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FROM THE DIRECTOR

As I write this, we are in the midst of a mean streak of winter, but we know it won't last forever. In a few short weeks spring will begin to pry the jaws of ice apart and shepherd the return of the birds and flowers we love. We enter into a season of hope and plan for good things to come.

Coronavirus has added to the somber nature of the winter season, but as with the weather, we hope to emerge renewed from that challenge as well. We don't know just

when things will improve in terms of being able to gather people together, but we're planning and will be ready

“ We enter into a season of hope and plan for good things to come. ”

when the time comes. We've been very busy even in the face of the pandemic managing the habitat in the preserve, studying birds and other animals and plants, welcoming many visitors who are hiking the trails, and giving people new opportunities to learn about their world. School field trips have been replaced by family nature kits, online programs, and small group excursions. We are more than grateful that our members and sponsors haven't given up on us, and see the value that 1500 acres of nature brings to our community.

We've had some time to live with our new addition, and we're excited for the capacity it gives us in terms of space for events and programs. We're also excited about a new family education room that is being developed

in the older part of our center. If you've attended programs in the past, imagine that space being dedicated to a learning area with a focus on science, art, reading, bird study, and outdoor learning. We're also looking forward to using our new kitchen at our first drive-through Bird Breakfast in May.

We still remain focused on our mission- habitat preservation and education. Our place is a bird sanctuary in the truest sense- complex habitat formed over thousands of years, poised on a major migratory route. Our Motus telemetry tracking station is confirming what

we have long suspected- birds nesting far from here move through our preserve and depend on its resources for their survival. It takes incredible effort and resources to maintain a preserve like this in a state that fully benefits thousands of species of wildlife. Preserve it we must, as places like this are rare. That the rusty-patched bumblebee and forked aster call us home is a testament to the special nature of Woodland Dunes. Maintaining the land and sharing it with you, who appreciate it, makes all of this worthwhile.

As spring comes, we look forward to seeing you and sharing the wonders of this amazing place.

~ Jim Knickelbine, Executive Director



**Dr. Fred & Charlotte Alyea,
Champions of Nature and Woodland Dunes**



By Nancy Nabak

A grain of sand is all it takes. Over the last year and a half, I've come to think of Dr. Fred and Charlotte Alyea as that initial grain of sand creating a pearl - our new nature center addition. If it weren't for them, it's highly unlikely the addition would exist.

Fred, now an octogenarian, was born in Texas but he moved to Waukesha Wisconsin in his early youth. There he discovered that he had a passion for nature. He also had a passion for music and sports, and fittingly, he learned that by being in nature he could have it all. Hiking, listening to the music of bird songs, and taking in the wonders of an entire ecosystem fed his soul. It also sparked his scientifically curious side. At just age 13, he and a friend started to write their own version of a bird guide.

Charting his course into the sciences as a young adult, Fred attended UW-Madison where he met his wife, Charlotte. Whether or not a scientific formula can be created here, the Law of Attraction, the ability to attract into our lives what we are focusing on, was definitely in play. Fred was a member of the Acacia Fraternity on campus. Charlotte was a member of the Tri Delta Sorority. According to Charlotte,

"The Acacias held a fraternity party one night where I showed up with a blind date. Fred was also there with a date. However, as the evening progressed, we both realized that we were with the wrong person. "They wouldn't make the mistake again. A week later, their real first date was at a concert of the world-renowned cellist, Pablo Casals. (Fred was also an accomplished cellist.)

Charlotte received her degree in Elementary Education and Fred received his Meteorology degree in 1964, followed by an advanced degree at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado.

They married and Charlotte taught grade school until they began to have a family. She then chose to stay home to raise their two children, Kristin and Brian. As an atmospheric scientist, Fred was one of the premier researchers with several published works on ozone-depleting gases from the 1970s to the late 1990s. The United Nations Environment Programme officially recognized Fred for his contribution in 2007 to the Nobel Peace Prize with Al Gore, the United States Vice President. Fred's research influenced the Montreal Protocol consensus, signed by 24 countries, to phase out ozone-

depleting substances at 50% by 1999. Because of his initial work, today we have a broader understanding about the connection between human activities and climate change.

It was also during this time that Charlotte and Fred discovered Woodland Dunes through our mutual friend and Board Member, Dr. Chuck Sontag. Sontag and Alyea were neighborhood friends as children and have remained in each other's lives since. Through the years, the Alyeas would visit the Sontags in Manitowoc, and Chuck & Fred would resume their birding adventures at Woodland Dunes. Fred immediately recognized what a special place this was; something organic here resonated with his spirit. He also saw a need. The Dunes could use extra financial support and he knew of someone who might be able to give it. With Fred's recommendation, Jack Alyea (Fred's brother) and his wife, Laurel, made investments into enhancing the nature center, built the observation tower, and supported several other projects. The last gift was the lead donation to the 5,000 square foot addition.

According to Sontag, Fred and Charlotte have come to regard Woodland Dunes as something immensely important in their lives. "Woodland Dunes is their premier nature center and they take great pride in the help they've been able to offer. It brings them personal joy." Each year, Fred and Charlotte personally sponsor a much-needed intern during the busy summer season. In fact, the Dunes is such a big part of their life that they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary here with their family - coming all the way from Atlanta Georgia.

Through the years Fred and Charlotte have become much more than visitors, much more than supporters. They are part of the heart we use when thinking about our habitat management. They are part of our creativity when developing educational programs for youth. They are a part of our Woodland Dunes DNA. They are family.

Photo credit: Brian Alyea

It's time to Dash, Walk & Roll!

Hey Dashers! Registration is now open for the Dash, Walk & Roll! Please help support our beautiful habitat and children's nature-based education programs!

We will be offering a **virtual, non-competitive 5K** again this year due to social distancing and safety reasons. Fun addition: we are also adding a **10K biking** element for any of you who would like to participate on wheels.

Great news! You can Dash, Walk or Roll *anywhere* you'd like from April 17 - May 1! (We have full hopes to bring this back in person by next April.)

Please join us, tell your friends, and get out and get some exercise! Set a goal and go for it!

Take selfie photos - get creative - while you're out and send them to nancyn@woodlanddunes.org. We want to highlight you as one of our participants on Facebook and in our newsletter! **Remember, near or far, you can be a part of us now!**

After your course is complete, please register your time and watch for T-shirt pick up details.

Fees:

- Now thru March 27 - \$25 per adult and \$10 per child - guaranteed T-shirts
- March 28th - Apr. 16 - \$35 per adult and \$10 per child - guaranteed T-shirts
- Apr. 17 - May 1: \$40 per adult, \$10 per child - guaranteed T-shirts

Curbside pick up of T-shirts will be available after the event ends. See mailing details with registration sign up. Stay tuned for more details as this event develops!

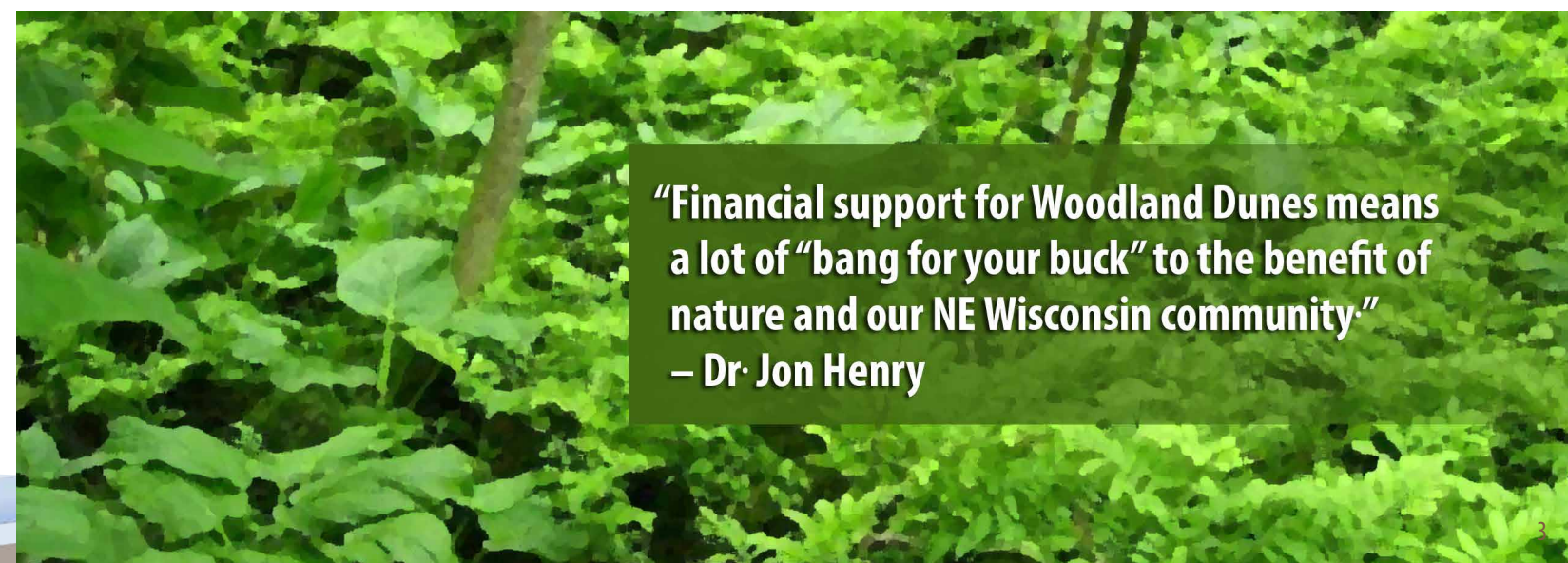


Register Here:
runsignup.com/Race/WI/TwoRivers/DashattheDunes

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Metalware Corp. is partnering with Woodland Dunes to protect vital Great Lakes Ridges and Swales habitat near the Ice Age Trail.



"Financial support for Woodland Dunes means a lot of "bang for your buck" to the benefit of nature and our NE Wisconsin community!"
- Dr. Jon Henry

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Lucy Brey

How long have you volunteered at Woodland Dunes and what made you become involved? I've been a volunteer for about four years. I wanted to put my time and support into an organization that promoted nature and wildlife. I also wanted to make sure it had goals that shared those things with our young so they grow up appreciating nature and its beauty.

What do you most enjoy about being involved with Woodland Dunes? The people who are the faces of the Dunes! The staff is so devoted to making the Dunes a wonderful place to visit. I also like seeing the visitors come in and how they are excited to try the trails, play in the children's area, or attend the educational offerings. There is always something happening.

What are some of your favorite pastimes or hobbies? I spend a lot of time at the piano trying to get my fingers to cooperate. I've been taking guitar lessons also, hoping to play some campfire songs one day. During the pandemic I started putting puzzles together, I have better luck at this than with the piano! I've always been a reader, and enjoy book clubs when we can get together. I love flowers and nature and watching the seasons change.

Words of wisdom for other volunteers? Decide for yourself what time you can spare and what fits your interests. So you don't get overwhelmed or feel it has become an obligation without joy, start small. Spending time helping others is rewarding.



Land Management

It is hard to believe that spring is approaching. Winter of 2020-2021 brought mild temperatures for most of the season, allowing restoration activities such as controlling invasive species and cutting chicken wire (for tree protection) to continue. We were able to hire our summer interns back on over their winter break and now much of our spring preparation work is ahead of schedule.

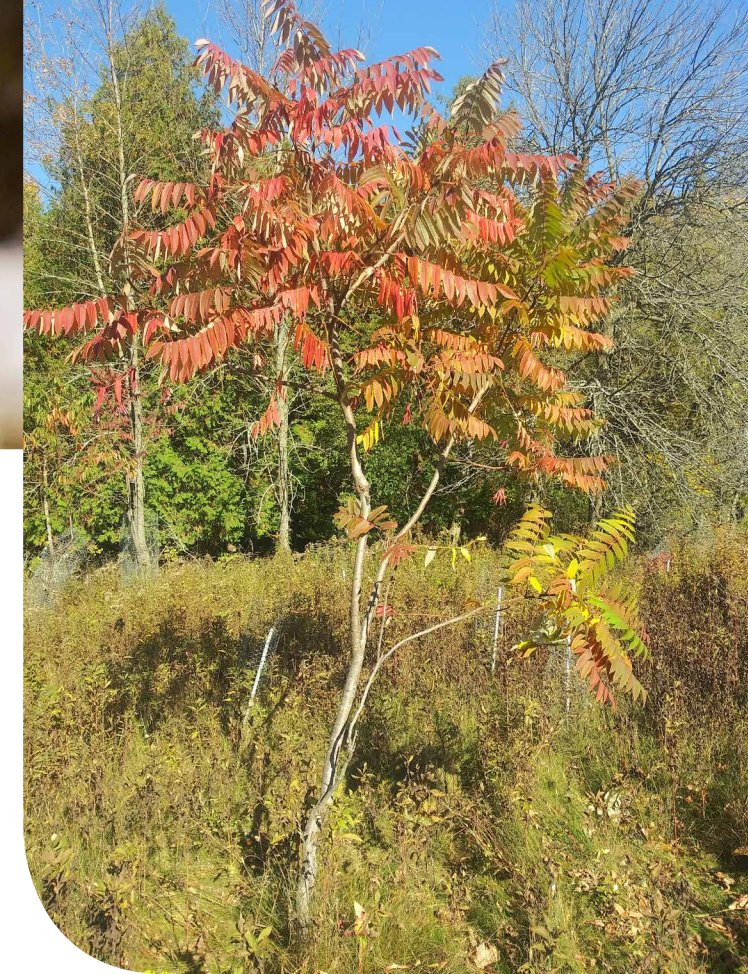
You may be wondering why we order so many rolls of chicken wire and spend so many hours cutting them into smaller pieces to put around the trees we plant. There is a very healthy deer population within our preserve and they somehow find our newly planted trees like a salad bar prepared just for them. While deer like to eat our nutrient-rich and nursery grown trees, that isn't the only threat they pose towards them. In the fall, bucks need to rub their velvety antlers on something. Our nice healthy, perfectly spaced out trees look appealing to them for this task as well.

It is hard to know when to remove those cages. There is a fine line between not wanting the cage to become part of the tree and removing the cage too soon. For example, there is a very nice sumac that was planted in 2015. It had grown much taller than its cage, although it definitely had more room for width. Unfortunately, a branch or two grew over the cage. I removed the cage on October 8, 2020. On November 25, I happened to be driving past that same tree, and saw that a buck had rubbed on the trunk and completely girdled the tree. I fully expect the tree to be able to regrow from the ground.

Fortunately, most of the trees we've removed cages from are large enough to survive deer activities such as browsing and rubbing. By protecting these trees and shrubs when they are smaller, we're able to have a higher percentage rate of survival. This allows us to get the most out of our funding and volunteer efforts.

Our habitat restoration efforts are funded by donations and grants. This means that on these cold, snowy days, we are working hard on grant applications to ensure our spring planting efforts continue.

— Jeni Klein, Land Management Coordinator



Volunteer Request:

Are you someone who likes to engage with people? Do you have basic phone answering skills? Do you have 3- hour blocks of time that you could donate to Woodland Dunes? If so, we are looking for help at our front desk to greet visitors, answer our phone, and take messages when necessary. Gift shop sales are also part of this position. Face masks are worn at all times in the building and only 10 people at a time are allowed in the Center. Training provided for this easy yet important role at the Dunes. You can help make a difference. If interested, please contact Nancy at 920-793-4007 or nancyn@woodlanddunes.org.

Thank you!



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Please contact us when making a donation of stock.
We want to thank you for your generosity! Thank you!



Virtual Adult Learning Series:

The adult learning series continues in a virtual format and it's simple to participate! Register by calling 793-4007 or emailing Jess at jessicaj@woodlanddunes.org with your name, phone number and email address. Please note registration deadline for each program. You will receive an email with directions and a link to the presentation. Contact Jess with any questions.

MOTUS Wildlife Tracking at the Dunes

Tuesday, March 16th
2:00-3:00pm

Motus is an organization of hundreds of sites in the world which record radio telemetry from birds and other animals fitted with small transmitters. Woodland Dunes operates a Motus station which records birds passing through during migration, and we've recorded some interesting visitors! Join Director, Jim Knickelbine, for a program about our station and the results of monitoring so far. Registration required by Friday, March 12th. Sponsored by Next Era Point Beach Nuclear Plant.

Wisconsin Bumble Bee Brigade: A Brief Overview and How to Get Involved

Tuesday, April 13th
2:00-3:00pm

The Wisconsin Bumble Bee Brigade is the Wisconsin DNR's newest citizen-based monitoring project. Jay Watson of the DNR will present on how the BBB is partnering with the public to improve its understanding, management, and conservation of Wisconsin's 20 native bumble

bee species, many of which are in decline. Volunteers can participate by submitting incidental observations or conducting surveys. In the three years since the project started, many volunteers have submitted observations from across Wisconsin. The Brigade will report the results and provide highlights from the project and share how you can get involved.

Registration required by Friday, April 9th.

Sponsored by Next Era Point Beach Nuclear Plant.

Why Do Birds Sing?

Tuesday, May 11th
6:00-7:00pm

Scientists have known how birds sing for decades but why they sing is still a puzzle. Do they sing for pleasure? For love? To mark a territory? And how do birds know when and what to sing? This virtual talk, led Professor Lauren Ritters of UW-Madison, will explore these questions and also address what birds learn by listening to songs. Registration required by Friday, May 7th. Sponsored by Next Era Point Beach Nuclear Plant.



Virtual Nature Chats

Friday, March 19th
Friday, April 9th
Friday, May 7th
10:00-10:30am

Join Jim Knickelbine, Director and Naturalist and Jess Johnsrud, Education Coordinator for a virtual chat about happenings in the preserve. Participants are encouraged to share recent

wildlife sightings and ask nature questions. Grab a cup of coffee or your favorite morning beverage and join us for this casual gathering on Zoom. Registration required the Thursday before each session.

Annual Midwest Crane Count

Saturday, April 17th
5:30-7:30am

Only a few Sandhill Cranes were left in Wisconsin in the 1930's, but due to protection, their population now exceeds 10,000. Each year, volunteers visit designated sites in Manitowoc County to count courting sandhills in a coordinated effort. If you would like to help, or join a seasoned crane counter to learn the technique, contact the Nature Center at 920-793-4007.



Fly-by Bird Breakfast

Saturday, May 15th
8:00-10:00am

\$6 includes ham, pancakes, fruit compote, real maple syrup and beverage

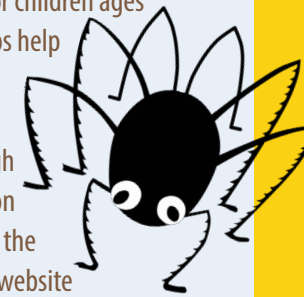
Our annual Bird Breakfast event is modified this year and will be a "to-go" style! Place your order in advance, arrive at the Nature Center at your chosen pick-up time and we'll deliver to your car!

Reservation and payment must be made in advance, no day-of orders or walk-ins. Reservations open Monday, May 10th, so be an early bird and call 920-793-4007 to place your order! Funds raised will support education and land management programs. Sponsored by Thrivent and Country Visions Cooperative Cenex Convenience Stores.



2021 Summer Camps

We hope to hold camps this summer in July and August for children ages 4-11 years old. Camps help kids foster a deeper connection to the natural world through exploration, hands-on activities and play in the preserve. Watch our website and Facebook for more information. Questions, please contact Jess Johnsrud at jessicaj@woodlanddunes.org or call 920-793-4007.



The Butterfly Garden

Plant Focus: Mountain Mint

As I write this article, the north wind is blowing the Polar Vortex through the Dorothy R. Star Garden—a perfect time to think about spring! I'd like to introduce you to one of our native plants and explain why you should consider having it in your own home garden or yard.

Who: Common Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum virginianum*)

What: an herbaceous plant that can grow up to 3 feet tall and branches frequently to the point of looking shrub-like.

When: a perennial that flowers during mid-summer, it has many flattened heads of small white flowers at the ends of the upper stems. The flowers don't all bloom at the same time, so during this period you can see the pretty white blossoms open and fade, beginning at the outside and ending in the center.

Where: it prefers full or partial sun and moist to average conditions. It is not fussy about soil type.

Why: according to Dr. John Hilty from illinoiswildflowers.info, mountain mint is an attractor for a large variety of nectar-seeking insects including bees, wasps, flies, small butterflies, and beetles. But likely because of the mint fragrance, the plant is not attractive to leaf-chewing insects and mammals, so it is rarely bothered.

How: you can purchase mountain mint at locations selling native plants, such as Stone Silo Prairie Gardens in DePere, WI or online at Prairie Moon Nursery in Winona, MN.

The take-away: I highly recommend this plant for the following reasons: it grows quickly and can fill a nice amount of space but can also be controlled by pruning; it smells wonderful; you can use its leaves for tea; it is an excellent native nectar plant.

For more advice on growing mountain mint in your own yard, check out gardeningknowhow.com, and please come visit our very own mountain mint plant this summer! You'll find it in the garden area along the northern border inside the Dorothy R. Star Butterfly Garden.

Wendy Lutzke
Butterfly & Bee Garden Coordinator

Photo by Peter M. Dziuk

To register for any of our programs, please contact Jess at jessicaj@woodlanddunes.org or call at 920-793-4007.



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