

## Lakeshore Nature Preserve Fall 2010 E-Newsletter

by Adam Gundlach & Bryn Scriver

### Fall and winter Volunteer Opportunities in the Preserve

Despite the days getting shorter and colder Fall is a good time to control woody invasive species. Most native plants have gone dormant yet buckthorn and honeysuckle are still actively growing. Their green leaves make them easy to spot for removal. It's recommended to cut them and treat the cut stump with herbicide. This method is also effective in the growing season, but there is more risk of affecting non-target plants. Winter application of herbicide is also successful, and further lessens the risk of damaging non-target species.

We could use your help on Sat. Nov. 6th and/or Mon. Nov. 8th to remove woody invasive plants from 9AM-Noon in East Savanna and East Bill's Woods. Meet at the entrance to Picnic Point.

We have also planned 2 work days in December, Sat. Dec. 4th and Mon. Dec. 6th from 1-3PM. Meet at the Frautschi Point parking lot.

For all volunteer work events we provide tools, gloves, and training. Dress in layers and bring your own drinking water. We'll bring the snacks!

See the schedule of upcoming [volunteer opportunities](#).



Happy volunteers with a big load of cut buckthorn! Photo by Evelyn Howell.

### Volunteers make big impact in the Preserve

This semester volunteers enjoyed beautiful late summer and early fall weather as they worked to transform areas of the Preserve by removing invasive plants, repairing eroded areas and planting native species.

Pollinators and people alike will enjoy parts of Lakeshore Path more with the addition of over 600 native wetland and shoreline plants. Groups that helped staff plant these plugs were Basecamp alumni, the Circle K Club, Society for Human Resource Management, and The Crossing.

LDS youth from the Madison Stake volunteered one morning to plant savanna and open woodland species in Frautschi Woods where student interns cleared invasive brush this summer. As they planted they had fun discovering "relics" such as old pipes, iron bench sides, and decorative tiles. These items were probably discarded by previous owners of the property.



Basecamp and Circle K Club students. Photo by Jim Rogers.



Society for Human Resource Management volunteers.

Staff from the Madison Army National Guard Headquarters dedicated one day to helping Preserve staff repair eroded areas along the Lakeshore Path. The eroded areas were a result of the old boat pins where canoes used to be stored along the shoreline. The eroded areas were shored up with “sand bags”, backfilled with soil, seeded with a cover crop, and covered with erosion matting. We completed the planned erosion repair work in less time than expected allowing us to clear some buckthorn and black locust along the trail. It was no surprise that the Army National Guard staff jumped right into their work. What was surprising was how much fun they had while doing it!



Guard volunteers hard at work and taking a break for a photo op with coaches Alvarez and Bielema.

The Greenhouse and Sullivan Substance Free House aka the “Clean and Green Team” and other students joined forces to help clear woody invasives from the top of the lawn at the Picnic Point entrance. Volunteers uncovered elderberry and viburnum shrubs as they took buckthorn, honeysuckle and Japanese tree lilac. By clearing this area we hope to better detect and control porcelain berry and garlic mustard as well as repair the eroding slopes by seeding desirable groundlayer species.

Before classes even began for the semester students in the MBA program put in time and sweat (lots of sweat!) in Willow Creek Woods. This is being transformed from an overgrown mess of invasive shrubs and low quality trees to an open oak woodland or savanna. Preserve staff cut weeds which the students raked into piles to be carried off the site. Experimental plots were set up to determine if this biomass removal aids in native groundlayer plant restoration by removing excess nitrogen which weeds love.



MBA's with a Heart event brings business school volunteers to Willow Creek Woods.

Daniel Einstein, the campus Cultural and Historic Resource Manager, has been leading a seminar for students in the new Greenhouse Residential Learning Community on Native American burial mounds. As part of the seminar they have undertaken management of the mounds. A major goal of preserving mounds is to prevent soil erosion. As a result mounds management involves raking off leaf litter, removing woody vegetation of the mounds, and seeding bare soil with plants that will hold the soil. The seminar participants assisted Einstein at the Willow Creek mounds group earlier this fall and will again on Nov. 10 at the Picnic Point mounds group.

International students and their family members were recruited at a Wisconsin Fair held at the Eagle Heights Housing Community Center on October 22 to help plant native species at Raymer's Cove. Friends members and Preserve staff were joined by a student couple from China, an Indian gentleman visiting his brand new granddaughter, and a Swedish spouse of a visiting scholar. We had lots of fun exchanging stories and culture while planting short prairie species along the cliff wall and in the prairie adjacent to the parking lot. The fence at Raymer's Cove along the cliff edge has been extended in an attempt to prevent people from accessing the cliff wall for safety and erosion reasons.



Volunteers planted over 300 prairie plugs at Raymer's Cove.



## **Gard Circle Dedication at Muir Knoll**

On September 24, 2010, Muir Knoll was the site of a dedication ceremony for the recently completed Gard Storyteller Circle, honoring former UW faculty member Robert E. Gard. The circle offers a dramatic view across Lake Mendota, providing the perfect backdrop for those who gather to ponder the pressing matters of the day, or simply sit and enjoy the oak trees' sway.

The dedication ceremony provided the perfect impetus to manage vegetation along the woodland edge surrounding the circle. Students from Biocore, Horticulture 120, and Geography/Environmental 339 worked with Friends members to remove undesirable brush and vines in undulating swaths to soften the transition between mowed lawn and the forest edge. The removals opened pools of light in the understory that will allow for a more diverse native groundcover to be established. It also helped uncover oak saplings planted in previous years by Students of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, which otherwise were being smothered by overgrowth.

Students of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve have continued their tradition of caring for Muir Woods by working on the top of the Knoll to create more open sunlit areas for native plants populate.



Volunteers take a deserved break around the Gard Circle at a September workparty. Photo by John Magnuson.

## **Friends Continue Care for East Bill's Woods**

The Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve continue to manage East Bill's Woods and supplement their project area with native plants. In early October twenty-three volunteers, including Friends members and University students, spent approximately 60 hours planting 704 plugs! The plants were donated by the Friends from the Carter Denniston Plant Fund.



Friends members and UW students planted East Bill's Woods in October. Photos by Glenda Denniston and John Magnuson.

## Picnic Point Restoration

Those familiar with the scenery along Picnic Point may have noticed some changes over the past few months. Several areas along the main Picnic Point path are currently being managed to remove invasive brush, increase native plant abundance, and attenuate soil erosion concerns. The work has also opened views to the surrounding lake and cityscape that have been shrouded for years by buckthorn and honeysuckle.

The historic water pump, located just east of the narrows beach, was one of the reclaimed sites. The pump was easily overlooked in recent years, as the surrounding vegetation encroached. Now, with a little manual labor, those venturing out the Picnic Point path can enjoy a refreshing drink at the pump, while peering north across Lake Mendota.

One impressive feature of the recently cleared areas was the sheer paucity of groundcover vegetation present underneath the dense stands of buckthorn and honeysuckle. The bare soil was seeded with a grass mix, and erosion-prone areas were covered with erosion control matting. As weed issues are brought under control, native shrubs and wildflowers will be re-introduced in these areas to improve the aesthetics and the structure of the plant community.



Interns start clearing around the pump.



A runner enjoys a refreshing drink from the pump after the area has been cleared.

## Porcelain Berry Prowling

A new viney invader is popping up in pockets across the Preserve landscape, and it is one that will require a dedicated effort in the coming years to keep in check. The vine is *Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*, commonly called porcelain berry due to its shiny multi-colored berries. A member of the Grape Family (*Vitaceae*), porcelain berry originates from East Asia, though it also has close relatives native to North America - *Ampelopsis arborea* and *Ampelopsis cordata*.

Porcelain berry is a woody, deciduous, perennial vine. The leaves are be highly variable in form, ranging from deeply lobed to serrate and quite similar to native grape. Vines grow quickly, spreading both horizontally across the ground and climbing into the tree canopy via tendrils. Dense infestations form a topiary effect as the tangle of vines uniformly envelops surrounding vegetation. To be expected, dense patches of the porcelain berry substantially reduce habitat quality for wildlife as native vegetation is smothered.

Porcelain berry produces inconspicuous, greenish-white flowers from June through August. The characteristic berries form in September and October, often in a menagerie of bright pastel blues, purples, and greens. The berries are eaten by birds, which in turn disperse the seeds about the landscape. Seeds appear to have a high rate of germination, as evidenced by the numerous seedlings that currently can be found throughout many areas of the Preserve. Fortunately, the seedlings pull easily and do not mature to the fruiting stage for several years.

Ways to distinguish porcelain berry from the native grape vine include:

- Bark – Native grape bark peels or shreds in strips, and lacks lenticels, where as porcelain berry bark does not shred and has prominent lenticels.
- Stem pith – Native grape vines have dark stem pith, while porcelain berry has white pith.
- Fruit – When fruiting in late summer and early fall, porcelain berry is easy to distinguish from the native grape because of its shiny, brightly colored berries.
- Leaves – Porcelain berry leaves exhibit considerable variability. Some mimic the native grape leaves quite well. Others become deeply lobed, generally with 3-5 lobes.

While walking the Preserve, if you identify an area where porcelain berry is growing, note the location and approximate size of the infestation and contact Lakeshore Preserve staff at [lakeshorepreserve@fpm.wisc.edu](mailto:lakeshorepreserve@fpm.wisc.edu).

More information on porcelain berry from the Plant Conservation Alliance: [www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/ambr1.htm](http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/ambr1.htm)



Porcelain berry fruits.



Porcelain berry covers shrubs, trees and ground in Wally Bauman Woods.



Porcelain berry leaves look deceptively like native grape.

## Eagle Heights Community Garden Awarded Fruit Trees

Earlier this summer, Eagle Heights Community Garden participated in a national competition sponsored by Edy's titled "Communities Take Root." When the votes were tallied, Eagle Heights was awarded numerous fruit trees by The Fruit Tree Planting Foundation (<http://www.ftpf.org/>), along with training on how to care for the trees.

The foundation, based in Mill Valley, California, is dedicated to planting 18 billion fruit trees and plants to alleviate world hunger, combat global warming, strengthen communities and improve the environment. The nonprofit organization donates orchards at places including public schools, city parks, low-income neighborhoods, Native American reservations and international hunger relief sites.

Twenty-five sites around the country were awarded fruit trees. Eagle Heights shared the honor with two other Madison locations – Wingra Park and Middleton's Bock Community Garden – making Madison the only metropolitan area in the country to have three winning sites. On September 15, 2010, volunteers helped plant the dwarf fruit trees along the eastern edge of the garden. As the trees mature in the coming years, their efforts will reward the community with a delicious and nutritious treat. Thanks to all who helped make this possible.



Eagle Heights Gardens volunteers planting fruit trees. Photo by Eagle Heights Fruits Group.