

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON LAKESHORE NATURE PRESERVE 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



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The removal of the Natatorium in 2021 to make way for a new campus gym/nat exposed, for at least a short time, a unique view of Willow Creek Woods savanna.

A Message from the Director

By Gary Brown, PLA, FASLA

Well, here we are more than one full year into the pandemic, and we are seeing rays of sunshine on the horizon. Vaccines are available and the university is leading an effort to get all faculty, staff, and students vaccinated. I think we've all learned a lot in the past 18 months. We figured out how to work virtually in all its various forms. We've been able to keep the Preserve safely open for use by our stakeholders, including the many new visitors seeking respite in nature.

I want to sincerely thank the Preserve staff for their perseverance and diligence in both working from home and in the Preserve. To our Preserve Committee members, our volunteers, and the Friends, thank you for supporting the staff and helping out where you can, either with your time & talents or with your financial support. This is greatly appreciated as we all continue to come together and define what the new normal will be moving forward in advocating for and supporting the Preserve.

As the pandemic wears on, the Preserve continues to see record-breaking use. Be it for research or teaching physically distanced learners, rest or relaxation, the Preserve and all its resources have been there for us. In 2021, the Preserve's visitor counter recorded 138,831 people walking to the tip of Picnic Point. This is the most traveled route in the Preserve to enjoy views of the lake and city skyline. On your next visit we encourage you to explore other portions of the 300-acre Preserve. To map a new route, go to our [Plan a Visit](#) or [Places in the Preserve](#) web pages or join a [Friends of the Preserve guided walk](#).

I'm happy to report that we will be updating the 2006 Preserve Master Plan during 2022 which will guide future land management and provide support for the university's mission of teaching, research, and outreach. Together with

the recently completed 2020 Preserve Strategic Plan, the Preserve will be able to chart a course of long-term support and strategic direction. Watch for announcements on how you can 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!



Pandemic milestones:

- **Biocore Prairie Bird Banding Observatory – resumed April 2021**
- **Prairie Partners intern program – resumed May 2021**
- **Friends field trips – resumed Sept. 2021**
- **Drop-in volunteer events – resumed Oct. 2021**
- **Fire circles remain closed**
- **Preserve hours remain sunrise to sunset**

Preserve Staff Recognized with Teamwork Award

The Lakeshore Nature Preserve staff team of Gary Brown, Adam Gundlach, Connor Kotte, Bryn Scriver, and Laura Wyatt was recognized with the UW-Madison Facilities Planning and Management (FP&M) 2021 Teamwork Award.

Nominated by the chair of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve Committee Professor Sara Hotchkiss, the award recognizes teams that:

- Maintain effective working relationships with co-workers, supervisors, or customers
- Encourage teamwork by recognizing and promoting employee strengths
- Acknowledge the strengths of all employees and encourage teamwork
- Collaborate and cooperate when solving problems
- Support UW–Madison values to achieve positive results together



Photo provided by FP&M Marketing and Communications

The 2021 Lakeshore Nature Preserve team (left to right: Gary Brown, Bryn Scriver, Adam Gundlach, Laura Wyatt, and Connor Kotte) was highlighted in a video awards presentation. [Watch the video](#) to meet the Preserve staff and learn more about what they do.

In 2021, 78 teaching/research permits were issued to 25 UW departments & programs, 5 government entities, and 6 community organizations.

Preserve Supports University Teaching, Research, and Outreach Mission

By Laura Wyatt, Preserve Program Manager

For many of us the Lakeshore Nature Preserve is the largest outdoor teaching and research laboratory on campus. In addition to providing a location for 78 defined educational projects in 2021, the Preserve provides a unique, hands-on opportunity for student environmental engagement and learning.

In addition, the Preserve provides funding through its Student Engagement Grant program for undergraduate teaching and research projects that utilize its 300-acre laboratory. In 2021 the Preserve Committee awarded five grants totaling \$5,000. The funds are made possible through an endowment established by former faculty members, Robert M. Goodman and Henry Hart. The 2021 awards went to the following projects:

- Wild and Domestic Canid Activity in the Preserve, Ali Thompson, Undergraduate Researcher
- The Efficacy of Porous Pavement within the Preserve, Cole Koffron, Undergraduate Researcher
- Isolation and Characterization of Protective Pollen Actinobacteria, Claire Reichardt, Undergraduate Researcher
- Beginning Birding Educational Series: Using Birdwatching to Encourage Environmental Awareness and Action, Audubon Society at UW-Madison (ASUM)

- Student-led Composting at Eagle Heights [Gardens], Ava Padilla, F.H. King Farm Student Director

We are blessed with hundreds of student volunteers, many of whom are not looking at a future career in natural resource management. However, most are aware of environmental challenges and are interested in how they can be part of the solution. Working alongside Preserve professional staff provides opportunities to discuss the physical value of their work and ways they can engage as “responsible” citizens to protect and nurture natural areas in the communities where they live and work.

For those students interested in a natural resources profession, working in the Preserve provides valuable technical experiences—like a residency. Employers are looking for candidates with applied, hands-on experience beyond the normal classroom seat time. In 2021 the Preserve was able to support four student employees and five Prairie Partners interns. These opportunities are solely supported by donations.

Thank you for your continuing support of the Preserve and the future of natural areas management.

Preserve and UW Arboretum co-host Wisconsin Master Naturalist Training

By Bryn Scriver, Preserve Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator

In October 2021 the Lakeshore Nature Preserve and the UW Arboretum co-hosted a Wisconsin Master Naturalist training with a focus on ecological restoration. Twenty participants engaged in the 40-hour training learning about ecological principles and the restoration process, practicing restoration and interpretive techniques, and visiting local field sites.

On a field day in the Preserve, participants collected native seed, practiced invasive buckthorn removal techniques, experienced a live fire demo, and toured Eagle Heights Woods

with Preserve staff. Wisconsin First Detector Network Coordinator Anne Pearce led participants on an invasive species walk on Picnic Point and State Assistant Archeologist Amy Rosebrough gave a fascinating look into local Native American history and showcased the Preserve's Indian burial mounds.

Visit the [Wisconsin Master Naturalist website](#) to learn more about this UW-Madison Extension Program.



Master Naturalists-in-training participated in restoration activities in the Preserve and the UW Arboretum.

Students Earn while they Learn and Contribute to the Preserve

By Bryn Scriver, Preserve Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator and Adam Gundlach, Preserve Field Projects Coordinator

In 2021 we welcomed a record nine student workers to the Lakeshore Nature Preserve—4 student employees and 5 Prairie Partners interns.

Two undergraduate students, Ben Kotte and Rebecca Lennie, worked part-time in the spring to find and pull garlic mustard plants before they set seed. Ben later joined graduate students Zoe Horns and Connor Kotte to work full-time during the summer and part-time into the fall. One of their responsibilities was to maintain the most visited places in the Preserve—making sure paths were clear and the restrooms and gathering spaces were clean and safe for visitors. These important paid positions were funded by gifts to the [Lakeshore Nature Preserve Stewardship Fund](#) at the UW Foundation.

For twelve Thursdays in the summer, the Preserve welcomed the Prairie Partners interns—Emma Raasch, Cara Farrow, Luke DeBiasio, Kyle Hulbert, and Bill Davis. The Prairie Partners program is administered by Madison Audubon and shares one crew between five local conservation organizations. The Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve fund the Preserve's participation.

For all the students, work revolved around restoration ecology in all its facets. They learned how to safely use power equipment, vehicles, and herbicide. They experienced the Preserve while cutting, pulling, mowing and selectively treating various invasive and weedy plants. They also honed their plant identification skills while

collecting native seed and conducting vegetation surveys in Eagle Heights Woods.

In addition to receiving supervision from Preserve staff, the students benefitted from a cadre of experts who provided educational enrichment throughout the summer, introducing them to a range of topics including limnology, lichens, birds and bird banding, prescribed fire, and canids.

We are thankful for the support that allows us to offer these work experiences to students.



Students participate in bird banding by recording data with Biocore Prairie Bird Banding Observatory coordinator Jackie Sandberg.



Emeritus Professor John Magnuson schools the students on lake monitoring aboard the Limnos II.



The interns examine lichens under the tutelage of Emeritus Senior Scientist Suzy Will-Wolf.



Adam Gundlach

Prescribed fire activities, like this controlled burn in Willow Creek Woods savanna, provide hands-on, live fire experience for UW students.

Pandemic to Pyrogenic Pursuits

By Adam Gundlach, Preserve Field Projects Coordinator

2021 brought a return of fire to the Preserve following the initial Covid lockdown in 2020 when land management activities were greatly curtailed, and no prescribed fires were conducted.

In January 2021, Preserve staff were back to setting fires, initially with snow cover to burn away brush piles of accumulated volunteer efforts. In March, prescribed fire returned to Willow Creek Woods savanna, following several years of repeated seeding and initial establishment of prairie-savanna vegetation. The burn furthered management goals for the site and supported the university's academic mission by providing hands-on, live fire experience for UW students in LA375 Prescribed Fire – Ecology and Implementation (now listed as LA581).

For natural communities adapted to fire regimes, a lack of fire over an extended period is much like a drought, or, at the opposite end, a flood, which stresses the community and selects toward a different assemblage of species. In the case of fire-dependent species, the flood waters can be thought of as an expanding sea of shade and an accumulation of leaf litter and debris, which smothers species that formerly thrived in open conditions.

While fire may not be a panacea for all land care needs, when used appropriately to meet management goals, prescribed fire is an efficient and effective partner in encouraging diverse natural communities.

After many years of work at the south end of Frautschi Point to remove invasive brush and establish native savanna

species, the first prescribed fire was conducted April 4, 2021. The burn was the next layer in management toward a more open woodland edge, following tree thinning work completed in 2020 around the grove of white oaks. The same day, additional burns were completed in Biocore Prairie and the mounds loop in Eagle Heights Woods.

The autumn burn season brought favorable conditions on November 23, 2021 to complete a prescribed burn in central Eagle Heights Woods. On short notice over the Thanksgiving holiday, a crew was pieced together with support from UW Arboretum staff and Quercus Land Stewardship Services to burn a 2-acre unit south of the mounds trail loop. Management of this unit seeks to maintain open woodland structure. The burn served both to check growth of saplings and shrubs, as well as prepare for winter seeding of a variety of forbs, grasses, and sedges. Over the years ahead, new flower stalks will make their first appearance in the community. Periodically, fire will spread across the site to push back on the creeping sea of shade and encourage fresh growth and abundant floral resources under the canopy of watchful oaks.

Prescribed fire operations in the Lakeshore Nature Preserve are funded through gifts from our generous supporters. [Consider a donation](#) to keep the torch lit on land management in the Preserve.



Adam Gundlach

Staff burns brush that was cut and piled by volunteers.



Adam Gundlach

Prescribed fire is used in Eagle Heights Woods to maintain an open woodland.



Boyd Schriver

A UW student gets hands-on instruction in using a drip torch.

Volunteers by the numbers...

**281
volunteers**

**1,944
service
hours**

**23 student/
community
groups**

Volunteer contributions:

- **5 acres of invasive brush cut**
- **12 miles of trails monitored**
- **90 acres searched and cleared of invasive garlic mustard plants**
- **350+ native plugs planted**
- **1 acre of woodland seeds sowed**



Bryn Scriber



Bryn Scriber



Adam Gundlach

Re-engaging Volunteers

As the UW relaxed pandemic precautions, the Preserve welcomed back volunteer groups and resumed drop-in volunteer events at the start of the fall 2021 semester.

In 2021, 281 volunteers contributed 1,944 service hours to the care of the Preserve, and 23 student and community groups participated in volunteer activities. Volunteers scoured 90 acres for invasive garlic mustard, cut 5 acres of invasive brush, monitored 12 miles of trails, planted hundreds of native plant plugs, sowed native seed across nearly an acre of woodland, and assisted with administrative projects like mailings.

Staff was particularly eager to reengage students, and we made doing so a priority. Many students, especially sophomores but even some juniors, had little to no knowledge or experience with the Preserve due to COVID disruptions to campus life. Students were eager for opportunities to be outdoors working alongside friends and classmates.

While the Preserve utilizes volunteers to carry out some of the labor-intensive work of restoring campus native plant communities, we see engaging volunteers as more than just free labor. We understand the benefits that volunteers reap, intellectually, health-wise, psychologically, and socially from participating in ecological restoration and land management work. These benefits are critically important for the well-being of students and members of the campus and larger community.

Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve

In 2021 the Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve continued to deliver on their mission to inspire people to connect to and care for the Lakeshore Nature Preserve.

In March they held their 2nd annual “It’s in Our Nature” Poetry Open Mic. You can listen to recorded pieces on the [Friends People and Events webpage](#). In April they held their 20th Annual Meeting featuring UW-Madison Asst. Professor of Printmaking Emily Arthur. In April and May Friends volunteers joined Preserve staff in 2 annual stewardship activities—the garlic mustard pull and the spring planting event. Over the course of the year the Friends coordinated and hosted more than 200 attendees at their monthly field trips, which were self-guided through August and returned to in-person at the start of the fall semester. Friend’s volunteers also maintained three citizen science projects: the Purple Martin house, the Bluebird trail, and water quality monitoring in University Bay with the Clean Lakes Alliance.

The Friends continued to provide financial support to the Lakeshore Nature Preserve for the Prairie Partners intern program (\$7,500), the Eagle Heights Woods project (\$6,000), a matching gift for the Day of the Badger fundraising event (\$4,000), as well as contributing \$30,000 towards the Preserve Master Plan Update.

We are ever grateful for the support of the all-volunteer Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve organization. You can learn more on the [Friends website](#).

In 2021, the Preserve received 279 gifts totaling \$552,966.

2021 Donors

Gifts to Stewardship Fund:

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Aleasha & Matthew Anderson
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Gifts to Friends Eagle Heights

Woods project:
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Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve
Nancy Mohs

Gifts to Class of 1918 Marsh

Healing Path Fund:
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Stephen H. Sentoff Fund - supporting Preserve internships:
Monica Sentoff

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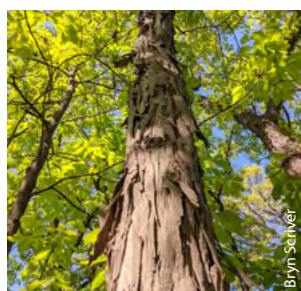
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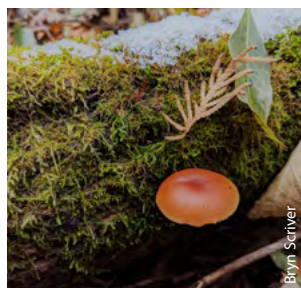
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Bryn Scrivner



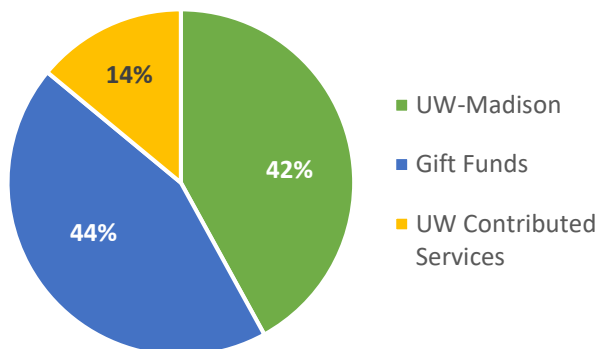
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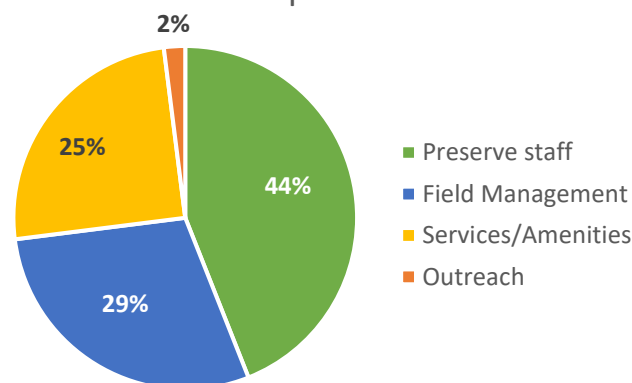
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2021 Financials—Budget \$446,344

Support



Expenses



Donors Make it Possible

By Laura Wyatt, Preserve Program Manager

Donors continue to make our work possible. In 2021 donors gave 279 gifts totaling \$552,966. Most gifts were under \$50—showing every gift counts. We received gifts from a growing number of supporters who have indicated they want to be a partner in supporting the Preserve. Thank you!

Of the one-half million in funds raised, \$360,000 was given to donor designated projects, and therefore restricted in use, including the master plan update, outreach center planning, named memorial projects, and the Preserve Endowment.

This leaves approximately \$190,000 to cover all land management costs (equipment, vehicles, seeds, and plants) and labor costs for student and seasonal employees and contractors who assist, as needed, with prescribed burns and some hazard tree removal. Gift funds also make the volunteer

program possible by paying for tools, gloves, and break-time snacks. Ecological restoration and land management projects would simply not happen without the generosity of our donors.

Special expenditures for 2021 include \$18,000 for a new Kubota utility vehicle to safely transfer staff and equipment, \$80,000 to update the master plan, plus funds to support removal of ash trees infested by the emerald ash borer.

We are thankful for all the ways individuals and groups come together to care for this special campus landscape. If you would like to support the Preserve financially, gifts can be made to the [Lakeshore Nature Preserve Stewardship Fund](#) at the UW Foundation.

Lakeshore Nature Preserve Interactive Map Retired

By Bryn Scriver, Preserve Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator

The Lakeshore Nature Preserve Interactive Map, created in 2006, was forced into retirement when Adobe Flash Player was no longer supported at the end of 2020. It was designed at the UW-Madison Cartography Lab by a team of graduate students, supervised by Professor Mark Harrower. According to Robert Roth, the current Cart Lab Director who was one of the students who developed the map, "15 years is a *really* long shelf life for an interactive map."

Not for merely finding one's way, the interactive map featured an analytical comparison tool whereby a person could compare any 14 layers of historic and more current

aerial photos and natural features (like soils or topography) to see and compare changes in the land over time. In this way the map served to help many students with finding and interpreting information about the Preserve for class or research projects.

We hope to be able to resurrect the interactive map in the future in a mobile-first version. As with most Lakeshore Nature Preserve projects this will require a significant gift, but one that can have a significant impact on learning in the Preserve.

You can support the Preserve today!

Visit supportuw.org/giveto/lakeshore/

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
- Andrew Busker–Student
- Alexis Paus–Student
- Open–Student

Non-voting ex-officio or consultants

- Gary Brown–Director, Lakeshore Nature Preserve
- Tom Bryan–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

Lakeshore Nature Preserve Staff

- Gary Brown, Director, gary.brown@wisc.edu
- Laura Wyatt, Program Manager, laura.wyatt@wisc.edu
- Adam Gundlach, Field Projects Coordinator, adam.gundlach@wisc.edu
- Bryn Scriver, Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator, bryn.scriver@wisc.edu
- Ben Kotte, Student Natural Area Assistant
- Connor Kotte, Seasonal Natural Area Technician
- Rebecca Lennie, Student Natural Area Assistant
- Zoe Horns, Seasonal Invasive Species Specialist

