VOODLAND DUNES DUNESLETTER Winter 2024 | Volume 198

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Nature photography by Nancy Nabak unless otherwise noted.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

THANK YOU, Members of Woodland Dunes!

NATURE CENTER & PRESERVE

Your support continues to sustain us as we wrap up this momentous 50th year! I am honored and humbled in taking the helm. I am so proud of all the Dunes' staff and volunteers: from front desk greeters to teacher naturalists, habitat

volunteers, bird banders, hunter volunteers, butterfly garden volunteers, and board and committee members who infuse good character and soul into this place! And of course, there are those anonymous folks who show up in unexpected ways to fulfill our mission.

I'm writing this article just before our membership appreciation meeting on Saturday, November 9th. If you attended, you know we are pleased to share that our Forget Me Not Creek Restoration Project kicked off in late October. You can see the new meandering creek slowly taking shape. We humans adjusted the creek once to help access crop growing. Now, we are amending it back to a more natural state that is conducive to fish and quality flood plain habitat.

Other wonderful news - Cattail Trail boardwalk had four weeks of work completed by the WisCorps crew. These young people removed and rebuilt about 500 feet of boardwalk. A new crew will return next fall to complete the project. Cattail Trail will then be safer, flatter, and more accessible for all. Please come out and see the beautiful new sections already in place and enjoy nature all around it.

As a non-profit organization, membership is critical in maintaining our mission. I won't beat around the bush, the future of our Preserve depends on you, and we need to make a slight

increase in our membership levels to keep up with land management costs and guality environmental programs for our children. However, all membership levels will include family members or members of your household. You can also further help us by giving on a recurring monthly basis through a very

Your support continues to sustain us.

simple process (see inside). Please consider this valuable option. You will not see these changes until late January. Thank you to those who have already contributed toward their 2025 investment in the Dunes!

We truly enjoyed celebrating our 50 Years with our 50 Hikes series. Thank you to all the staff, volunteer

hike leaders, and participants who made this series so informative and fun. Next year, we are offering a similar suite of hikes available twice per month. We hope you will come out for more nature and camaraderie.

Before I wrap up, I want to express sincere thanks and appreciation to Wendy Lutzke, our butterfly garden coordinator and environmental educator, for over eight years of dedication. Her years of managing the garden and working with volunteers have made it a wonderful space to spend a summer afternoon (or any season) in the garden. All your caring and dedication shows through with happy flowers, frogs, bees, and butterflies! Happy Retirement, Wendy!

Well, let's hunker down and enjoy our winter season. Make plans to take a winter hike, figure out what to plant in your garden or prairie or woods, hang out with some friends or enjoy a good meal, spend time alone reading a good book, and visit the Dunes often.

In gratitude- Happy New Year,

~ Sue Crowley, executive director

Nature Center

P.O. Box 486 3000 Hawthorne Avenue Two Rivers, WI 54241

Hours

Monday - Friday: 9 am - 4 pm Saturday: 9 am - 12 pm (April - October)

Contact

Phone: (920) 793-4007 Website: woodlanddunes.org

> Facebook: Look up Woodland Dunes in Two Rivers, WI and like our page!

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Kay Nooker

How long have you volunteered at Woodland Dunes and what made you become involved? After retirement a couple years ago, I knew I didn't want to just sit around and get old! My family,

including my dad, who was involved with conservation, and our daughter who is an ornithologist (learned about banding saw- whet owls from Bernie Brouchoud), to my own love of nature, made Woodland Dunes a perfect fit. I wanted to get involved by doing more than just paying my yearly dues.

What do you most enjoy about being involved with Woodland Dunes? There are so many people who visit Woodland Dunes, and sitting at the front desk gives me the opportunity to chat with them. It's especially fun sharing all the great things they can find at Woodland Dunes and in our community.

What are some of your favorite pastimes or hobbies? Besides going on as many Woodland Dunes hikes that I can fit in my schedule, I enjoy aqua classes at HFM Wellness Center and taking walks in our area. I also like to travel, read, bake cheesecakes, and most of all, spend time with family.

Words of wisdom for other volunteers? I can't even begin to list all the cool things I've learned about nature by taking hikes and classes offered by Woodland Dunes. I'm just awed by seeing nature up close, and fully recommend everyone to sign up and join them when you can.



Volunteer Power!

Our volunteers rock with passion! In 2024, over 200 hundred volunteers logged in over 3,700 hours of work at the Dunes! We are grateful and know we couldn't do it without you. THANK YOU, Amazing Volunteers! - Woodland Dunes Staff Forked Aster by Max Kornetzke

Habitat Management

In late August, I visited Madison's Arboretum to partake in a training session with the Wisconsin Rare Plant Monitoring Project. The session was filled with a dozen or so folks of varying ages from across the state with a love for native plant diversity. By the end of that training session, we had become verified volunteers. We focus on surveying known populations of rare plants to assess trends in their population's health. Volunteers can also submit their findings of previously undocumented populations of rare plants.

I was inspired to take this training when I learned our preserve was home to a Wisconsin state threatened species: Forked Aster *(Eurybia furcata)*. This plant was first documented within our preserve in 2020.

Forked Aster is a Midwest endemic species, which means its small midwestern range is the only place in the world where it grows naturally. There are several reasons why this endemic species is rare. The first reason is that forked aster is self-incompatible. This means that small populations of closely related plants are unable to self-pollinate and produce viable seeds. Although a population may look robust and filled with hundreds of flowering individuals, it may, in fact, only be one or several closely related individuals, as this plant spreads through underground rhizomes to make small colonies.

The second reason for its rarity is habitat fragmentation and degradation. Since this species requires genetic diversity to properly reproduce, the continued fragmentation of the forested- wetland edge that it occupies has led to more and more isolated populations. It lacks the necessary genetic diversity to spread naturally.

As I continued to read about its best management practices, I came across research from the Chicago Botanic Garden that found the introduction of outside population genetics (e.g. seeds, pollen, or plant divisions) can significantly improve the production of viable seed development.

With this knowledge, I applied for an Endangered/Threatened Species Permit through the WDNR to collect seed from a more robust local population to try and propagate seedlings. I then applied for the C.D. Besadny Conservation Fund grant (through the Natural Resource Foundation of Wisconsin) with a proposal to enhance our own population and the surrounding habitat. I am grateful that Woodland Dunes was awarded this grant in early October.

Management will include the removal and treatment of invasives around the aster population, as well as signage about this rare plant in our butterfly garden - where I am hopeful to plant the seedlings. Although there is no certainty of seed viability, I will be sowing these seeds and overwintering them in protected containers. If I have successful germination, these seedlings will be transplanted into a protected area in our Butterfly Garden. This population will be allowed to mature for a couple of years. Once established, division of the rhizomes will be out-planted near the wild population as a means to enhance genetic diversity. With time I am hopeful we will have a thriving community of Forked Asters across our preserve.

– Max Kornetzke, land manager

Nature Corner



t was a beautiful fall season, the preserve was painted like a sunset - the leaves on the trees turned various shades of oranges, reds, bronze, and purple. The orange grasses of the prairies contrasted against the bright blue fall sky. Lots of visitors stopped by, potentially unaware of how many other creatures were sharing the trails they walked on. We saw signs of many mammals along the trails - red fox, deer, mink, rabbits, river otters, short-tailed weasels, and others. Many birds passed through the preserve, using this area as a stopover site to rest and refuel before continuing on their journey. This fall, staff and volunteers conducted our fall stopover bird surveys, encountering over 90 species! One of my favorite bird sightings this season happened during one of our guided hikes, a solitary sandpiper put on quite the show for us! It strutted across the mudflats of Todd's Pond (Willow Trail), called out, and flew directly overhead as we continued on our hike. How fun!

American Crow American Goldfinch American Herring Gull American Redstart American Robin American Tree Sparrow American Woodcock* **Bald Eagle** Barred Owl **Bay-breasted Warbler Belted Kingfisher* Black-and-white Warbler Black-capped Chickadee** Black-throated Green Warbler **Blackpoll Warbler** Blue-gray Gnatcatcher **Blue-headed Vireo** Blue Jay **Blue-winged Teal Brown Creeper** Brown-headed Cowbird Canada Goose Cedar Waxwing **Chestnut-sided Warbler Chipping Sparrow** Common Grackle

Common Raven Common Yellowthroat Cooper's Hawk Dark-eyed Junco Double-crested Cormorant **Downy Woodpecker** Eastern Bluebird Eastern Meadowlark Eastern Phoebe **Eastern Towhee** Eastern Wood Pewee **European Starling** Forster's Tern Fox Sparrow Golden-crowned Kinglet Golden-winged Warbler Gray Catbird **Great Blue Heron Great Egret** Great Horned Owl* **Greater Yellowlegs** Green Heron Gull sp. Hairy Woodpecker Horned Lark

House Finch House Sparrow House Wren Indigo Bunting Lincoln's Sparrow Magnolia Warbler Mallard Mourning Dove Nashville Warbler Northern Cardinal Northern Flicker Northern Harrier Northern Parula Northern Saw-whet Owl* Orange-crowned Warbler Palm Warbler Pileated Woodpecker Purple Finch **Red-bellied Woodpecker Red-breasted Nuthatch Red-eyed Vireo** Red-tailed Hawk **Red-winged Blackbird Ring-billed Gull**

Rock Pigeon Rose-breasted Grosbeak Ruby-crowned Kinglet Ruby-throated Hummingbird Rusty Blackbird* Sandhill Crane Solitary Sandpiper Song Sparrow Swainson's Thrush Swamp Sparrow **Turkey Vulture** White-breasted Nuthatch White-crowned Sparrow White-throated Sparrow Wild Turkey Wilson's Snipe* Wood Duck Yellow-bellied Sapsucker Yellow-billed Cuckoo Yellow-rumped Warbler

* Incidental sightings

~ Kennedy Zittel, naturalist



A Night to Remember in September



It was another great night of music, tastings, and fellowship on our trails Friday, September 6th at our second annual heiknbrew. Thanks to 200 guests, sponsors, craft beer and wineries, and volunteers, we raised over \$21,000 to support needed conservation and education programs at Woodland Dunes. We also want to extend a big thank you to the Two Rivers Optimist Club who made sure our guests had plenty to eat while they were tasting various libations during the event.

Where the funds go: part of our 1,500- acre habitat is "ridge and swale", considered globally important, meaning there is little habitat like ours left in the world. This habitat is rich in species diversity because it supports plants and animals in low, wet places (swale) and drier high areas (ridge). In turn, this unique land also becomes an outdoor classroom for thousands of children and adults each year. Thank you for helping us take care of this precious space! We need you now and into the future. YOU make a difference!

Thank you to our fine sponsors. Please support them.



Enchanted Wrap Up 2024

It was a fun evening at the Enchanted Forest! Families learned about misunderstood creatures such as opossum, fox, and spider and enjoyed looking for the carved nature pumpkins in the garden. Thank you to ATC for sponsoring this educational event and thank you to the Two Rivers Octagon Club for carving pumpkins!















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Unless otherwise stated, registration is required for all programs. Please note registration deadlines and program location. To register, email Jess at jessicaj@woodlanddunes.org or call 920-793-4007.

family programs

Raising a Wild Child

Thursday, December 12th: Squirrels & Cones Thursday, January 9th: Animal Tracks Thursday, February 13th: Snowflakes 10:45am-Noon | Members: \$2/child | Non-members: \$3/child Experience the wonders of nature with your 2-5 year old through nature hikes, play and guided activities. Help your child notice the natural world and ignite their curiosity! Children must be accompanied by an adult. Dress for the weather, majority of the program takes place outdoors. Registration required by the Monday before each session, space is limited.

Winter Fun Over the Holiday Break

Have a wintry adventure at the Dunes over the holiday break! The trails are open dawn to dusk and the Nature Center will be open 9am-4pm Monday, December 23rd, Thursday, December 26th and Friday, December 27th. Stop in and explore the family room, take a walk on a trail or participate in one of the activities below.

Animals in Winter Trail

Learn how animals survive winter on this self-guided walk along part of Willow Trail. Grab an info sheet in the box near the beginning of the trail (or inside the Nature Center), then use your "nature eyes" to look for 5 hidden animal silhouettes. Match the silhouette to the animal on the sheet to learn more! Trail will be set up December 20th - January 6th and is available dawn to dusk.

Winter STEM Day

Friday, December 27th | 10:00am-2:00pm

Bring the family to participate in winter-themed STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) challenges. Can you create a catapult that can launch a "snowball?" This along with other fun activities will be set up inside the Nature Center. Stop in anytime during the listed hours. Registration appreciated, but not required. STEM programs are engaging activities that use critical thinking skills, imagination and are fun! Sponsored by the Neshotah Foundation.

Wild Wanderers

9:00-10:30am Members: \$3/child Non-members: \$4/child A complimentary program to the Raising a Wild Child Series, Wild Wanderers is for children 5-8 years old (older and younger siblings are welcome to join) and an adult. Take a deeper dive into various nature topics through guided activities, games, and nature hikes! Children must be accompanied by an adult. Some portions of this program will be led by staff while others will be for families to explore on their own. Dress for the weather - a majority of the program will take place outdoors. Registration is required by the Monday before each session, space is limited.

Saturday, January 11th: Animal Homes

Learn about different types of animal homes (and who might live there) through various hands-on activities and games!

Saturday, February 8th: Opossums

Calling all opossum lovers, learn about the United States' only marsupial mammal through stories, games, and activities!

Candlelight Night

Saturday, February 1st | 6:00-8:00pm Members: \$5/person; \$15/family Non-members: \$10/person; \$25/family Enjoy a fun, relaxing evening with friends and family! Stroll along a candlelit trail, warm up by the fire with s'mores and hot

beverages, listen to live music, and visit our astronomer friends to view winter constellations (weather permitting). If there's snow, a limited number of

snowshoes will be available for use (first come, first served basis) or bring your own. Registration is appreciated and will open Monday, January 20th.

ADULT LEARNING SERIES

All programs in this series have a sliding scale fee of \$1-\$10 per person. This will be collected at check-in, cash is preferred.

Saving Our Songbirds Together in Winter

Tuesday, December 3rd | 10:00-11:00am Thirty percent of North American birds

have vanished since 1970 and the birds we love to see and hear have suffered some of the biggest losses -- warblers, finches, sparrows and blackbirds. The good news is we can all take steps around our home to help reverse their decline. Join SOS coordinator. Lisa Gaumntiz, as she addresses three important steps and shares some supplies and events in early 2025 to help you help birds! This program will involve a 40-minute presentation and audience discussion, and a companion booth where visitors can pick up a free sample of bird-friendly coffee, a native plant guide, and more SOS supplies. Registration appreciated by Monday, December 2nd.

To register for any of our programs, please contact Jess at jessicaj@woodlanddunes.org

EVENTS

January: Ask a Geologist

Tuesday, January 14th 10:00-11:00am

Calling all beachcombers! Do you have a rock, fossil or other rock-like item and want to know what it is? Bring your local beach treasures to the Dunes and Dr. John Luczaj, Chair of Geoscience and Water Science at UW-Green Bay, will help you identify it and answer questions about geology. Register by Monday, January 13th.

February: Storytelling with Donna Severinsen, Ojibwe and Oneida

Friday, February 14th 12:30-2:30pm

Winter is the season for storytelling and a way to pass along cultural teachings. Join us as Dona, a cultural bearer, wife, mother and grandmother, shares songs and stories from her native culture. Watch our website and Facebook page for more details.

Trivia Time

Wednesday, February 5th 1:00-3:00pm Members: \$3/person Non-members: \$8/person

Ready to test your nature knowledge? Join us at the Dunes for some refreshments while competing in a fun trivia game! Come with your own team of 2-4 people or teams can be assembled at the program. Teams will answer questions relating to the history of Woodland Dunes and the plants and animals that live here. Registration required by Tuesday, February 4th, space is limited. The winning group will be awarded a "special" prize!

Dunes' Digest: A Lunch and Learn Series

Noon-1:00pm

All programs in this series have a sliding scale fee of \$1-\$10 per person. This will be collected at check-in, cash is preferred.

Join other nature enthusiasts for an hour of nature knowledge. This new winter series will offer a different topic and presenter each month. Bring your own lunch and we will provide coffee, tea, water, and a sweet treat. Registration is required by the Monday before each program.

Wednesday, January 15th: Birding the Florida Peninsula

Join local birder, Joel Trick, on a photographic journey through the coast of Florida. Joel and his wife Patti took a 16-day birding trip from the Panhandle to the Everglades and saw 141 bird species! This visual experience is sure to help you escape the winter blues!

Wednesday, February 19th: Where the land meets the water – Coastal wetlands in the Great Lakes

Called the "rainforests of the Northern Hemisphere," coastal wetlands are one of the most productive habitats in northern latitudes. They warm up before the lake and serve as important spawning and nursery habitat for nearly three quarters of Great Lakes fish species. Wetlands, like the Great Lakes themselves, have changed over time, especially from human impacts, but wetlands remain important habitats. Join Fisheries Specialist Titus Seilheimer for a virtual tour of coastal wetlands and the current status of other Great Lakes habitats.

Wednesday, March 19th: The Natural Year in Review

Join naturalist, author and radio host Rob Zimmer for a look back at the past year in nature here along the shore. Rob will highlight many of the natural wonders and beauty that he enjoyed and photographed over the past year, including: birds, butterflies, wildflowers, weather, and so much more. Experience the past year in nature during this fun and unique educational program.

GUIDED WALKS

Members: Free Non-members: Sliding scale \$3-\$10/person

Join a staff member on a guided hike along one of our trails. Some hikes will have a specific topic while others will be about whatever nature presents to us that day. Registration is required the Monday before the hike takes place, as space is limited and meeting locations vary. Hikes will be under a mile long unless specified.

Wisconsin's Animals of the Ice Age Hike

Tuesday, January 7th | 2:00pm Hike a portion of the Dune's Segment of the

Ice Age Trail and learn about some of the animals that lived here in Wisconsin during the Ice Age!

January Thaw Hike

Wednesday, January 22nd | 2:30-3:30pm Let's get out and enjoy an afternoon in the woods. We will take a look at winter buds, enjoy the fresh air of a January day, and reflect on the beauty winter has to offer.

Sunset Walk & Full Moon Observation Wednesday, February 12th

5:00pm Enjoy a guided sunset walk and finish the day observing the rising

of the full moon.

Cool Canines Hike

Thursday, February 27th | 10:00am Hike along one of our trails as we discuss the cool canines that live at Woodland Dunes and what makes them so paw-some!

Thank You!

Memoriams/Honoriams

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IN LIVING COLOR!

We were contacted by an anonymous donor who believes we should show you nature as it is — in color instead of black and white. He is also graciously paying for the difference so that our budget stays focused on our conservation and education mission.

THANK YOU, GENEROUS DONOR!



The Butterfly & Bee Garden

After working at Woodland Dunes for 8 wonderful years, I have stepped away as a paid staff person and will now use my hands as a volunteer. Since this is my final newsletter article, I wish to share one more set of ideas I learned while taking the Pollinator Certification Course last winter. I am happy to say that I am officially Pollinator Steward Certified!

Creating your own habitat appropriate for native pollinators is a wonderful project. Make it manageable for your time, abilities, and space. Once you have started it, the fun of monitoring and journaling begins. As the space matures, you can ask yourself the following questions to decide whether your habitat is working. This will give you an organized way of journaling your findings. From there, you can continue what you're doing or make changes as necessary.

- Are my plants successfully growing?
- Have the plants been able to establish themselves without much help on my part?
- How is the space changing over time?
- How often am I seeing pollinators visiting my plants? What varieties of pollinators am I seeing?
- What are other people's impressions of the habitat I created?

And don't forget to take time to just enjoy the view, take in the scents and sounds of your space, and know that you are making a difference! Think of your space as the great artist Claude Monet said of his, "My garden is my most beautiful masterpiece."

Wendy Lutzke,
Retired Butterfly & Bee Garden Coordinator

It's time to Gift or Renew! We Need You!

Did you know that you can increase your support for Woodland Dunes at any time? The easiest way to do that is by giving monthly through an automatic credit card payment or checking account transfer. A \$10 - \$25 monthly donation, a sacrifice of a sweet treat just once a month, makes all the difference to us. Monthly support helps us the most because it keeps funds coming in year 'round, not just at membership renewal time. And we work hard with your dollars to preserve nature all 12 months throughout the year.

Benefits of being a member:

- Receive our quarterly "Dunesletter" newsletter and monthly electronic reminders of events happening at the Dunes
- Discounts on admissions to most of Woodland Dunes programs and events
- 10% discount in the Nature Shop
- The satisfaction of supporting a non-profit organization that is working hard to educate the community and preserve the natural world. Guarantors also receive special updates from the executive director two times a year.

2025 MEMBERSHIP			
Name	Monthly Donor Installments — this option helps us the most throughout the entire year!		
Address	Electronic Funds Transfer from checking		
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Phone	□ I wish to start/change Electronic Funds Transfers. I have enclosed		
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\$250 Conservator I would like to	□ \$10/mo. □ \$25/mo. □ \$50/mo. □ Other \$/mo.		
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If a membership is paid after October 1, it covers the end of the year plus the next year. Please send this form and your tax-deductable membership to Woodland Dunes, PO Box 486, Two Rivers, WI 54241-0486.







PO Box 486 | Two Rivers, WI 54241-0486



Join us for a fun night in the Caribbean that supports our globally rare habitat and the education programs that take place on it, serving thousands of youth and adults every year.