



University of Wisconsin-Madison
Lakeshore Nature Preserve Committee
Facilities Planning & Management
Preserve Staff Reports – April 15, 2020

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Gary Brown, Director

Well, it's been an interesting few weeks here on campus and in our community! Who would have thought just a few short weeks ago we would all be telecommuting and "social distancing" this spring in the Preserve and across our beautiful campus? Preserve staff have been actively monitoring the land for us to assure the paths, trails and site are safe for public use. We'll be working with UW Grounds staff (hopefully) on some erosion problems along the Temin Lakeshore Path, but for now the Preserve seems to be holding up well to the increased use as people get out and enjoy the warmer weather. We just ask that everyone using the Preserve remain vigilant in their social awareness and physical distancing to help keep our COVID-19 numbers down and get us through this pandemic event as soon as possible. We have unfortunately had to cancel all activities in the Preserve until further notice, including all volunteer events, spring plantings, fire circle use, Friends field trips, and all gatherings of any size to support the response to this disease. I will also say that this event will likely have significant impact on the university's finances, including the operating budget for the Preserve. I'll keep everyone posted as we move forward through the summer and we begin the recovery period.

I will also note that this hasn't stopped many great things from happening in support of the Preserve. We have a draft of the Strategic Plan document ready for public review which is included in the meeting materials. We are excited to share this information as we move forward with some of the recommended initiatives.

Stay well!

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT – Laura Wyatt, Program Manager

Permits issued since our last meeting:

- LT2020-6a – FWE521 – Pigeon- student bird monitoring and identification
- 2020-7 – UW Wellbeing – Diehl -Forest Bathing
- 2020-8 – Friends; CLA Lake Mendota Monitoring
- 2020-9 – Bird Monitoring - Liebl

Preserve staff joined many within the UW family in working remotely beginning March 16. We all have all been busy working on communicating the impact of the evolving UW guidance to those engaged with the Preserve as University faculty, staff, students, community partners and volunteers.

Staff are concerned about the impact that delayed or cancelled land management practices, most recently garlic mustard control and prescribed fires, will have on the land and current management. We are busy considering alternative strategies and adjusting our land management planning. Because the situations are evolving, it is impossible to plan with any certainty.

Governor Evers designated natural areas as "essential activities" and the UW is keeping the Preserve open for individuals practicing the CDC recommended social distancing. Our work though in land management and maintenance is considered non-essential so we are limited in what we can do on the land during this period and likely for the spring season into summer. As this event continues to evolve, we are sure there will be further updates and changes. Staytuned!

Our prospects of seasonal summer hiring have been placed on hold as well, but we have completed interviews, reference checks and initial screening of candidates. We are ready to extend offers once permitted to do so. Permit holders and groups who planned to utilize the Preserve have been contacted to ensure they understand current use restrictions.

CAPITAL PROJECTS - Rhonda James, Senior Landscape Architect

Capital Projects adjacent to the Preserve:

- The Natatorium Replacement design continues. Building removal will begin likely later in the fall.
- Vet Med expansion design continues and will start construction likely in spring 2021.

Capital Projects within the Preserve:

- The arbor at Eagle Heights Gardens is to be removed due to deteriorating posts. They plan to re-imagine the gathering area in the coming year.
- At University Houses Gardens, the gardeners have requested a gravel access drive to the weed pile and 4 plots beyond. We are investigating the possibilities of this request.
- Stonework around the fire pit at Ebling Circle will hopefully be repaired this summer.
- The stonework at the edge of the steps at the lower viewing area at the end of Picnic Point will also be done this summer.
- A new memorial bench will be added in the area of the old bath house, hopefully yet this spring 2020, by the UW Mason Shop which are working on a limited schedule right now.

Maintenance Projects (this spring/summer/fall):

- Gravel widening inside the entrance to Picnic Point will be done to give more space to turning service vehicles such as the trash & recycling and UWPD vehicles.
- Various erosion spots along the Lakeshore Path will also be addressed this spring/summer.
- Water bars will be installed in Eagle Heights Woods on southwest path to Shady Lane to prevent continued erosion problems.

Note: due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Grounds staff are only responding to health-safety risk management issues on campus. This may requires some of the above projects to be deferred until spring/summer 2021.

LAND MANAGEMENT - Adam Gundlach Field Projects Coordinator

- **Eagle Heights Woods** – Tangle of downed oak trees brought down the utility transmission line along the western property line. MG&E/Hooper crews addressed the immediate power line needs. Telecom cables remain low-slung. Arborist crew cleaned up debris in neighboring backyard.
- **Frautschi Point** – Sowed seed across the Second Oak project area and field edge with volunteer stewards Glenn and Steve – seed donated by Ron Endres.
- **Willow Creek Savanna** – Sowed seed across northern 2/3 of the site – seed donated by Ron Endres.
- **Picnic Point** – Routine maintenance/safety checks. Closed fire circles. Patched sink holes in main path.
- Field operations other than routine safety checks have been suspended until further notice.
- Planning continues for early spring field work needs (i.e., garlic mustard, prescribed fire), Prairie Partners interns, and seasonal staff onboarding...

OUTREACH & VOLUNTEERS – Bryn Scriver, Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator

Outreach activities:

- Poster accepted to Teaching and Learning Symposium, now canceled
- Poster accepted to Showcase, now postponed, no date set
- Day of Badger Fundraising event postponed, no date set

- University Apartments newsletter article for April (benefits of green space on mental and physical health)
- Draft Spring Newsletter
- Working on 2019 Annual Report
- Worked with FPM Communications staff on signage and messaging-all events canceled and fire circles closed until further notice; staff placed signs in kiosks and at each fire circle and firewood rack

Volunteer activities:

- Ongoing communication with volunteers re: cancellations
