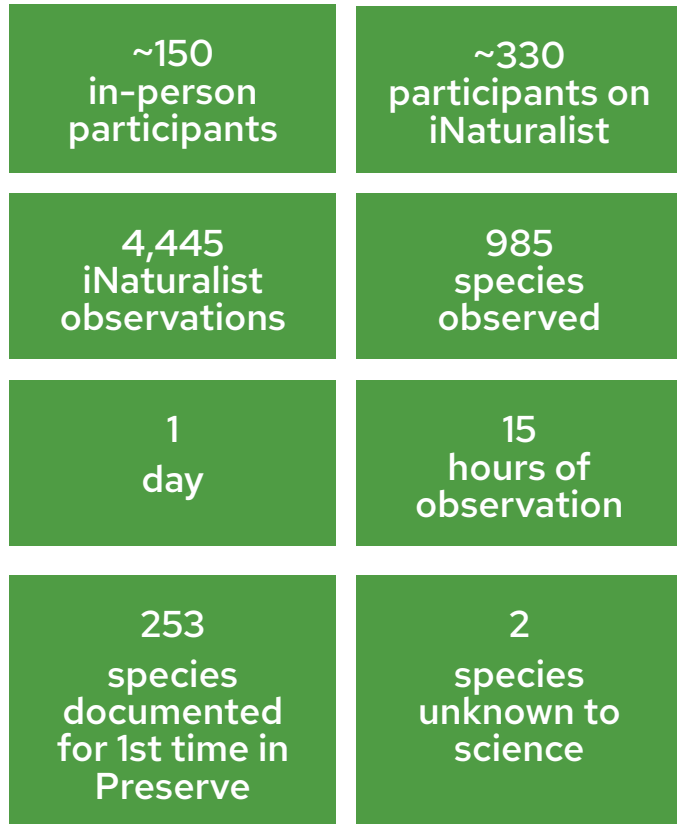
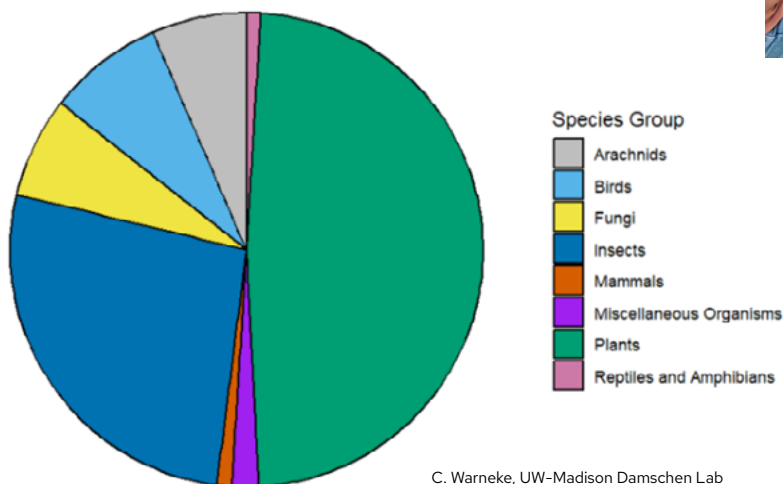
- Migrated the Friends [website](#) to a modern platform and a new URL;
- Recruited new board member candidates;
- Set a sustainable path for the organization as it enters its second quarter-century



Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve members are joined by student volunteers to collect native seeds in Biocore Prairie.



Volunteers serve critical operational and educational functions for the Preserve.

2025 bioblitz by the numbers...**2025 Bioblitz Results by Species Group**

This pie chart shows the number of observations from each species group. Almost half of all observations were plants, with insects making up the next-largest proportion. Fungi, birds, and arachnids had similar numbers of observations, while all other groups had very few. We found three bacterial species (identified by the diseases they cause), as well as most major groups of life!

First Preserve Bioblitz a Success

About 150 people visited the Lakeshore Nature Preserve on June 7 to participate in our first-ever bioblitz. Participants recorded more than 985 species, including 253 that had never been documented in the Preserve before and 2 unknown to science! Some “bioblitzers” walked the trails on their own, looking for species to record, while others ventured out in groups or joined expert-led tours on bees, parasitic wasps, fungi, and fireflies. Another 330 people helped to verify the more than 4,400 observations on iNaturalist.

We were thrilled to see so many people excited about local biodiversity. In addition to bringing together the community to identify the organisms found here, the data we gathered at the bioblitz will help guide ecological restoration and management of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve and bring attention to its teaching, research, and outreach value.

[Read the full report from the 2025 Bioblitz](https://lakeshorepreserve.wisc.edu/bioblitz/bioblitz-2025/) (<https://lakeshorepreserve.wisc.edu/bioblitz/bioblitz-2025/>).



Josh Arnold



Bryn Scriber



Bryn Scriber



Bryn Scriber

2025 Land Management Report

Adam Gundlach, Field Projects Coordinator

Stewardship

Invasive Plant Control: Preserve-wide

Staff and volunteers scoured the 300-acre Preserve in search of garlic mustard to mark the start of spring. The student intern crew then flowed with the season's phenology pulling, cutting, or applying herbicide to targeted plants, including wild parsnip, Japanese hedge parsley, leafy spurge, Canada thistle, crown vetch, bird's foot trefoil, and reed canary grass.

Unfortunately, invasive porcelain berry vine appeared to be resurgent across its old haunts, and another sprawling plant, smooth bedstraw (*Gallium mollugo*), appeared to be establishing itself around the Preserve.

Brush removal and resprout control: 5+ acres

Staff and volunteers cleared swaths of brush along the main Picnic Point path and in the old orchard and savanna restoration at the base of Picnic Point. Volunteers were recruited to continue brush removal at Frautschi Point and along the central Temin Lakeshore Path. A contractor crew from RES completed brush removal across a couple of acres in Eagle Heights Woods.

Brush piles burned: 33

Cut brush is hauled away for composting, chipped for use on trails, or burned on-site, depending on several factors. Staff, aided by student interns, burn brush piles in the winter with snow cover.

Native seed collected: 77 species

Interns and volunteers collected grass and forb seeds, mostly in the Biocore Prairie but also on our woodland edges. Interns also collected hundreds of white oak acorns from Eagle Heights Woods.

Native seed sown: 6.5 acres

Seed mixes were compiled from Preserve-collected seed and supplemented with purchased seed to match shady woodland conditions and more open savanna/prairie sites. Sowing locations included the water utility field, the edge of Caretaker's Woods, the old orchard south of Biocore Prairie, portions of the Picnic Point peninsula and in Muir Woods near Waters Residence Hall. White oak acorns were planted in Frautschi Point, Bill's Woods, and Picnic Point.

Prescribed fires conducted: 16 acres

Spring 2025 was a productive season, both in terms of teaching and the number of burns completed. Fourteen current and former UW students joined the Preserve's prescribed burn crew, and the UW prescribed fire course culminated in live-fire training exercises at Biocore Prairie. We were also able to expand fire management to a savanna unit at the base of Picnic Point for the first time.

Hazard tree removals: Ongoing

Boley Tree Service removed hazard trees in Muir Woods, Caretaker's Woods, and Second Point Woods. Many were dead and dying ash trees, as the later phases of emerald ash borer infestation continue to unfold. On a bright note, ash can still be found regenerating from seed; one can hope the borer will fade and ash seedlings will find an opportunity to rise back into the canopy.



Clockwise from top right: Preserve intern Anna poses with a truckload of invasive garlic mustard plants, a volunteer from Blackhawk Church looks for resprouting buckthorn plants to cut, students in the prescribed fire class conduct live fire training in Biocore Prairie, student volunteers remove tree sized buckthorn, Preserve intern Andi mixes seed for sowing.

Fiscal Year 2025 Donors

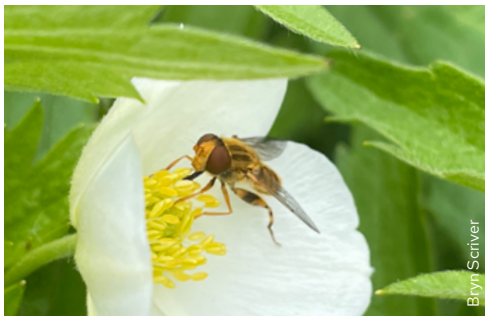
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Jennifer Younger & Thomas Smith
Amy Zabel

Note: If you made a gift between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 and your name was left off this list, please accept our apology and let us know by contacting lakeshorepreserve@fpm.wisc.edu



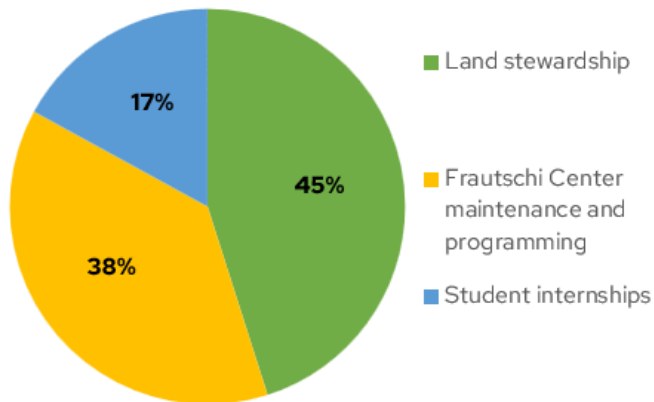
Private gifts are vital to the Preserve's ongoing success.
To become a donor, visit supportuw.org/giveto/lakeshore/

Fiscal Year 2025 donations by the numbers...

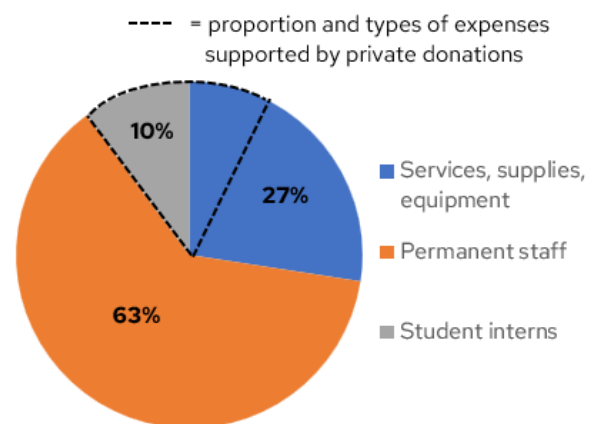
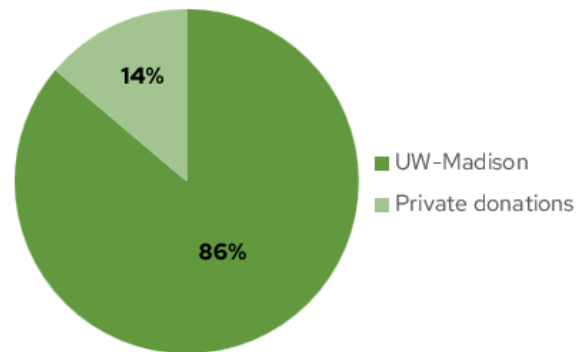


* Does not include gifts by W. Jerome Frautschi totaling \$3,396,938 for the construction of the Frautschi Center.

Fiscal Year 2025 Donations



Fiscal Year 2025 Operational Financials—Budget \$367,404



Donor Spotlight: Eric Sandgren, VMD, PhD

Question: "What is your connection to the Lakeshore Nature Preserve?"

Answer: "I did my undergrad at UW the right way—spent 8 years on it, while working and taking 2 or 3 classes a semester. Then tuition reached \$1,500 a semester, so I had to move on (how things change). But I spend a lot of time walking along the lakeshore, even before I knew what it was. When I returned as faculty at the School of Veterinary Medicine, I picked up right where I left off, this time with my family. There is magic there, and always more to find!"

Question: "If someone is visiting the Preserve for the first time, where would you tell them to visit, and why?"

Answer: "Tough choice, but I'd have to pick what I call "Grandfather Oak", one of the open-grown white oaks nestled just off the wooded path at Frautschi Point. How can anything be so majestic?"

Question: "Why do you choose to support the Preserve?"

Answer: "Good things don't survive on their own if their monetary value isn't maximized. They require active and continuous support. My experiences at the Preserve are not unique, and I want them to remain available to others for a long time. I believe I have an obligation to "pay it forward" in light of the huge positive impact the Lakeshore Nature Preserve has had on my life. And I love to join a community of so many like-minded people! Thanks to all the staff and volunteers for helping to keep this alive."



Eric Sandgren is a Professor Emeritus in the Dept. of Pathobiological Sciences at the UW–Madison School of Veterinary Medicine and a Preserve donor.

Lakeshore Nature Preserve Committee

Established by the UW provost in 2000, the Lakeshore Nature Preserve Committee is an advisory committee 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.

2025-26 Preserve Committee

Voting members

- Ellen Damschen, faculty
- Claudia Guzmán, academic staff
- Erin Hamilton, faculty
- Emma Hauser, faculty
- Anupreksha Jain, student
- Sam Knock, student
- Elise Kruse, student
- Cooper Rosin, academic staff
- Kyle Webert, academic staff/Chair

Non-voting ex-officio or consultants

- Patrick Bohlen, ex officio, Director, UW Arboretum
- Brad Herrick, ex officio, Director, Lakeshore Nature Preserve
- Kelly Ignatoski, ex officio, Director, University Apartments
- Rhonda James, consultant, Senior Landscape Architect, Campus Planning
- Missy Nergard, ex officio, Director, Office of Sustainability
- Tom Zinnen, ex officio, President, Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve

2025 Lakeshore Nature Preserve Staff

- Brad Herrick, Director
bradley.herrick@wisc.edu
- Adam Gundlach, Field Projects Coordinator
adam.gundlach@wisc.edu
- Bryn Sriver, Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator
bryn.sriver@wisc.edu

Student Natural Area Assistants

- Andi Hokanson
- Vanghuam 'Vang' Lee
- Eden Milan
- Connor Roberson
- Anna Swenson
- Leah Zuschlag

Student Research Assistants

- Claire Foote
- Andrea Rodriguez Quiros

2025 visitor use by the numbers...

172,426
visitor trips
recorded to
Picnic Point

23,814
min. estimated
number of fire
circle guests

1,584*
fire circle
reservations



* Note: Fire circle #5 was closed for 2.5 months to allow snapping turtle eggs to hatch from a nest.

Thank you UW Partners!

Managing one-third of campus takes a village. We are grateful to our UW partners who assist us in keeping the Preserve safe, clean, and welcoming for all.

- Campus Event Services
- Grounds
- Campus Planning and Landscape Architecture
- Custodial Services
- Waste and Recycling
- Environment, Health & Safety
- UW-Madison Police Department

