



Preserve!

FRIENDS OF THE LAKESHORE NATURE PRESERVE

FALL 2024

A Decade of Stewardship: Laura Wyatt's Legacy in the Lakeshore Nature Preserve

Yara Al-Rayyan

After a decade of dedicated service, Laura Wyatt, Interim Director of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, is retiring. I had the privilege of interviewing her to reflect on her remarkable tenure. During our conversation, Wyatt shared insights into her journey, the evolution of the Preserve and her vision for its future. Her deep connection to the Preserve and commitment to its stewardship have left an indelible mark, making her departure both a moment of celebration and reflection.

where she worked with the Naperville County Forest Preserve and the Chicago Botanic Garden. Wyatt also served as an extension educator at the University of Illinois and became the first director of Klehm Arboretum in Rockford, Illinois. Her diverse background includes roles in urban forestry, horticultural education and public land administration. These experiences not only honed her expertise in plant management and conservation but also deepened her lifelong interest in making people-plant connections.

members of all ages and abilities can contribute to and benefit from the Preserve's offerings. "I love to teach people. I love to make people aware of things, and I feel we're a success when someone has come out to the Preserve and they have gained just one little piece of knowledge or one insight into something new during their visit, and we've been successful."

Wyatt's efforts to maintain and enhance these natural features were always guided by her belief in the people-plant connection. "The value of trees in urban cities and the benefits they bring to communities is something I have always championed," she said. Wyatt also noted that the proposed Frautschi Center will also help facilitate diverse opportunities for involvement.

One of the highlights of our conversation was hearing about Wyatt's favorite places in the Preserve throughout the seasons. In the spring, she loves Eagle Heights Woods and the blooming wildflowers. Summer draws her to the Biocore Prairie, where the landscape transforms into a kaleidoscope of colors as it transitions into fall. Come winter, she enjoys walking on the frozen lake by Raymer's Cove. These seasonal favorites underscore the natural rhythms of the Preserve and showcase its year-round beauty.

(cont. on pg. 2)



Laura visiting Biocore Prairie a month after joining the Preserve Team in 2014. Photo: B. Scriver

A Career Devoted to Nature

Before joining the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, Laura Wyatt amassed a wealth of experience in horticulture and land management. Her journey began in the suburbs of Chicago,

where she worked with the Naperville County Forest Preserve and the Chicago Botanic Garden. Wyatt also served as an extension educator at the University of Illinois and became the first director of Klehm Arboretum in Rockford, Illinois. Her diverse background includes roles in urban forestry, horticultural education and public land administration. These experiences not only honed her expertise in plant management and conservation but also deepened her lifelong interest in making people-plant connections.

A Decade of Leadership at the Preserve

Laura Wyatt joined the Lakeshore Nature Preserve in 2014 as the Program Manager. Her extensive background in horticulture and land management equipped her to lead the Preserve at a time when environmental awareness was growing. Her work ensured that while the Preserve adapted to new understandings of environmental stewardship, it retained its core natural essence. From strategic planning for the management of the Preserve to expanding connections with students and updating the master plan, her vision underscores the importance of creating a supportive environment where community



A Partnership for the Future

Wyatt's interactions with the Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, founded in 2001, have been particularly special. "I hope the people who are in charge are able to make those right choices and see that the support of the Friends is going to be more important than ever," Wyatt notes. She emphasizes the collaborative spirit that has characterized her work with the Friends and the mutual commitment to the Preserve's well-being.



Preserve Team visits the Biocore Prairie. From L to R: Bryn Scriver, Laura Wyatt, Adam Gundlach. Photo: Preserve staff

Wyatt urges both UW and the Friends to continue their efforts, reiterating the importance of member involvement in safeguarding the Preserve's future. "With our new building, there will be so many opportunities for the Friends, for folks to become engaged at new and different levels," she advises.

Her parting message to the community is one of continuous engagement and stewardship.

As Laura Wyatt steps down, we will welcome a new director who will undoubtedly bring another passion and vision to the Preserve. The legacy of stewardship and dedication that Wyatt leaves behind will continue



Laura making site checks on Picnic Point.

Photo: N. Wyatt

to inspire and guide the Preserve's journey forward.

With her departure, Wyatt leaves a lasting impact on the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. Her decade-long tenure is marked by a deep commitment to preserving and enhancing the natural beauty and ecological significance of this cherished landscape. Her wisdom and dedication will be missed, but her influence will remain, guiding future generations of stewards.

CITIZEN SCIENCE

Yahara Lakes Zebra Mussel Monitoring Study

Doris Dubielzig

This spring the Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, in collaboration with Biocore Instructor Seth McGee, joined the new Zebra Mussel Monitoring Study. In mid-May, at the Brittingham Park shelter, UW-Madison Professor Emily Stanley and her undergraduate researcher, Ally Kundinger, provided background information and explained their task to the assembled volunteers. For the next four months, we would be studying how quickly zebra mussels can establish at sites around the four major lakes (Mendota, Monona, Waubesa and Kegonsa) connected by the Yahara River.

One of the most important biological invaders in North America, the zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*) is a small (<50mm) striped freshwater shellfish that reproduces prolifically. Native to Eurasia, the species is believed to have

been introduced to North America as stowaways in ballast water emptied from commercial ships. Young zebra mussels (called veligers) are microscopic and can drift in water for weeks before attaching to a surface. The shellfish and its veligers spread through freshwater systems and via recreational boats and gear. Zebra mussels were identified in Wisconsin in 1989 and in Lake Mendota in 2015. Center for Limnology doctoral student Mike Spear monitored their exploding population in the lake until 2018. In 2017, Spear wrote, "Today, zebra mussels carpet the rocky bottom of nearshore Mendota, transforming the landscape to a jagged matrix of invasive biology and reaching densities in the tens of thousands per square meter... unfortunately, the zebra mussels have also colonized the lake's native mussels, called Unionids, latching on to their openings,

weighing them down, sucking away their food and, eventually, killing them."

Zebra mussels are ecosystem engineers that can create massive changes to an environment after their introduction. A single zebra mussel can filter a liter of water a day, consuming plankton vital to the food web of native species. While this filtering can double water clarity, the resulting loss of chlorophyll reduces the amount of photosynthesis and therefore dissolved oxygen in the water. In addition, zebra mussels readily reject blue-green algae (cyanobacteria), including *Microcystis sp.*, contributing to toxic algae blooms. The bivalves attach with small stubborn threads to infrastructure, including water intake pipes,



A mature zebra mussel uncolored by sediments.

that become constricted by zebra mussel colonization. While some waterfowl, pumpkinseed fish, crayfish and muskrats are known to eat zebra mussels, human efforts to control or eradicate the invaders have had little success.

Matt Chotlos was elected to the Friends Board as an undergraduate in 2019. Already studying freshwater ecosystems at UW-Madison, he immediately joined the Friends new nearshore water quality monitoring team for Clean Lakes Alliance and helped organize our volunteer efforts from 2020 to 2023. While continuing to serve as Friends Secretary, Matt will begin a graduate program at Penn State University this autumn, investigating the

in community. Perhaps insects that live parts of their life cycle on the bottom of the lake before emerging to become an important food source for land animals will decrease in number. You can begin to see how effects on top of effects make for some complicated answers! Many ecologists spend their whole careers trying to model these outcomes, and we have only a few years of local data since zebra mussel introduction.”

This year, Dr. Stanley and Ally Kunding decided to resume and expand zebra mussel population monitoring on Lakes Mendota, Monona, Waubesa and Kegonsa. To do so, they recruited citizen scientists from individuals and organiza-

Brief Study Objectives and Methods

Stanley and Kunding want to collect data from each of the four Yahara Lakes on the size of zebra mussel population, how it varies over time, where the bivalves are the densest and what living conditions they prefer.

Each party was given a brick, fastened onto the end of a 50m cord. Thirty test bricks for zebra mussels were deployed on the four lakes this summer. Since we were already collecting Clean Lakes Alliance water quality measurements from the dock at the Lot 60 boat landing, we chose to place the brick there, too. Our new board member Jeff Koziol,



Doris Dubielzig and grandson find a zebra mussel on the Friends brick on July 29. Photo: Doris Dubielzig



Jeff Koziol's zebra-mussel-coated brick in Spring Harbor on August 3. Photo: Jeff Koziol

effects of PFAS contamination in northern snakehead fish. From Penn State, he wrote that zebra mussels “are reshaping our lakes and rivers in ways that we may not fully understand yet, especially how they may affect ecosystems on a longer time scale. It can take many years to see how species introductions shift the momentum and cycle of things.”

Matt continued, “The invasive mussels may improve water clarity but worsen algae blooms. They may threaten some delicate species while benefitting other species that can adapt to eat them. The aquatic food web is also linked to the terrestrial food web, and there may be unexpected downstream impacts on our very own Lakeshore Nature Preserve. Perhaps migrating species of waterfowl that feed on certain species of fish or aquatic plants will be impacted by shifts

in community. Perhaps insects that live parts of their life cycle on the bottom of the lake before emerging to become an important food source for land animals will decrease in number. You can begin to see how effects on top of effects make for some complicated answers! Many ecologists spend their whole careers trying to model these outcomes, and we have only a few years of local data since zebra mussel introduction.”

tions, including the Friends, who have been volunteering with Clean Lakes Alliance as nearshore water quality monitors (in our case, since 2019). UW-Madison’s Center for Limnology has been involved with the Long-Term Ecological Research Program (LTER) of the National Science Foundation (NSF) since the 1980s. Researchers have studied the four lakes and a group of lakes in the Northern Highland Lake District in northern Wisconsin. Dr. Stanley is the principal investigator for the current NSF-funded “Comparative Study of a Suite of Lakes in Wisconsin,” which includes a focus on how external factors interact with aquatic invasive species to regulate water quality. The LTER Zebra Mussel Study/Yahara Lakes Volunteer Zebra Mussel Monitoring Study, funded by the NSF, collects data with unpaid citizen science volunteers.

who monitors water quality from his property in Spring Harbor, also attended the presentation at Brittingham Park in May. Jeff participates in the zebra mussel study from his home, where LOTS of zebra mussels settled on his brick. Participants periodically raised the brick and submitted data on whether any mussels were attached. Monitors were also asked to be on the lookout for quagga mussels (*Dreissena bugensis*). This larger, “meaner” species, apparently not yet seen in Lake Mendota, is displacing zebra mussels from their initial invasive Great Lakes range.

Conclusions will depend on Dr. Stanley’s report after the end of this season. If the project “works,” Stanley plans to make it a regular monitoring program which will track zebra mussel populations with the assistance of citizen scientists, like our own, over time.



Mark Your Calendars for Tundra Swans: the Preserve's Thanksgiving Gift

M.J. Morgan

"Thanksgiving is the time," wrote David Liebl in a November 19, 2021, Friends blog. This talented birder also mentioned the 4,200-mile journey the swans make from the Colville River Delta in far northern Alaska to Chesapeake Bay. Stopping off at ponds and small lakes with open water, migrating tundra swans for thousands of years have identified Lake Mendota as a choice place to rest and add ounces. Because swans are such heavy birds, they cannot "fatten up" for migration. They instead must stop periodically to load nutrition and some fat, swimming gently in the ever-colder waters. University Bay gives these swans a significant payoff: they can harvest the tubers of sago pondweed.

Both this pondweed and duckweed feed hundreds of waterfowl

deliver the nutrients swans instinctively seek: protein, phosphorous, magnesium and calcium. Because swans have a hard time obtaining and storing calcium, the sago calcium is critically important for them, especially as they return north to nest. Calcium reserves are needed for sturdy egg production. As they overwinter in the Chesapeake, tundra swans feed almost entirely on clams. In migration, they return to waters with sago pondweed. So important is this plant to them that a journal article on sago evolution is titled, "Hiding from Swans."

swans are longer and heavier. Perhaps the smaller size encourages commensal feeding. When swans dig for tubers below, they stir up other



Competition captured by a skilled photographer. Photo: Arlene Koziol



Note the variety of activities among resting swans. Photo: Arlene Koziol

aquatic plants, old roots and seeds from the muddy bottom. And other waterfowl are waiting in line.

Do not miss the University Bay tundra swans this fall and winter! Watch

Swan feeding habits are part of a cluster of diverse migration tactics, including flyways from five different breeding areas. The easternmost soaring route passes directly over Dane County. Data from ten years of blogs on the Friends website reveals an arrival date range as early as November 19, with swans still on the lake some years as late as January 28. Ice shelves forming along the shore encourage more swans to stop over, as they use the ice for resting near open water where they traditionally can escape predators. But once the ice is fully on the lake, (an average date of December 20), the swans leave for the Chesapeake in a dramatic wing-loading ascent. Before they go, however, they are often followed around the Bay by other waterfowl, especially ducks. This pattern, called commensal feeding, is distinctly observed with tundra swans. They are our smallest native swan – trumpeter

them eagerly foraging; juveniles dabble more on the lake surface while older swans 'treadle' or reach down three feet below the surface with their long necks. The high number of tundra swans reflects the survival of adults, who can live twenty years in the wild. Most predation occurs on eggs and chicks. Since these swans do not breed until after their third year, flocks usually have swans of many ages. Senior swans can lose patience with younger ones, hissing and nipping. The social drama of swans is also evident in their voices. While sunning on ice shelves, they have been described by a Friends member as "most talkative, with a mellow bugling call." In mid-December of 2017, over 600 tundra swans clustered in University Bay! With their six-to-eight-foot wing spans, the commotion, communication and luminous white fluttering of late autumn tundra swans bespeaks their comfort here. Check for them early... and check often.



Sunning her wings! Photo: Arlene Koziol

through the summer. Yet it is the sago that tundra swans, *Cygnus columbianus*, especially love and need to consume. Sago pondweed floats seeds on the water surface that look like tiny pearls strung on filaments. They attract the greedy beaks of ducks and geese before the swans arrive. But swans know about the tubers, often so far down in mud layers of the bottom that a probing swan beak must dig them out. Sago pondweed tubers

FRIENDS OF THE LAKESHORE NATURE PRESERVE

2024-25

Fall & Winter Field Trips

September 15

Slow Botany (FLNP)

Sunday, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

Wildflower Finale! Leaves aren't the only fall colors at the Preserve this month -- there are still plenty of wildflowers in bloom. Join nature writer Andrea Debbink for a free guided hike to see some stunning end-of-season wildflowers at Biocore Prairie and beyond. She'll also share activities and mindfulness prompts from her newest book, *Flower Finding*. You can read more about her work and listen to her recent interview on Wisconsin Public Radio, here: <https://www.wpr.org/news/flower-finding-andrea-debbink>. As the story notes, "When you encounter a flower you don't recognize, it can be handy to reach for your smartphone and look it up on Google or an identification app." Debbink says she does this sometimes, too. But if you want to try practicing slow botany, Debbink recommends taking the time to use your senses and develop a more sensory experience of identifying plants and flowers.

Meet at the Picnic Point entrance kiosk, 2000 University Bay Drive. Leader: Andrea Debbink, <https://www.wpr.org/person/andrea-debbink> FLNP Host: Josh Sulman

September 22

Fascinating Fungi

Sunday, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

Join Marie Trest with the UW Department of Botany to look for and learn about some of the amazing variety of colorful and fascinating fungi, including common species that you might see along the trails. See <http://tinyurl.com/MadisonFUNAdventures> and <http://FriendsLakeshorePreserve.com> for a trail map, pictures and Fun Facts about Fungi. Can you spot some fungi growing on tree trunks, decaying wood and snags along the trails? Please remember to stay on trails and do not collect anything in the Preserve. Send pics and

comments to tmzinnen@gmail.com. Contact 608-698-0104.

Meet at the Picnic Point entrance kiosk, 2000 University Bay Drive. Leader: Marie Trest, <https://msafungi.org/msa-educator-spotlight-maria-trest>

October 19

What Is a BioBlitz? (FLNP)

Saturday, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

Learn why scientists do BioBlitzes to form a holistic picture of an area's biodiversity and ecosystem health. We'll scan for plants, critters and microbes, looking in the air, on the ground and in the soil and water to get a feel for the variety of life across the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. This Saturday event is part of the 2024 Wisconsin Science Festival. <https://www.wisconsin-science-fest.org/bioblitz/>

Meet at the Picnic Point entrance kiosk, 2000 University Bay Drive. Leader: Tom Zinnen (tmzinnen@gmail.com)

October 27

Poetry in the Preserve (FUN)

Sunday, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

In the beauty of autumn, a poem hides under every leaf and twig. Enjoy hearing poems collected from our annual It's In Our Nature open mic event on this literary excursion. Bring your favorite nature poem or nature reading to share! We will try writing short Haiku about the beauty around us. A Haiku does not have to rhyme, so anyone can do it -- just put five syllables in the first line, seven syllables in the second line, and five syllables in the last line. See <http://tinyurl.com/MadisonFUNAdventures> and <http://FriendsLakeshorePreserve.com> to check for postings, poems, a trail map and more information. Send your pics, comments and haikus to tmzinnen@gmail.com. Contact 608-698-0104.

Meet at the Picnic Point entrance kiosk, 2000 University Bay Drive. Leader: Paul Noeldner

November 3

Migrating Birds in the Lake, in the Bay, in the Marsh, in the Woods and on the Prairie (FLNP)

Sunday, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

Bring your binoculars or borrow a pair from the field-trip host as we scan the skies and tune in to the calls of migrating birds passing through the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. We will look to learn about different strategies in migrating and explore how birds on the move adjust to changes in weather, food resources, woodland cover and open water.

Meet at the Picnic Point entrance kiosk, 2000 University Bay Drive. Leader: TBA Please check the Friends website for more information closer to this date.

November 24

Fun Fall Birding (FUN)

Sunday, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

Join enthusiastic bird guide Chuck Henrikson for a family-friendly educational bird outing at the Lakeshore Nature Preserve by UW Campus on Lake Mendota! A wonderful variety of migrating birds visit the lake shore and large natural areas to feed and rest. University Bay is famous for waterfowl during spring and fall migration. We will look for and learn about white tundra swans, beautiful buffleheads, comical coots, tiny grebes, diving mergansers and calling loons. The UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve is also a great place to look for year-round resident birds like friendly black-capped chickadees, white-breasted nuthatches, brightly colored cardinals and bluejays, secretive barred owls peering from a low branch and winter residents like tree sparrows and juncos that come 'down south' to Wisconsin for the winter. There may be hot chocolate and a campfire with S'mores after the walk. See the Friends of Lakeshore Nature Preserve website at <http://friendslakeshorepreserve.org> and <http://tinyurl.com/MadisonFUNAdventures> for a map and



fun facts about the Preserve, migrating birds and a fun fall bird bingo card. Please remember to stay on trails and do not collect anything in the Preserve. Send pics and comments to tmzinnen@gmail.com. Contact 608-698-0104.

Meet at the Picnic Point entrance kiosk, 2000 University Bay Drive. Leader: Chuck Henrikson

December 8

Indoor Animal Artifacts

Sunday, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

Our Lakeshore Nature Preserve field trips step inside for an early winter excursion through the collection of mounts, skins and skulls in the Department of Forest & Wildlife Ecology. Extension Specialist Jamie Nack will guide us on getting a feel for different vertebrates. You will see how a grasp of the collection can help us learn to more quickly and accurately identify animals. These artifacts aid us in distinguishing between similar but distinct species in the wild through differences in size, shape, coloration and patterns. Note: Russell Labs is across the street from Babcock Hall Dairy Store, which is open until 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays.

Special Place: Meet in Room A228 Russell Labs, 1630 Linden Drive. Parking available in Lot 36, 1645 Observatory Drive. Leader: Jamie Nack, Extension Senior Wildlife Outreach Specialist, <https://forestandwildlifeecology.wisc.edu/people/faculty-and-staff/jamie-nack/>

December 22

Friends Favorite Places (FUN)

Sunday, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

Join Naturalist Paul Noeldner and other Friends of UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve for a family-friendly guided walk. We will visit some of the places people love at the Preserve. Dress warmly and enjoy hot chocolate and S'mores at Fire Circle #2 after the walk. You may want to prepare for the walk by viewing a Virtual Tour of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve at <http://FriendsLakeshorePreserve.com>. What are the special places you like to visit? Send YOUR favorite spot pics and comments to tmzinnen@gmail.com. Welcoming, diverse, family friendly, educational, no registration required, no pets. Fourth Sunday every month. Contact 608-698-0104.

Meet at the Picnic Point entrance kiosk, 2000 University Bay Drive. Leader: Paul Noeldner

January 12

Subnivean Species (FLNP)

Sunday, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

"Subnivean Species" may be a phrase new to you as it was for me (Tom Zinnen), but turns out it is a cool way for some critters to survive the winter by thriving under the snow. Morgan Farmer, currently holder of a Louis & Elsa Thomsen Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship in the Department of Forest & Wildlife Ecology, will help us uncover the ways and means that voles and mice use to move and forage under the snow, and in turn, how predators such as martens, other weasels and shrews hunt for dinner in the snowpack.

Meet at the Picnic Point entrance kiosk, 2000 University Bay Drive. Leader: Morgan Farmer, <https://vandeelen-drake.russell.wisc.edu/current-members/morgan-farmer/>

January 26

Winter Wonderland (FUN)

Sunday, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

Join Naturalist Paul Noeldner and Friends of Lakeshore Nature Preserve for a family-friendly walk. The trees and trails at the Lakeshore Nature Preserve are as beautiful as a picture postcard under a blanket of white snow. Stop to reflect on the small, surprising beauty of green moss peeping out from a log or rock. Look for delicate ice sculptures along the shoreline. Listen for the cheery chirping of winter birds. Watch for bird and animal tracks and try to guess what they are doing! See <http://tinyurl.com/MadisonFUNAdventures> for a map and winter fun facts and activities. Send pictures and comments to tmzinnen@gmail.com! Dress warmly and enjoy hot chocolate and S'mores at Fire Circle #2 after the walk. See <https://www.friendslakeshorepreserve.com/field-trips.html> for updates. Contact 608-698-0104.

Meet at the Picnic Point entrance kiosk, 2000 University Bay Drive. Leader: Paul Noeldner

February 9

Proposed: Mapping Teejop

Sunday, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

Mapping Teejop is a digital mapping project that guides users on

indigenous site walking tours of the UW-Madison campus, created through partnership between the American Indian & Indigenous Studies Program and the Department of Geography's Cartography Lab. Mapping Teejop provides content and context for visitors to learn about Ho-Chunk history and presence at the University of Wisconsin, a region long known as Teejop; there will also be opportunities for self-reflection. The tours feature some of the most iconic locations on campus: Bascom Hill, Observatory Hill, Tee Wąąksik Homjik (Lake Mendota), Camp Randall and the Memorial Union. Mapping Teejop (<https://mappingteejop.wisc.edu>) is intended to be an entry point into learning and reflecting on the indigenous history and presence of the UW campus. For visitors wanting a more in-depth experience with in-person tour guides, please consider the First Nations Cultural Landscape Tour by visiting the Visitor Relations and Campus Tours website, found here (https://www.wisc.edu/visit/?view=in_person#find_a_visit_option).

Proposed location: Mendota Room of DeJope Residence Hall, 640 Elm Drive, Madison. Check Friends website in 2025 for updates.

February 23

Winter Birds (FUN)

Sunday, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

Even with ice and snow, there are beautiful, bright, noisy birds to enjoy at the Lakeshore Nature Preserve! Join skilled birder Chuck Henrikson on an educational, family-friendly guided walk to look for blue jays, cardinals, tufted titmice, woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees, wild turkeys, barred owls and more! Learn how to use the Merlin app to help identify birds by sight and sound using observations on eBird! Bring binoculars and a camera if you have them. Enjoy hot cocoa and S'mores at Fire Circle #2 after the walk. No registration required, no pets. Fourth Sunday every month Bird and Nature Adventures at the Preserve are co-sponsored by Madison FUN partners Southern Wisconsin Bird Alliance and Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. See the partner websites and Facebook pages for updates and more activities!. Contact 608-698-0104.

Meet at the Picnic Point entrance kiosk, 2000 University Bay Drive. Leader: Chuck Henrikson (invited)

The Green Heron: a Frequent Visitor to the Preserve and Mascot of the Friends

David S. Liebl

Poised quietly on a low branch or log at the water's edge, the green heron, *Butorides virescens*, is often overlooked by visitors to the Preserve. About 18 inches tall, dark green/blue and rust colored with a stout sharp bill and yellow/orange legs, the heron blends into its surroundings...until it quickly extends its long neck to snatch prey from the shallow water.

Arriving in early May from Caribbean Ocean wintering grounds, green herons establish their breeding territory with both males and females issuing loud low-pitched "skow" calls from perches along Madison lake shorelines. Their nests among shrubs or on low branches near water hold three-five eggs. After three weeks of incubation by both parents, the young hatch; they are able to leave the nest in about ten days, and fledgling green herons can become independent a month after hatching. Recent confirmed observations of locally breeding green herons have been mostly around Lake Wingra and Wingra Creek, likely due to the isolated shoreline.

Adult green herons are common in the Preserve, throughout the Yahara chain of lakes and in nearby wetland and ponds. This heron is unique among North American wading birds for its



A young green heron has mastered pincering a large-mouthed bass.

Photo: Arlene Koziol

ability to fashion tools and use bait to lure the minnows and small fish it preys upon. Herons have been observed placing worms, mayflies or bits of feathers (even breaking off small bits of twig) onto the water to attract fish within reach of their bills. When the fishing is poor, they also eat small insects, crustaceans, worms and even small frogs.

By early October, green herons, along with great blue herons and great

egrets, will begin to fly south. Your best chances of seeing these wonderful birds in the Preserve will be to watch the shoreline around the outlet of Willow Creek or along the shore at the west end of University Bay, the Class of 1918 Marsh or near the Picnic Point Marsh. If you hear a loud "squawk" and have a brief glimpse of green/blue wings flying away...then they saw you first.

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visit www.friendslakeshorepreserve.com
and click "Join / Renew / Donate" to find our membership form



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In Memory of Stanley Dodson
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*Indicates new members

Collect Seed With Us

Josh Sulman, Chair, Projects and Land Stewardship, Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve

Join Friends as well as Preserve staff on September 29, 9-11 a.m., at Biocore Prairie to collect 2024 seeds. Meet at the informational kiosk at the entrance to Picnic Point.

“A seed contains the past, the present and the future.”

We need many volunteers for this event, so please plan to come and learn about prairie ecology as you gather seeds of grasses and wildflowers. Seeds will be used for ecological restoration at the Preserve! Bring water and wear long pants and closed-toed shoes. You may bring gloves and garden pruners if you have them, but we will have a supply of these to share. Families are welcome. Training on prairie plant identification will be provided — no experience is necessary.

The UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve has updated its Master Plan in the context of an era of rapid social, ecological and climate change; the new vision emphasizes natural landscapes and sustaining ecological functions across the Preserve. In gathering native seeds to diversify the Preserve, we are building a more resilient landscape for us and future generations of people, plants and animals to thrive on.

Southern Wisconsin is the heartland of a great oak savanna and prairie landscape — shaped by fire and managed



Prairies are rich sources of seeds in the fall.
Photo: Bryce Richter, UW Madison

by humans for thousands of years. Historically, the land that is now the Lakeshore Nature Preserve supported a diverse array of lakeshore, wetlands, prairies, savannas and forests yielding a rich flora. This in turn provided food and shelter for wildlife and human communities. By 1910, the Preserve and surrounding landscape had been largely converted to agricultural, residential and university land uses, but it still supported a robust native flora (see J. R. Heddl 1910, "The Plant Geography of the University Bay Region," a B.A. thesis, available free online). The Friends organization is dedicated to supporting land management and restoration of the Preserve's rich ecological heritage and function. We engage members and the community in supporting the Preserve through taking an active role in hands-on practices. Seed collecting is part of that.

For decades, Kathie Brock and her late husband, Tom, have been leaders and advocates for restoration of prairie and savanna in the Lakeshore Nature Preserve and across the region. Over years of careful observation, the Brocks developed a table of seed collecting dates for native species in southern Wisconsin which has become a go-to resource for professional and volunteer land managers alike. For an idea of what species are likely to be ripe for collection at our late September event, check out the Brock's list here: <https://pleasantvalleyconservancy.org/seed-collecting-dates/>

Please join the Friends at Biocore Prairie on September 29 and take part in this hands-on involvement in the ecology of the Preserve. Check our website for updates near the date: <http://www.friend-slakeshorepreserve.com/>

Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve

P.O. Box 5534
Madison, WI 53705

Ideas and *Friends* announcements for our newsletter and website are welcome. If you'd prefer to go paperless and receive your newsletter electronically, please email us at preserveFriends@gmail.com

President: Under consideration
Secretary: Matt Chotlos
Treasurer: Steve Holtzman
Field trips: Tom Zinnen
Newsletter: MJ Morgan,
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Friends Volunteer Coordinator:
Anne Pearce

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*Friends of the Lakeshore
Nature Preserve* is a 501(c)
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Please visit our website: www.FriendsLakeshorePreserve.com

LAKESHORE NATURE PRESERVE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Bryn Scriver, Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator
UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve

Learn about the natural world, meet new people or visit with old friends and enjoy fresh air and exercise at our volunteer opportunities. Activities may include removing invasive plants, maintaining trails, planting, seed collecting or more. Tools, gloves and training provided. No need to register ahead of time; however, groups and youth must contact the Volunteer Coordinator prior to event. We cancel in case of inclement weather. bryn.scriver@wisc.edu



Volunteer Calendar

SAT SEPT 21, 9-11:30am

Meet at Picnic Point entrance (2000 University Bay Drive)

SAT OCT 12, 9-11:30am

Meet at the Frautschi Point parking lot (see map: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/TpVwHNBAz3kiYwC27>)

SAT OCT 19, 9-11:30am

Meet at Picnic Point entrance

SUN NOV 3, 9-11:30am

Meet at Picnic Point entrance

SAT NOV 23, 9-11:30am

Meet at the Frautschi Point parking lot

SAT DEC 7, 9-11:30am

Meet at the Frautschi Point parking lot