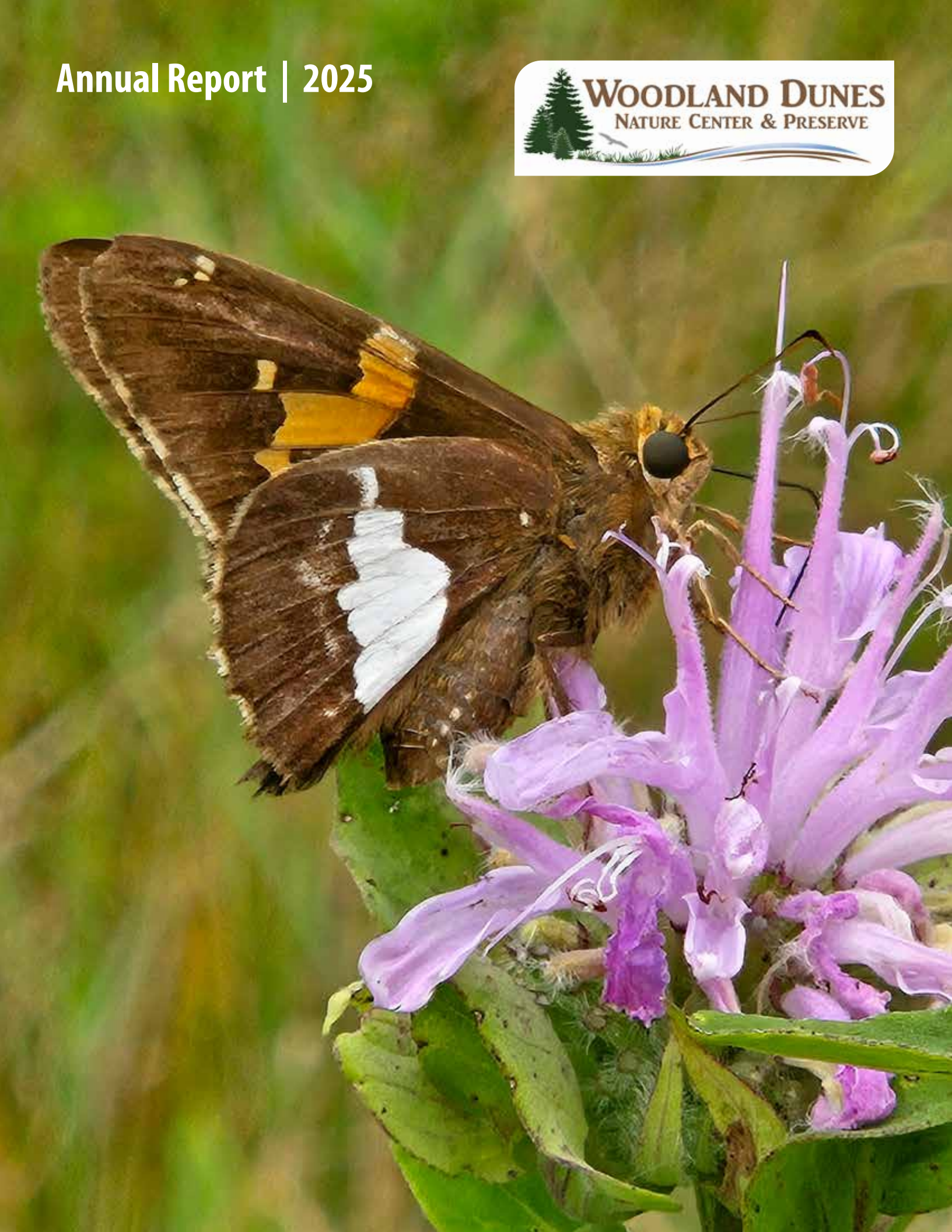
Annual Report | 2025

WOODLAND DUNES
NATURE CENTER & PRESERVE



2025 Staff

Executive Director
Sue Crowley

Assistant Director/ Education Coordinator
Jess Johnsrud

Communications & Development Director
Nany Nabak

Land Manager & Butterfly & Bee Garden Cooridinator
Max Kornetzke

Naturalist
Kennedy Zittel

Administrative Assistant & Accountant
Jenifer Thompson

Cleaning Specialist with Ascend Services
Kyle Kraus

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Tom Kocourek

Vice President
Bruce Robinson

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Troy Christiansen

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Mark McLaughlin

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Founders, previous board members, and previous executive directors are eligible for this honor.

2025 Inductees
Helen Bleser
Lyn Brouchoud
Donald DeBruyn
James Knickelbine
Ellen Lewellen
Robert Weinert
John Woodcock
Lucy Zeldenrust

Legacy Leaders
Designated to people who have passed away and have significantly contributed and shaped Woodland Dunes.

2025 Inductees
Bernie Brouchoud
Gordon Buboltz
Helen Dicke-Krivacek
Winnie Smith
Beverly Vareka

Our mission is to preserve and restore natural ecosystems through responsible stewardship, education, and community engagement ensuring that native habitats and wildlife thrive for generations to come.

L to R: Sue Crowley, Kyle Kraus, Max Kornetzke, Jessica Johnsrud, Jenifer Thompson and Kennedy Zittel.

"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."
- Aldo Leopold

COVER PHOTO of a Silver-spotted Skipper *By Kennedy Zittel*

Director's Message

Restoration and accessibility matter

Sue Crowley, Executive Director

Greetings Woodland Dunes Community,

Throughout 2025, we embraced growth and transformation to offer our local community enriching educational experiences that are immersed in nature at our scenic preserve. We grew not only our educational repertoire but also our land base through the generous contributions of our members.

Our Forget-Me-Not Creek Restoration project is improving habitats for numerous species. If you haven't visited yet, drive by the site on Woodland Drive or join one of our guided hikes offered throughout the year. The creek went from a 1333-foot straight-lined, incised ditch to 2335-foot meandering and diverse structured creek. This collaborative effort was funded by multiple sources, allowing us to keep enhancing the 50-acre habitat into the future and out to Lake Michigan.

Our second major multi-year initiative was the reconstruction of the Cattail Trail boardwalk. Measuring one-third of a mile, this accessible boardwalk provides visitors with the opportunity to experience the marsh environment leading to a West Twin River inlet. The boardwalk appeals to those interested in birding, observing aquatic species, and nature study. Additionally, a kayak launch is available for paddling on the river trail. We extend our sincere appreciation to the Ruth St. John and John Dunham West Foundation, the WDNR Recreational Trails grant, Phyllis Schippers, and all the volunteers who contributed to the successful completion of this project.

Cattail boardwalk accessible to all!

We have experienced changes both in staff and board composition this past year. Our Communications and Development Coordinator, Nancy Nabak, resigned after nine and a half years of service. As of mid-January 2026, Jason Prigge signed on as our Development Director. On our board we said grateful good-byes (not because they were leaving but because of their years of service) to Tom Kocourek, Charles Sontag, Susan Knorr and Bruce Robinson. Over 100 years of dedication to our mission, each supported our organization with their strengths in leadership, keen editing, building and birding expertise.

Other successes include a refresh to our Gift Shop, we are happy to have more books, the debut of our Woodland Dunes specific phenology calendar, and other hands-on nature exploration toys for young and old, plus, of course, a hardy selection of logoed hats, tees and sweatshirts.

We are thankful to the late Bill Arhndt and to Shannon Schroeder for the property we acquired from them. This 45-acre property is adjacent to our Bugler Preserve and extends habitat for the endangered rusty-patched bumble bee among many other species. Contiguous blocks of land are critical in supporting biodiversity of species. Over 50 generous donors made this important acquisition possible.

We are grateful to all our members, donors, event sponsors, grantors, volunteers and contractors who have made the achievements featured in this publication possible. We remain dedicated to our mission of nature education and preservation for the present and future generations.

Humbled and grateful for your community commitment.

Transformation of a creek from this ▲

to this ▶

Environmental Education

4,974 People engaged in Dunes' programs

174 Programs offered

- Wild Child
- Wild Families
- School Field Trips
- Guided Hikes
- Adult Learning

24 guided hikes **234** hikers

68 field trips **2,889** students

20 summer camps **222** campers

Experiencing Nature for ALL Ages

Woodland Dunes provides a wide range of high-quality programming for all ages. The popularity of the "50 Hikes for 50 Years" series in 2024 inspired our staff to continue offering two guided hikes every month. The walks in the preserve are led by our staff, who provide their own unique teaching style and areas of interest. These hikes are a special treat because it's an opportunity to spend time outdoors with a small group and a personal guide. Some of the most popular hikes in 2025 were Mammals of the Ice Age in January, Evening Spring Walk in March, and the Forget-me-not Creek Tour in October.

Many of the adult programs were taught by our staff, but we also recruited several guest speakers that provided specialized programs. We were fortunate to have local naturalists, a meteorologist, authors, and professors share their knowledge and expertise. Some of the topics covered included the Bald Eagle Nest Watch, arboreal humanities, nature writing, ecological contributions of wetlands, and hiking the Ice Age Trail. We also tried something new and offered three adult summer camps. This was a spin on the children's summer camps and reminded us that adults need to get in on the fun too.

Teaching children about nature and fostering a connection with their local green space is a critical part of our mission. School field trips, family programs, and summer camps are opportunities for children to start forming this relationship. In 2025, there were 68 field trips at Woodland Dunes including the development of a new field trip called Creature Features. This program directly connected with the new science curriculum for the Two Rivers first graders. Summer day camps are popular and 222 children participated in last year. There were camps about wetlands, soil, winged creatures, and the very popular Dunes Detectives where campers solved "critter crimes" by learning about tracks, scat and other animal signs. Family programs provide a space for adults and children to share in the wonders of nature together. Families made memories together and discovered salamanders under logs, listened to frogs singing, learned about animal homes, and more.

"We feel fortunate to have such a special place in Woodland Dunes so close by, with such an enthusiastic, knowledgeable, dedicated staff who are always willing to engage with any questions we come up with. Thank you so much!"

- Dunes' Digest participant

"We love nature, learning about nature, and the teachers at Woodlands Dunes. We know we can trust the teachers. We appreciate the opportunity to learn about nature in nature."

- summer camp parent

"I thought Woodland Dunes did a great job! They have a very well organized and educational program that is interesting and developmentally appropriate for kids. The kids enjoyed all of the different groups and learned new information about the habitat and different animals. The staff at Woodland Dunes is very knowledgeable, patient, and kind."

- preschool teacher

"Thank you for all the hard work you put into the events at the Dunes. It's a wonderful resource to have so close by and it's great that it's being utilized."

- Candlelight Night attendee

"Thank you so much for all the fun and learning we had yesterday. The children are still talking about it today!"

- preschool teacher

Volunteers make the Dunes thrive!

HOURS

553 Education

600 Committees & Board

522 Overall Habitat & Trail related

253 Trail & Boardwalk Building

222 Grant related assistance

480 Front desk & gift shop staffing

47 Invasive species management

Bird Monitoring

138 different species documented in 2025

2 classified as threatened in Wisconsin

11 classified as a species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) in Wisconsin

Over 15,000 visitors & 400 members

18 Programs offered to highlight nature at night

- Star Parties
- Enchanted Forest
- Candlelight Night
- Teen Night
- Guided Walks
- Family & Adult Programs

Dorothy R. Star Butterfly and Bee Garden

2025 was a year full of blossoms in our Dorothy R. Star Butterfly and Bee Garden thanks to the regular maintenance by our garden volunteers. In 2025 we had a total of 7 volunteers who collectively put in over 80 hours working on various projects in and around the garden.

A new trellis structure was established at the front of our garden to wrangle the beautiful, but sharp and wiley native climbing rose (Rosa setigera).

Volunteers and staff began to mulch new areas to knock back weeds and prepare areas for a fresh arrangement of native shrubs and wildflowers for our native pollinators.

With funding through the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin C.D. Besadny Grant we propagated a rare, threatened species of aster called Forked Aster (Eurybia furcata). Some of these specimens were planted in our Butterfly Garden with accompanying signage to explain the significance of this species. Although it may not be the showiest plant in our garden, it is a great pollinator plant that is also an important part of the midwest's natural history.

Creating Healthy Habitats

The land Woodland Dunes protects continues to grow. In 2025, we acquired an additional 45 acres of wildlife habitat. This property, with sections already in restored prairie as well as woodlands, will be protected in perpetuity.

Adjacent to these new parcels we made progress on our US Forest Service funded restoration project focused on enhancing habitat for the endangered Rusty Patched Bumble Bee populations that have been documented at these restored prairies. This work included establishing a 9-acre deer enclosure in a mature upland forest where native shrubs and wildflowers will be planted to provide a wide range of flowering resources across the growing season for these important pollinators.

Other work took place in our main preserve. In a long swale along Columbus Street we began wrapping up our 2-year US Forest Service Riparian Forest Restoration Project. In 2025 volunteers, interns and staff planted 1662 native trees and shrubs along this corridor dominated by large, dying ash trees. Die-back from the Emerald Ash Borer was much more pronounced across our preserve last year. We look forward to our plantings filling in new gaps and adding native biodiversity to our changing wetland forests.

Our Forked Aster Ridge Restoration project, funded by the Wisconsin Natural Resources Foundation's C.D. Besadny Fund, focused on growing this rare native wildflower found wild in our preserve. Forked Aster is rare because it is an obligate-outcrosser, meaning it requires genetically unique individuals to cross-pollinate in order to produce viable seed. We successfully collected, propagated and outplanted over a dozen plugs each with several individual plants out into our preserve. These plugs will serve as added genetic diversity in the hopes that our wild population will set seed and spread further across the preserve in the future.

Across our preserve with the help of nine volunteers and 46.5 hours of work, we covered over 13.5 acres and knocked back large sections of invasive shrubs like common and glossy buckthorn.

1,662
native trees and shrubs planted for habitat enhancement

9
acres protected from deer browse through establishing exclosure

13.5
acres of invasives species managed

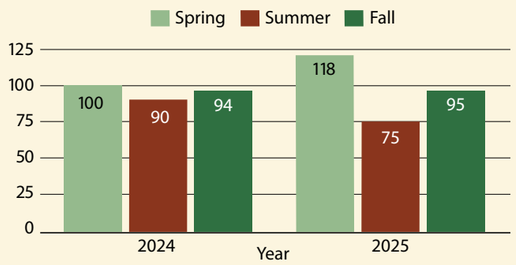
2025 Wildlife Surveys

138 bird species documented
- **2** species classified as State Threatened
- **9** additional species classified as Species of Greatest Conservation Needs (SGCN)

9 species of bumble bees documented
- **1** species classified as Species of Greatest Conservation Needs (SGCN)

5 bat species documented
- **2** species classified as State Threatened
- **1** additional species classified as Species of Greatest Conservation Needs (SGCN)

16 wildlife species documented on trail camera



Bird Surveys: 2024 vs 2025

State Threatened Red-shouldered Hawk Hatchling Data

Wildlife Monitoring

Staff and volunteers conducted various wildlife surveys throughout 2025, trail camera monitoring, amphibian surveys, bumble bee surveys, monarch tagging, sucker migration counts, motus data collection, and bird banding. Staff also led the Manitowoc County Crane Count and the Manitowoc County Bald Eagle Nest Watch (BENW) program.

2025 marked the creation of our newest wildlife research project, Weasel Research. This project was designed to document what species of weasel are residing on the preserve to compare with our historical species list. Three camera trap boxes (called our weasel boxes) were built and placed Mid-October around the State Natural Area. Each box has a trail camera inside and outside, and within the first month we captured images of nine wildlife species, including a short-tailed weasel.

We had fewer bumble bee surveys done in 2025 due to time restraints and weather limitations during the survey period, however, we still documented nine species of bumble bee *(bombus)* - just one species short of our record number of 10 species seen in a year. One of the species' highlights was the Yellow-banded Bumble Bee *(Bombus terricola)*. This species is considered rare throughout its range, due to a drastic population decline since the mid-1990s, and is considered a species of special concern in Wisconsin. We haven't documented this species on the preserve for years, so it was an exciting reappearance in 2025.

Woodland Dunes' visitors and staff have been collecting phenology data for decades. In 2025, this data was compiled and used to create our first Woodland Dunes Phenology Calendar. Each month was filled with various phenology trends, such as when the first monarch sighting occurs, as well as images from local photographers of the plants and wildlife being discussed. The calendars were a big hit, with three rounds of orders sold by the end of the year.

During the fall a total of 39 Northern saw-whet owls were caught at our banding station. Seven of those owls had been previously banded: Two by our banding station and three by other banding stations (Two owls were caught twice in the season). One of the owls that we caught on November 3rd was banded in Ontario on September 29th, because of bird banding we now know that this owl traveled around 700 miles in under two months during migration. Towards the end of the year our Naturalist, Kennedy Zittel, received her subpermit for owl banding to help Director Emeritus and Master Bird Bander, Jim Knickelbine, continue to run our owl banding station.

Growing Community Partnerships

Community partnerships play an essential role in helping communities enhance quality of life for residents and visitors alike. As Woodland Dunes continues to provide accessible hiking opportunities and educational programming, we recognize that these efforts would not be possible without the generous support of numerous companies and organizations. We are also deeply grateful to the many grantors who support educational and restoration initiatives throughout the preserve. Your contributions–through monetary gifts, in-kind donations, volunteer service, and grant awards–are invaluable to advancing this work.

POND DIPPING TOOL SHED

Volunteers from Grace Congregational United Church of Christ GCUCC helped build our pond dipping shed and gained valuable experience for their service in the Appalachia Service Project (ASP). This year was the 18th year of GCUCC volunteers doing a project at the Dunes before their trip east.

HENRY WETLAND PRESERVE RESTORATION

We collaborated with the WI DNR and Stantec to support the ecological management of this successful restoration project from fallow field to thriving wetland prairie.

FORGET-ME-NOT CREEK RESTORATION

Partnerships with Stantec, Northeast Asphalt, and WI DNR provided on site transformation of the ditched creek to a healthy stream. We also worked with Lakeshore Natural Resource Partnership to develop a video of the success story of using ash logs from Fischer Creek Park.

TWO RIVERS ART CLUB

This high school club assisted with the art project that attendees at The Enchanted Forest could work with the art club students to create a fun creature. Thank you, Nathan Klips, teacher and wonderful students.

TWO RIVERS OCTAGON CLUB

These wonderful, progressive and service-minded students carved pumpkins for The Enchanted Forest so that the pumpkins could be lit and decorated the Butterfly Garden and paths. Your carving talents were much appreciated.

Thank you for all the ways you support the Dunes!

Memoriams/Honoriams

In Memory of Joanne Barta
Estate of Joanne Barta

In Memory of Roger Brey
Curtis & Kaye Johnson

In Memory of James Bruechert
Jeffrey & Mary Gehler

In Memory of Robert & Lois Bush
Jeffrey & Julie Rathmanner
Patrick & Kathryn Taddy

In Memory of Marilyn Christel
Helen Bleser
Michael & Karen McFadzen

In Memory of Ronald Crabb
Nancy Crabb & family & friends

In Memory of Judy Knickelbine
Helen Bleser
Gary & Chris Blimel
Lyn Brouchoud
Tom & Betsy Kocourek
Brian & Jenifer Thompson

In Memory of Jeffrey Kohn
Kathleen & Robert Schaap

In Memory of Kenton Langman
Russell & Beverly Glaeser
Donna Langman

In Memory of James Miller
James J Miller Legacy

In Memory of Norbert Pritzel
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John & Julie Woodcock

In Memory of David Schaap
Janet Kohn

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Bonnie Timm

In Honor of Robert Gahl
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In Honor of Annette Henry
Gerald & Patricia Henry

In Honor of Jon Henry
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Lisa Lorrigan
Dean & Kim Lynch
Edward &
Christine Mahloch
Patty Marak
Deb Martin
Richard &
Pamela McDonald
Bill & Lori Megow
Tim & Karen Myers
Rebecca Naidl
Ralph & Kay Nooker
Jeffrey Orlopp
Matt & Tracey Randerson
Theresa Redo
David & Barbara Reinbold
Lynn & Casey Rennert
Bob Schuh &
Mary Brethouwer
Bud Sawatzky

Rita Schilder
Luke & Corrine Schultz
Carl & Barbara Schwartz
Christine &
Robert Shebesta
Dawn Spencer
Mike & Janet Sponholtz
Keith Spruce
Charles & Carole Starck
Mark & Jean Stecker
Steven & Lisa Steinhauer
Brian & Cath Tease
Brittany Teegarden
Tom Teteak
Janice Tetzlaff
Brian & Jenifer Thompson
Josh & Brianna Trainor
William & Candace Trochil
Steve & Julie Walesh
Nick & Jessica Wegener
David & Suzanne Wiesner
Jill Ehmke Zimmer

Single $25

AZ Milkweeds
for Monarchs
Jill Backus
Scott Barner
Germaine Berkovitz
Bruce Berres

Paul Biegun
Maureen Birk
Mark &
Elizabeth Bittner
Catherine Cole
Jacquelynn Collins
Anne Dirkman
Ebsco Industries
Barbara Fricke

Appie Geraldson
Michael &
Patricia Gottfredsen
Martin Gregory
Karen Grupe
Ryan Hansen
Stephanie Harrison
Linda Helf
Cindy Hogan
Marjorie Jehle
Curtis & Kaye Johnson
Deanna Johnson
Debra Jones
Nancy Just
Gerry & Marilyn Keuler
Bonnie Kleiber
Susan Landers
Diane Leidig
Tim Leigh
George Lottermoser
Richard Luchsinger
Susan Luther
Doris Magyar
James Malek
Diann Moore
Christy Mrotek
Amy Mullins

Jeff Peterman
Michael & Linda Rappel
Jeff Rasmussen
Scott Rasmussen
Ty Rasmussen
Vicki Rathsack

Karyl Rommelfanger
Laura Rozoff
John Ruminski
Mary Savage
Ellen Schnell
Julie Schroeder
Tom Schug
Rick Schultz
Nick Sheeter
Roy & Linda Sheeter
Gerald Sisel
Dan Stecker
Julie Steltz
Nellie Stoiber
Gary Thielbar
Julie Thielbar
Steve Thielbar
Jim Vieau
Lori Wretne

Corporate Membership

Fricke Printing Service
Broken Spoke Bike Studio

Volunteers

Our many of volunteers are the backbone to the success of our organization. They serve in a variety of ways such as: Board Member, Committee Member, Event Committee Member, Butterfly Garden Assistance, Front Desk Support, Habitat Preservation, Deer Hunter, Teacher Naturalist, Education Helper, Species Monitor, Photographer, Astronomy Instructor, Bird Banding Assistant, Bird Hike Leader, and Educational Costume Designer.

We thank the many individuals who supported us in 2024, and also the groups that supported us through various projects:

Carron Net Company, Inc.

Grace Congregational United Church of Christ - Two Rivers

Hawkins Ash CPAs

Lakeshore Technical College

Manitowoc County Master Gardeners

Two Rivers High School

Rebecca Abler
Rachel Argue
Scott Barner
Kay Baum
Mike Becker
Maureen Birk
Ben Birr
Ben Booth
Lucy Brey
Judy Bull
Lynn Burzynski
Troy Christiansen
Lynn Christiansen
Wendy Cracraft
Don Debruyn
Douglas DeVries
Jeremiah Dietrick
Tracy Folz
Jenene Garey
Trevor Giesler
Judy Goodchild
Lou Ann Gray
Matthew Grimm
Jonathan Hafner
Ryan Hansen
Nolan Hansen
Brian Henrickson
Annette Henry
Sydney Herman
Jane Hertel

Bill Hoeltke
Brady Hoffmann
Brian Hoffmann
Andrea Holschbach
Rebecca Jabs
Andy Jacobson
Darci Jayne
Kaye Katke
Al Kluczinske
Emma Knickelbine
Jim Knickelbine
Susan Knorr
Peter Koch
Barb Koch
Tom Kocourek
Betsy Kocourek
Casper Koenig
Jeff Kozaczuk
Lee Kummer
Tim Leigh
Bryce Lewellen
Pete Lewellen
Jean Lockington
Nick Lohr
William Loughead
Dick Luchsinger
Tabitha Luebke
Cindy Lupin
Steve Lutzke

Wendy Lutzke
Lynne Lyman
Mary Madison
Doris Magyar
Andrew Marcelle
Daniel Massey
Mark McLaughlin
Dolly McNulty
Justin Meyer
Marisol Mittnacht
Laurie Mosher-Paulin
Casey Mueller
Anthony Munz
Kay Nooker
Melissa Nyssen
Kathy Olson
James Ouradnik
Travis Ouradnik
Ann Marie Paprocki
Jessica Pech
Patrick Pelnar
Jeffrey Peterman
Zach Pethan
John Pethan
Aaron Petri
Jason Phelps
Cheryl Philipps
Charlie Philipps
Mike Pintok

Ed Plansky
Ray Pollen
John Popp
Tonya Prosser
Bob Randerson
Jeff Rasmussen
Scott Rasmussen
Ty Rasmussen
Lynn Rennert
Craig Retzlaff
Jason Ring
Peggy Rozoff
Dan Schaus
Fischer Schaus
James Schepper
Anne Schuette
Tom Schug
Mike Schuh
Rick Schultz
Ed Schwantes
Titus Seilheimer
Brandon Sharpe
Sue Shea
Shana Shebesta
Nick Sheeter
Roy Sheeter
Gerry Sisel
Jarrod Sisel
John Sisel

Josh Sisel
Roger Sisel
Bo Skornicka
Mike Skornicka
Chuck Sontag
Dan Stecker
Lisa Steinhauer
Steve Steinhauer
Nellie Stoiber
Julie Thielbar
Brian Thielbar
Gary Thielbar
Steve Thielbar
Brian Thompson
Debbie Timm
Joel Trick
Patti Trick
Louise Trickel
Jim Vieau
Kelly Vorron
Jay Watson
Gina Welch
Ken Weymouth
Pat Wiegert
Mike Wiegert
Molly Wyrostek
Neal Zarn
Lori Zimney
Larry Zimney
Ariana Zimney

2025 Audited Financials

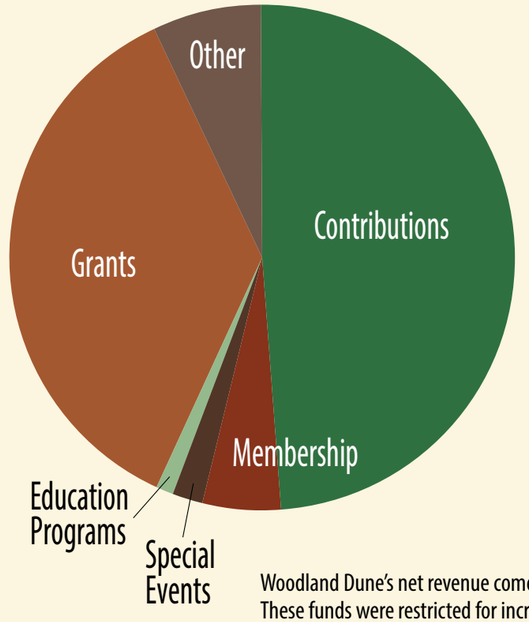
REVENUES	2025	2024
Contributions	$810,777	$838,436
Membership	$79,050	$144,805
Special Events	$40,721	$79,857
Education Programs	$17,308	$14,309
Grants	$600,879	$418,470
Other	$111,035	$242,929
TOTAL REVENUE	$1,659,770	$1,738,806

EXPENSES	2025	2024
Program Services	$1,108,783	$628,922
Administration	$292,134	$136,517
Fundraising	$47,858	$102,442
TOTAL EXPENSES	$1,448,775	$867,881

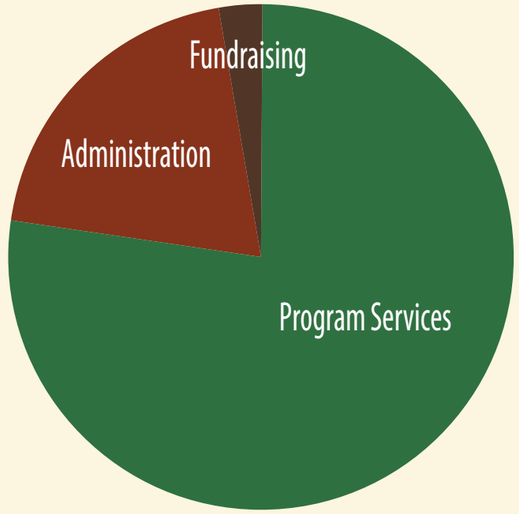
ASSETS	2025	2024
Cash and Cash Equivalents	$179,000	$416,983
Investments	$191,545	$142,352
Accounts Receivable	$164,653	$79,591
Employer Retention Credit	$0	$102,190
Unconditional Promise to Give	$167,924	$758,000
Land and Fixed Assets, Net	$4,421,453	$4,284,022
Restricted Assets	$7,525	$19,086
Beneficial Interest in Endowment	$1,401,921	$742,438
Other Assets	$18,880	$9,085
TOTAL ASSETS	$6,552,901	$6,553,747

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	2025	2024
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	$22,489	$234,330
Net Assets		
Without Donor Restrictions	$6,150,861	$5,172,504
With Donor Restrictions	$379,551	$1,146,913
Total Net Assets	$6,530,412	$6,319,417

REVENUES



EXPENSES



Woodland Dune's net revenue comes from grants and estate donations. These funds were restricted for increased programming, rebuilding the Cattail Trail Boardwalk, additional funding for our Forget-Me-Not Creek restoration project and raising significant funds for our Endowment Account. Through careful cost saving measures we were able to keep our administrative costs stable.

Woodland Dunes
Nature Center & Preserve

P.O. Box 486 3000 Hawthorne Avenue Two Rivers, WI 54241
(920) 793-4007 www.woodlanddunes.org