

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON LAKESHORE NATURE PRESERVE 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



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New garden for community and student-based programming

Tom Bryan, Malachi Persche, and Kase Wheatley

Known in 2020 as the COVID-19 Mutual Aid Garden, this new garden is now called the UW Mutual Aid Garden. Located within the Preserve on land that had been a College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) Agricultural Research Station, it is now dedicated to community and student-based programming. The garden is managed cooperatively by representatives from GreenHouse Learning Community, the Dawson Lab in Horticulture, and the Agroecology M.S. Program.

Research demand diminished for the CALS Agricultural Research Station as student interest for land was increasing and is anticipated to grow even more. The Board of Regents just approved the Organic Agriculture Certificate, and an Agricultural Ecosystems Major is coming soon. Both academic programs are expected to use the space for experiential education. Graduate students in the Agroecology M.S. program aided in the land transition by acting somewhat as a third-party consulting group.

"The Lakeshore Nature Preserve provides the ideal environment to teach students and engage the community all while producing food for those who need it."

In 2020, the primary goal was to grow large quantities of nutrient-dense, high-calorie, and culturally relevant produce to donate to community members most affected by ongoing economic fallout. Gardeners distributed food via the Badger Rock Neighborhood Center free farmer's market, FH King's Harvest Handouts, and the Share Shelf at the Eagle Heights Community Gardens. The Lakeshore Nature Preserve provides the ideal environment to teach students and engage the community all while producing food for those who need it.

The Mutual Aid Garden demonstrates the possibilities of alternative agricultural systems that build more sustainable and resilient food systems and strengthens partnerships and understanding among multiple campus and community entities. The garden hosted several cropping systems trials in 2020 and will continue in 2021. For example, the AfroDiaspora Cropping Trail was led by Christian Keeve, now pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Kentucky. Wunk Sheek, a registered student organization at UW that services students of indigenous identity and those interested in indigenous issues, culture, and history, has plans for a display garden.

Neighbors, students, staff, and faculty who are interested in volunteering and/or leading a project in the space are encouraged to fill out our [contact form](#).

For more, see the [PBS WI 2020 Garden Expo highlight on the garden](#).



In 2020, the Mutual Aid Garden produced food for those affected economically by the pandemic. Students from the GreenHouse Residential Learning Community helped plant and harvest food for donation.

Tom Bryan

In 2020, 38 teaching/research permits plus 25 continuing long-term permits were issued to 25 UW departments & programs, 2 government entities, and 7 community organizations.



False sunflower blooms in Willow Creek Woods.

Bryn Scriver

From the Director...

Gary Brown, PLA, FASLA, Director

After a very strange “Year of the Pandemic”, I am happy to report the Lakeshore Nature Preserve continues to see record breaking use by our campus colleagues. Be it for research, rest and relaxation, small groups of socially distanced teaching, or those seeking respite from our sheltered days at home, we have been here for you. Preserve staff have worked hard to ensure we have a safe and enjoyable place to get out and be in nature. Several hardworking, safe, and face-covered volunteers joined staff to pull garlic mustard and other invasive plants and scout for hazards along our trails all during these uncertain times. With you, our volunteers and supporters, at our side, we have been able to maintain a sense of normalcy in the Preserve. Thank you for all that you do!

I’m also happy to report that we will be updating the 2006 Preserve Master Plan this Fall which will guide land management activities and provide valuable support for activities that support the university’s overall mission of teaching, research and outreach. Together with recently completed 2020 Preserve Strategic Plan, the Preserve will be able to chart a course of long-term support and strategic direction. Please watch for public meeting notices in how to participate in the master plan update process. Thank you again for all you do to help keep the Preserve available for future generations of Badgers! On, Wisconsin!

Adaptation and Change

Laura Wyatt, Program Manager

The pandemic resulted in a number of changes in the Preserve in 2020:

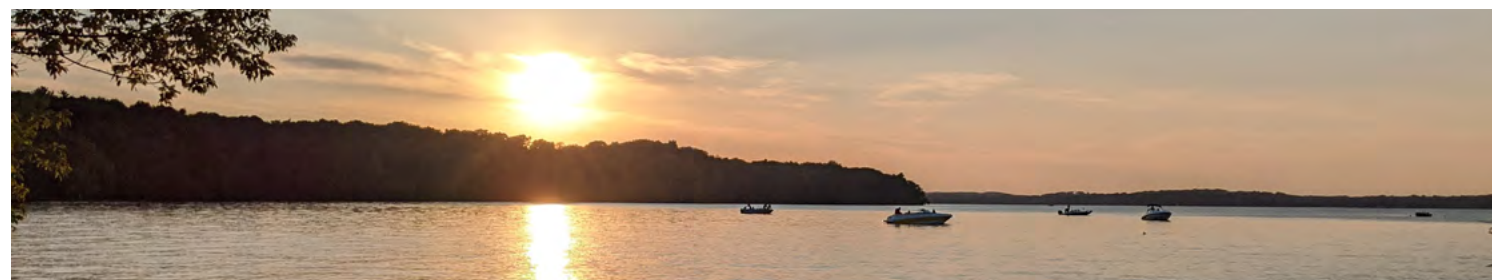
- Fire circles closed
- Preserve hours reduced to sunrise to sunset
- Student Engagement Grants awards canceled due to uncertainty of research activity
- Prairie Partner Interns (financially supported by the Friends) canceled
- Spring and summer seasonal staff hiring freeze
- Friends in-person field trips and special events canceled

Yet, *resilience* describes the work of Preserve staff and volunteers during the challenging year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Initially, staff was not even permitted to work solo within the Preserve, but it wasn’t long before it was realized the Preserve team was “essential” to keeping the Preserve safe for the increasing number of visitors seeking respite and solace within these treasured natural areas.

With increasing determination, the Preserve team pioneered development of processes and protocols aligning with UW-Madison pandemic guidance which permitted limited and restricted restoration activity to be performed within the Preserve. Our thanks to our volunteers, stakeholders and donors who continued to work alongside us to support the Preserve. Please read on and celebrate the resilience displayed by what we were able to accomplish.

"Resilience describes the work of Preserve staff and volunteers during the challenging year of the COVID-19 pandemic."



Bryn Scriver



Masked volunteer Glenn poses with garlic mustard.

Glenn Teschendorf

Volunteer Program

Bryn Scriver, Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator

Due to COVID-19, the 2020 Preserve volunteer program looked quite different to previous years. Bustling drop-in volunteer events and group activities were replaced by masked and physically distanced individuals (or household members) working on land management tasks. Staff supervision was done remotely by text, phone, and email.

In May 2020, with newly drafted safety guidelines and administrative approval, we reached out to experienced Preserve volunteers to scout for and pull garlic mustard. Twenty-two volunteers covered 90 acres to prevent this invasive plant from regaining a foothold in areas where it has been reduced.

We also relied on our small cadre of Volunteer Stewards to control other invasive plants and to be extra eyes on the trails. They cleared 12 acres of resprouting buckthorn and honeysuckle, weeded native plantings, monitored 12 miles of trails, picked up trash, and alerted staff to anything that needed attention. They also assisted with analyzing data and collecting research reports.

In total, 76 individual volunteers and 9 volunteer groups (who participated before mid-March) contributed 2,008 hours of service to the Preserve. This service was even more valuable as the hiring of our regular seasonal staff was delayed due to the pandemic.



Friends monitored Purple martins in the Preserve.

Chuck Henrikson

Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve

Bryn Scriver, Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator

The Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve is a volunteer-run, nonprofit organization that inspires people to connect to and care for the Preserve. Their support includes monetary donations, volunteering, and outreach.

Like everything else, the coronavirus disrupted the Friends’ 2020 plans. The annual garlic mustard pull, spring planting event, and participation in and sponsorship of the Prairie Partners summer intern program were all canceled.

However, the dedicated volunteers quickly pivoted to bring the Preserve to the people, virtually. They moved their annual meeting to Zoom and began to publish monthly self-guided walks and phenology-history calendars on their website.

Fortunately, the Friends were also still able to carry out three on-going citizen science projects (bluebird trail, purple martin house, and lake monitoring) with minor modifications per UW-Madison COVID-19 guidelines.

The Friends generously donated \$4,000 to the Preserve stewardship fund and \$15,000 for continued restoration efforts within Eagle Heights Woods. Many thanks to the Friends of the Preserve for their support and dedication to promoting the Preserve.

Student learning in the Lakeshore Nature Preserve continued in 2020

...with face coverings, physical distancing, and lots of fresh air.



From the left: Prof. Jonathan Pauli discusses wildlife techniques with a student research team, students harvest vegetable crops in the F.H. King farm, Biocore students kick off the semester in the experimental prairie.

Land Management and Facility Maintenance

1 EAGLE HEIGHTS WOODS – Staff conducted spring and summer vegetation surveys to track progress of restoration efforts following invasive brush removal by contractors.



2 FRAUTSCHI POINT – Staff and volunteers removed invasive brush, burned 15 brush piles, and sowed native seed. Staff planted native shrubs (funded by the Friends).



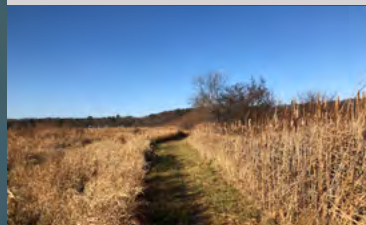
3 BIOCORE PRAIRIE – Staff and contractors conducted a prescribed burn on Nov. 12. UW Arboretum researcher Christy Lowney tested fire intensity data recorders.



4 PICNIC POINT – Fire circles closed mid-March due to COVID-19 restrictions. Staff monitored site use and stocked toilet paper and hand sanitizer in restrooms.



5 CLASS OF 1918 MARSH – Staff mowed and cut brush to maintain trails.



6 LAKE MENDOTA DRIVE – After hazard tree removals in the utility right-of-way, staff and volunteers mowed brush and pulled thistle, burdock and other weeds.



PLANTING AND SEEDING –

- Staff planted 2 oak trees (one each at Picnic Point and Biocore Prairie).
- Staff planted native grasses and forbs at fire circle #3.
- Staff collected seed from 22 species of native plants and sowed it across 11 acres.



TRAIL SAFETY – Staff, in partnership with UW Grounds, removed hazardous and downed trees and repaired erosion on trails.



TRAIL MONITORING – Volunteers monitored 12 miles of trails, reported on conditions, checked signage, picked up litter, and pruned back vegetation.



INVASIVE PLANT CONTROL –

- Volunteers and staff scouted for and pulled garlic mustard over 90 acres. Staff herbicided dense stands of first year garlic mustard in Bill's woods.
- Volunteers and staff removed buckthorn, honeysuckle, and porcelain berry over 35 acres.
- Volunteers scouted for and pulled Japanese hedge parsley in Frautschi Point and Tent Colony Woods.
- Staff mowed/cut reed canary grass, non-native thistle, and leafy spurge in prairie, old field, and bioswales.
- Staff worked with UW Housing, the Dept. of Natural Resources, and a contractor to facilitate herbicide treatment of state prohibited Lesser celandine.





Opening the landscape

Adam Gundlach, Field Projects Coordinator

The long view, reaching back across the pages of time, inscribed into early survey records and journal entries of colonists, describes a wide-open terrain dotted with scattered groups of oaks.

Orson Lyon, Original Land Survey, December 1834...

Describing a point about a ½-mile west of Willow Creek:

“Land hilly and 2nd rate timber. White, black, & burr oak. Undergrowth same with grass.”

Describing a point in the vicinity of Eagle Heights Woods:

“Land hilly & 2nd rate timber. White, black, & burr oak. Undergrowth oak, hazel, & grass.”

Open landscapes in this region are very much human landscapes. Without the interplay of indigenous people burning, coupled with the workings of herds of large herbivores, the oak savannas and woodlands of southern Wisconsin we now try to restore would have closed into dense forest long ago. And that’s the state in which many of those communities are found today – dense, closed, with a modern-day invasive plant twist.

The present-day long view, stretching to the horizon across Lake Mendota, is often only found by scrambling through a thicket to a shoreline nook for a peak. Today, most vantage points from trails and paths are intentionally carved out and maintained as viewsheds, often toiling annually to fight back the ceaseless in-fill of trees and shrubs. Without that intention and management attention, scenic views close, as do sun-loving natural communities.

In 2020, we continued to thin trees around desirable oaks along the southern edge of Frautschi and Second Point Woods and open the lake view just to the east in the Biocore Overlook. The work is a drop of sawdust in the bucket toward objectives of “Oak Opening” and “Savanna Transition” laid out across much of the core of the Preserve in the 2006 Lakeshore Nature Preserve Master Plan. The work of opening the landscape and stewarding more open communities continues and will do so well into the future, as resources allow.

Visitor Counter Helps Tell Story

Connor Kotte, Natural Areas Assistant

In August 2020, with equipment purchased through donor gift funds, the Preserve partnered with UW Transportation Services to install a visitor counter at the entrance to Picnic Point. The equipment records a count for every passing visitor and distinguishes the direction of travel (i.e. entering vs exiting the Preserve). The counter runs 24/7 and data is uploaded in real time to the cloud.

While Picnic Point is perhaps one of the Preserve’s primary entrances, there are numerous locations where people can enter the Preserve. After at least 1 full year of data from Picnic Point the counter can be moved to different locations.

Visitation data is extremely useful to the management of a facility like the Preserve. It can inform programming, land management, and infrastructure issues, like trails, trash and recycling, and toilets. Data can be analyzed to provide insights on monthly, weekly, or hourly totals and averages and peak weekend and after-hours activity. Preserve staff will continue to utilize this data in new ways to inform management, improve safety, and communicate the benefits of natural area visitation. Who would have guessed that in just over 4 months in Fall 2020 that 48,552 visitors passed through the Picnic Point entrance?



UW staff make adjustments to the visitor counter.

Bryn Scriver

In 2020, the Preserve received gifts totaling \$113,120 from 126 donors.

2020 Donors

Gifts to Stewardship Fund:

John Aeschlimann
Colleen & Kenneth Albrecht
Colleen Anderson
Dan Anderson & Joan Nugent
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Mariana & Frank Weinhold
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Gifts to Endowment Fund:

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Paul Rabinowitz
Rayla Temin
Stanley Temple
Maxine Triff
Ronald & Margaret Wallace
Mariana & Frank Weinhold
Levi & Janet Wood

Gifts to Friends Eagle Heights Woods Project:

Colleen & Kenneth Albrecht
Catherin Buege
Andrew Crummy
Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve
W Jerome Frautschi
Nancy Lee
Ellen Stephenson
Sarah & John Williams

Gifts to the 1918 Marsh Healing Path Fund:

Susan Denholm
Blair Mathews & Karen Johnson Mathews

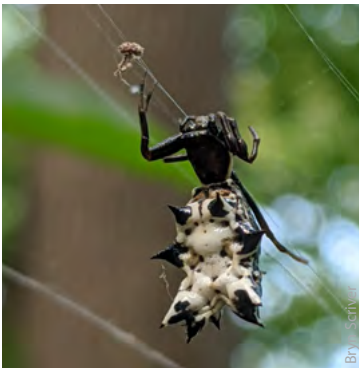
Gifts received in honor:

Doris Dubielzig – given by Richard E. Dubielzig
Gisela Kutzbach – given by Catherine Buege
Roma Lenehan – given by Susan Denholm
Blair Mathews – given by Susan Denholm

Gifts received in memory:

Paul Richard Carpenter – given by Doris Dubielzig
Dennis Cooper – given by Janis Cooper
Harriet Riley – given by Ronald Towle & Elinor Riley
Howard Temin – given by William & Alexandra Dove
Graham Olson – given by Nancy Lee

We strive for accuracy. If you have a correction, please contact laura.wyatt@wisc.edu or 608-265-9275.



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 current members for their time and service.

2020-21 Preserve Committee

Voting members

- Sara Hotchkiss–Faculty, Botany (Committee Chair)
- David Bart–Faculty, Planning & Landscape Architecture
- Anna Pidgeon–Faculty, Forest & Wildlife Ecology
- Janet Batzli–Academic Staff, Biology Core Curriculum
- Rob Beattie–Academic Staff, Nelson Institute
- Joe Webb–Academic Staff, Outdoor UW
- Benjamin Burke–Student
- Andrew Busker–Student
- Alexis Paus–Student

Non-voting ex-officio or consultants

- Gary Brown–Director, Lakeshore Nature Preserve
- Stephen Sentoff–Board President, Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve
- Kelly Ignatoski–Director, University Apartments
- Rhonda James–Senior Landscape Architect, Campus Planning & Landscape Architecture
- Karen Oberhauser–Director, UW Arboretum

2020 Lakeshore Nature Preserve Staff

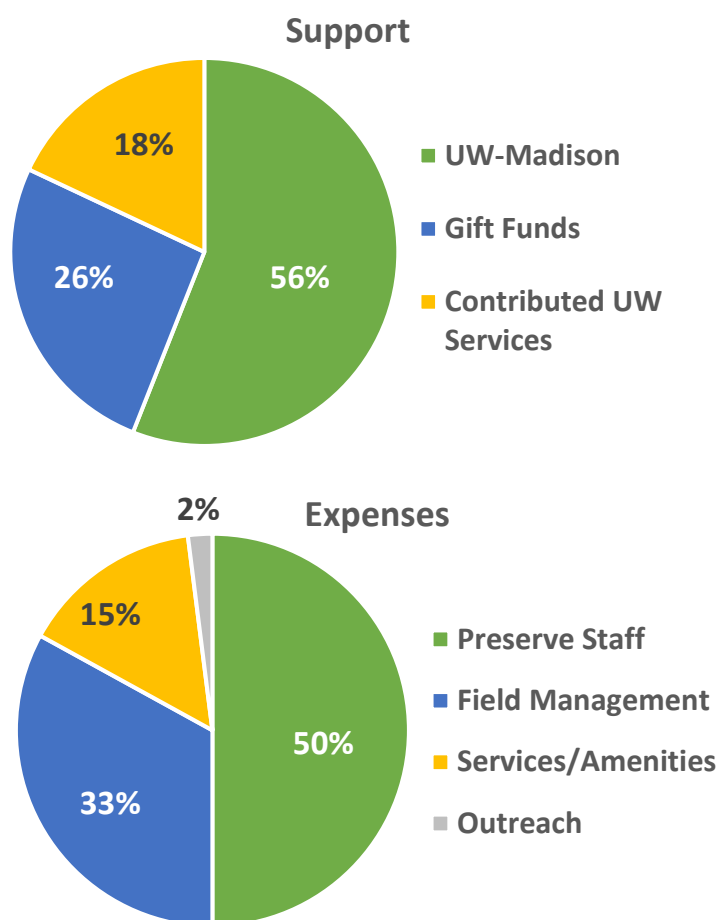
- Gary Brown, Director, gary.brown@wisc.edu
- Laura Wyatt, Program Manager, laura.wyatt@wisc.edu
- Bryn Scriver, Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator, bryn.scriver@wisc.edu
- Adam Gundlach, Field Projects Coordinator, adam.gundlach@wisc.edu
- Heidi Belling, Seasonal Invasive Species Specialist
- Connor Kotte, Seasonal Natural Areas Assistant



**Facilities Planning
& Management**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2020 Financials—Budget \$298,711



Your support makes a difference

With your support the Lakeshore Nature Preserve is able to shelter natural environments and cultural resources on the UW-Madison campus for the purpose of active learning, research, and outreach in a place of respite and wellbeing.

While the university provides staff and basic services, gift funds are critical to support our volunteer program, invasive plant management, and ecological restoration, and to provide applied work experience for students and seasonal staff.



To support the Preserve's mission make a donation today!

Visit supportuw.org/giveto/lakeshore/