



Preserve!

FRIENDS OF THE LAKESHORE NATURE PRESERVE

FALL 2026

Dining Campus Farm

Malorie Garbe, Housing Sustainability Coordinator

Nadia Eull, Housing Sustainability Coordinator Assistant

Nestled between the Biocore Prairie, the Eagle Heights Community Gardens, and the student-run People's Farm (formerly F.H. King), University Housing operates a 1.5 acre [Dining & Culinary Services \(DCS\) Campus Farm](#) that grows vegetables for the dining markets. Since its start in 2023, this plot within the Lakeshore Nature Preserve has been committed to sustainable agricultural practices and providing a learning-laboratory for campus students and staff to learn from and take part in the cultivation of local food for students living in the residence halls.

The space is managed by Farm Manager Malachi Persche, a UW-Madison alum who plans and implements the growing systems and crop harvests to provide fresh and local ingredients for Dining, hands-on learning opportunities for students and staff, and a model for sustainable agriculture in Dining operations and beyond. Students in the GreenHouse Learning Community and Resident Sustainability Ambassadors get involved by planting and caring for an array of produce from seed in the Leopold Hall greenhouse. Dining staff and students come together to

help plant, weed, trellis, and harvest produce on the farm using manual methods. The harvest is then featured in Dining Markets across campus to provide healthy, sustainable recipes for students living in University Housing. The Dining Campus Farm works closely with its garden neighbors at [Eagle Heights Community Gardens](#), student organizations Wunk Sheek

[Dawson Lab](#) on trialing seed varieties, reduced-till soil maintenance, and living pathways that represent diverse approaches to sustainable agriculture for Wisconsin farms.

Some examples of sustainable, low-impact farming methods used on the Dining farm include:

» No-till production: The farm uses a permanent bed system that limits soil disruption. The land is prepared for planting using temporary tarps and hand tools for planting, weeding, and soil aeration

» Agrivoltaics solar panels on site power electric mowers and trimmers that are used to manage weeds and create pathways throughout the farm

» Crop rotation, integrated pest management, and organic compost created from coffee grounds and leaves from campus limit weeds and pests without the use of harmful chemicals

» Drip irrigation provides source-level watering at plant roots, conserving water use on the farm



Joel Ninmann, University Housing

Students in the GreenHouse Learning Community harvest butternut squash.

and The People's Farm, and the [Lakeshore Nature Preserve](#) to foster an environment of collaborative and respectful land stewardship.

In 2025, the Dining Campus Farm expanded to an additional 1.5 acre certified organic plot at the West Madison Agricultural Research Station. There, Dining & Culinary Services works in close collaboration with the

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Bluebirds in the Preserve

Jeffrey Koziol, M.D.

Bluebirds in Wisconsin are primarily Eastern Bluebirds, a native thrush that declined sharply in the 20th century but has rebounded thanks to nest boxes, habitat conservation, and citizen science efforts across the state. At the Lakeshore Nature Preserve we have 9 Bluebird houses. There are five cavity nesting species that compete for these houses, Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, House Wrens, Chickadees and House Sparrows. Invasive House Sparrows are removed.

The Eastern Bluebird is the only regularly nesting bluebird species in Wisconsin and is the bird most people mean when they talk about “bluebirds” here.

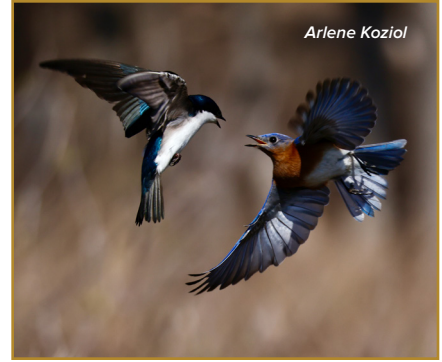
Eastern Bluebirds nest throughout Wisconsin but are most common in the southern two-thirds of the state. They favor open habitats with short grass and scattered perches, including grasslands, forest edges, farmland with pastures and woodlots, golf courses, public parks, and even suburban neighborhoods. Their tolerance of people and preference for “monocultures of short grass” make them familiar sights in human-dominated landscapes where they can drop from perches to snatch insects from the ground.

A few hardy Eastern Bluebirds remain in Wisconsin all year, but most migrate to the southern United States for

winter. Early returners begin appearing in the state in March, and by mid-April egg-laying is typically in full swing. In southern Wisconsin, nesting usually begins in mid to late April, with birds using natural tree cavities, old woodpecker holes, and nest boxes for their nests. Females build a loosely woven cup of fine grasses and other soft materials, lay four to six pale blue eggs, and incubate them alone, while both parents feed the chicks for 15–20 days until fledging and for about three weeks afterward. Bluebirds commonly raise two broods per season and sometimes a third, often reusing the same cavity or box once it has been cleaned after fledglings depart. During the breeding season, Eastern Bluebirds are primarily perch-foragers, watching for prey from elevated perches and then dropping to the ground to capture it. They take mainly small arthropods such as caterpillars and other insects, providing their nestlings with a high-protein diet that supports rapid growth.

Bluebird populations in Wisconsin plummeted by about 90% by the 1980s, with only around 600 nesting pairs documented in the state. Key causes included loss of natural tree cavities competition from non-native cavity nesters, and changes in land use that reduced suitable nesting and foraging habitat. In response, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and citizen volunteers launched focused recovery efforts, including widespread installation and monitoring of nest boxes across rural and suburban landscapes. These efforts, coordinated largely through the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW), have reversed the decline: in 2023 alone, roughly 14,790 bluebirds fledged from BRAW-monitored boxes, an 8% increase over 2022.

The early bird gets the worm. Well not always! Bluebirds are the first spring arrivals at the preserve but the last several springs have been cold with freezing temperatures and little to eat. This year there



Male Eastern Bluebird driving off Tree Swallow. Bluebirds were able to drive off one tree swallow but not a small group of swallows.

was no early Bluebird nesting. Bluebirds and Tree Swallows often battled intensely over nesting boxes.

Eastern Bluebirds tolerance of people means they do not require wilderness, and their presence is now a common sign of spring in Wisconsin. Residents can support bluebirds by providing open, short-grass areas with scattered perches, installing well-designed nest boxes in appropriate locations, and keeping boxes safe from predators and invasive competitors. Good management includes weekly box checks during the nesting season, repairing hardware, maintaining predator guards, ensuring proper ventilation and orientation, and promptly cleaning boxes after fledglings leave so that pairs can initiate additional broods. Through these practices, Wisconsin communities have transformed bluebirds from a conservation concern into a thriving symbol of hope, happiness, and successful citizen-led wildlife stewardship.

What happened in 2025:

- Eastern Bluebird: 3 nests 12-13 eggs, 9 hatchlings, 5 fledglings.
- Tree Swallows: 7 nests, eggs, 22-24 hatchlings, 20 fledglings.
- Housewrens: 3 nests, 20 eggs, 9 nestlings, 7 fledglings
- Problem solved: 5 House sparrow nests removed
- Predators: No predation by snakes, racoons, cats or mice



Eastern Bluebird nestlings and unhatched egg

Nature Connections

The Friends are pleased to announce a new, reoccurring feature in the newsletter: Crafting Nature Connections. This feature will be curated by Marjorie Rhine, a new Friends board member, who teaches writing at UW-Madison, is a Wisconsin Master Naturalist and is an avid observer of the natural world. Each installment of Crafting Nature Connections will include a short nature writing exercise or a nature-inspired craft. Deepen your connection to the natural world by getting out paper and pen and exploring your talents! Save what you create, and stay tuned for future opportunities to share your work with the Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve community!

Our first Crafting Nature Connections activity invites you to write for ten minutes about a favorite tree, so get out some paper or a notebook, a pen or pencil, and a timer (your cellphone works well).

What to do:

1. Get ready to make a list of memorable trees from your childhood. Try to list as many trees as possible in one minute—set your timer and write!
2. Now, quickly circle the tree on your list that is the most vivid or has the most emotional resonance.
3. Set the timer for ten minutes and get ready to write on paper with your pen or pencil about your selection. Use present tense and start with “I am,” placing yourself in a moment. Describe everything you see, hear, smell, touch and taste in this moment, sharing these vivid sense perceptions with your reader. Try to turn off your internal editor and just keep pen or pencil to paper, even if you are doodling until the next words come to you. Writing by hand is important: studies show that doing so lights up more parts of your brain.



Note: this exercise is adapted from the work of Lynda Barry, a renowned cartoonist and graphic novelist who is now Professor of Interdisciplinary Creativity at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, teaching drawing and writing. You can easily find out more about Lynda Barry and explore some of her other writing prompts online by googling her name.

President's Letter



Tom Zinnen, President

After being postponed due to tornadoes on April 14, the Friends met on May 19 at the

Unitarian Meeting House, graciously hosted by Tom Miskelly. Notably, the Meeting House was designed by TKWA, the same firm that is designing the Frautschi Center. The venue was a leading part of the message this year: this firm knows how to make buildings that resonate with the land and that reflect the values of the client.

The crowd of 50 enjoyed presentations by Preserve Director Brad Herrick and by Therese Hanson, the lead architect on the Frautschi Center.

On behalf of the Board, I was honored to express our appreciation to outgoing board members, including Don Wylie, Taylor Stofflet, and especially our Secretary, Matt Chotlos. In turn, I was delighted to welcome our

newly-elected board members: Maddie Aalto, Sarah Lundquist, Kathy Oker, Marj Rhine, Scott Hackel, and Laura Wyatt.

A month later, on June 22, Ayres Associates released the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment that proposed the construction of a 14' wide roadway through Bill's Woods to provide access to the campus maintenance yard in the Preserve.

Preserving the Preserve is the prime directive for the Friends, and this proposal to bulldoze several hundred yards of Bill's Woods runs up against our mission. In our comment submitted to Ayres, we noted that: 1. the university's own master plans for the Preserve call for removing the campus maintenance yard from the Preserve; 2. choosing to remove the maintenance yard would maintain safety for users of the Eagle Heights Community Gardens and of

the Preserve while removing the need for the proposed road through the Preserve; 3. the \$400,000 earmarked for the new road could then be shifted to develop a new maintenance yard elsewhere on campus.

We will continue to advocate to preserve the Preserve. We look forward to a revised Environmental Impact Assessment that weighs the pros and cons of each of the possible sites for the maintenance yard. Finally, we encourage the university to grasp this once-in-a-generation opportunity to move the maintenance yard from the Preserve, and thereby affirm and enhance the sustainability roles the university has proclaimed for the Lakeshore Nature Preserve in the instruction, research and outreach missions of the university.

Golden Oyster Mushrooms: From Grow Kits to Forests

Rowan Trest

You may have heard about, or even seen, Golden Oyster Mushrooms, *Pleurotus citrinopileatus*, in the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. They are bright yellow wood-decay mushrooms that can be found growing on and decomposing dead trees and logs. Native to eastern Asia, golden oyster mushrooms (GOM) can now be found in at least 25 US states. Aishwarya Veerabahu, a PhD candidate in the new Biology Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is leading research on the effects of this alien species.

GOM, a prized edible, is often sold in grow kits, where consumers can have their very own colony of mushrooms growing on a block. Either through spore dispersal by the mushroom or human dispersal, GOM escaped containment and has quickly made its way into North American forests. GOM has traits of an invasive species, which are also beneficial to the mushroom cultivation industry. This includes observed resistance to molds, temperature tolerance, fast growth, and plentiful mushroom production, which all likely contribute to its invasive success. Along with the USDA Forest Service and the Center for Forest Mycology Research, Veerabahu is examining the effects of GOM on native fungal populations.

In an article published in *Current Biology* in 2025, GOM were found to displace native fungal communities. Fungi often exist within wood as mycelium, even when visible basidiocarps, or mushrooms, are not present. The team used metabarcoding methods, a way to sequence the DNA of fungi growing in wood, on wood samples from trees with and without GOM to identify the fungal species that were present in these dead trees. They found that trees with GOM present had, on average, different fungal communities and fewer fungal species than trees free of GOM. Trees with GOM host an average of half the number of fungal species as those without. Trees with GOM also had fewer similar saprotrophic fungal species, i.e., fewer native oyster species.

The change in fungal communities has the potential to change much more in the ecosystem.

Cerrena unicolor, the “Mossy Maze Polypore,” found to be the most impacted species in the study, can have complex symbiotic relationships with woodwasps. Other fungi that experienced changes in population were pathogens, parasites, and saprotrophs, all of which have the potential to change forest ecosystems and processes in undiscovered ways. Furthermore, it is suspected that GOM can impact the carbon cycle and wood decomposition.

The spread of GOM is also predicted to increase in the wake of climate change. Species distribution models (SDM) predict that with rising temperatures throughout



the US, GOM's habitable range will expand. Data for these models were generated from community/citizen science observations. Community science has contributed heavily to the project and will continue to be valuable for monitoring GOM's spread. To investigate how GOM have been so successful in North America, populations of native, cultivated, and invasive GOM are being investigated for comparison. The Golden Oyster Mushroom Community Project has encouraged people to find GOM in their communities across the US and send in their mushrooms - Veerabahu has received over 30 cultures and counting!

Veerabahu's work has been featured in the New York Times, Science, NPR, and more, which has expanded the public's knowledge not only of this invasive mushroom but also of other issues facing fungal biodiversity. Veerabahu has interviewed many stakeholders and people with diverse perspectives on GOM, including grow kit companies, scientists, and hobby mycologists and foragers. She hopes these conversations can guide management and future legislation and conversations surrounding GOM and other fungal issues. Multiple mushroom cultivation companies have voluntarily discontinued their GOM grow kits. Veerabahu feels hopeful that mushroom-lovers of all kinds, across different fields and industries, can come together in the pursuit of fungal conservation and address the issue of invasive fungi.

Rowan Trest is a third-year undergraduate at UW-Madison studying Botany and German, working with Aishwarya Veerabahu in the Pringle Lab of Mycology.

FRIENDS OF THE LAKESHORE NATURE PRESERVE, in collaboration with THE FRIENDS OF URBAN NATURE and the UW-MADISON LAKESHORE NATURE PRESERVE present

Fall & Winter Field Trips 2026-27

Monarch Migration

Wednesday, September 13, 2026

1:30 to 3:00 pm

Seth McGee leads us on this Lepidopteran Royal Progress as the Monarchs head south through the Preserve to their overwintering palaces in Mexico.

Fascinating Fungi

Sunday, September 27, 2026

1:30 to 3:00 pm

Explore and compare with Marie Trest the wide variety of fall fungi fruiting in the Preserve.

Bat Research in Vietnam

Wednesday, October 21, 2026

7:00 to 8:15 pm

Join us for this Indoor Expedition as Makeela Magomolia shares sagas and insights from her June 2026 research trek in Vietnam. Room 1360 Genetics Biotech Center, 425 Henry Mall

Poetry in the Preserve

Sunday, October 25, 2026

1:30 to 3:00 pm

Share your favorite verses & rhymes as we peruse the autumnal prairies & woods with our poet laureate Paul Noeldner.

Bat Acoustic Walk

Friday, October 30, 2026

6:15 to 7:45 pm

Join Makeela Magomolia, FLNP board member, and the UW's Bat Brigade for a bat walk at dusk. Learn about bat conservation, acoustic surveying, and the important ecological roles bats play in Wisconsin.

Early Fall Migrating Birds

Sunday, November 8, 2026

1:30 to 3:00 pm

Join Jackie Edmunds & colleagues from the Biocore Prairie Bird Banding Observatory in scanning the skies, branches and grasslands for avian visitors passing through the Preserve.

Late Fall Migrating Birds

Sunday, November 22, 2026

1:30 to 3:00 pm

Chuck Henrikson leads us into the trees and onto the prairies to scan the lands & waters for birds heading south to warmer climes.

Preserve Trees in Winter

Sunday, December 13, 2026

1:30 to 3:00 pm

Tom Zinnen delves into ways to ID different trees even as the deciduous ones stand leafless against the winter sky by using clues from their form, bark and buds.

Friends Favorite Places

Sunday, December 27, 2026

1:30 to 3:00 pm

Cruise the Preserve with Paul Noeldner to visit your favorite hibernial destinations a week after the snowy solstice.

Testing for Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies, including Chronic Wasting Disease in Deer

Sunday, January 10, 2027

1:30 - 3:00pm

FLNP member Ben Johnson of the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Lab shares insights into the diagnosis and distribution of TSE diseases, including CWD that infects deer and affects the deer-hunting culture of Wisconsin. Location: Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Lab (Room TBD), 445 Easterday Lane

Winter Wonderland

Sunday, January 24, 2027

1:30 to 3:00 pm

Trek the trails of the Preserve with Paul Noeldner to take in the wintry sights and crystalline delights of frozen Lake Mendota, and then warm up with hot chocolate at a Picnic Point fire pit.

Mapping Teejope

Sunday, February 14, 2027

1:30 to 3:00 pm

Join Professor Kasey Keeler on this "Indoor Expedition" as she describes Mapping Teejope, a digital mapping project that guides users on Indigenous walking tours of the UW-Madison as an entry point into learning and reflecting on the Indigenous history and presence here. Location TBD. Outdoor walkabout to follow, weather permitting.

Take this pullout and save it for future reference!

Unless noted, field trips meet at the Picnic Point entrance kiosk, 2000 University Bay Drive. Public parking is free on weekends and after 4:30pm on weekdays in Lot 130, 2003 University Bay Drive. The entry point is served by Metro Bus Stop #2938 outbound and #2881 inbound. See map.wisc.edu. Once construction begins in the Frautschi Center site and surrounding area, parking and meeting locations will be subject to change. Verify meeting locations by checking the Friends website at FriendsLakeshorePreserve.org

Winter Birds

Sunday, February 28, 2027

1:30 to 3:00 pm

Join Chuck Henrikson to get a crisp look at our hardy winterovers, some of whom are already singing out mating territories and a few (like Great Horned Owls) that might already have young to care for.

Language & Landscape

Sunday, March 14, 2027

1:30 to 3:00pm

FLNP board member and linguist Sarah Lundquist discusses the Indigenous linguistic landscape of Wisconsin

Early Migratory Birds in the Preserve

Sunday, March 28, 2027

1:30 - 3:00 pm

Join Chuck Henrikson as we keep our eyes and ears open for *Turdus migratorius* (Wisconsin's state bird) and other rufous harbingers of spring.

Friends' "Exploration Stations" for UW Science Expeditions

Sunday, April 11, 2027

1:00 - 3:00 pm

Explore a constellation of hands-on Exploration Stations spangled across Picnic Point as part of UW-Madison's annual science open house.

Spring Wildflowers

Saturday, April 10, 2027

1:30 to 3:00pm

Glenda Denniston, Eve Emshwiller and Paul Noeldner help uncover the ephemeral beauty of plants that flower amidst the warming sun and late snows of spring in Wisconsin.

Lichens of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve

Sunday, April 18, 2027

1:30 - 3:00 pm

Join botanist Susan Will-Wolf as we trek in search of lichens, they quintessential symbiosis, a kind of mutual-aid society of algae, fungi and bacteria that are like few other creatures in the panoply of Nature.

Ecological Restoration Work Parties

Learn about the natural world, meet new people or visit with old friends. Activities may include removing invasives plants, maintaining trails, planting, seed collecting and more. Tools and gloves and training provided. No need to register; however, groups and youth must contact the Volunteer Coordinator prior to the event. We cancel in case of inclement weather. For information on were to meet, visit the Preserve events calendar (<https://lakeshorepreserve.wisc.edu/events-calendar/>). Bryn.scriver@wisc.edu.

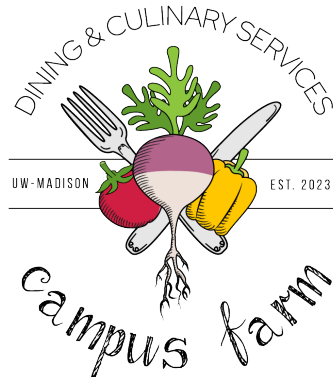
Volunteer Dates: Sat Sept 19, Sun Oct 4, Sat Oct 17, Sun Nov 8, Sat Nov 21, Sat Dec 5, all dates 9-11:30am

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These practices are in line with the Lakeshore Nature Preserve's vision to "foster biodiversity on campus and cultivate lifelong environmental engagement", teaching students and staff about where food comes from and how to work with the land.

This year, the Dining farm is growing so many Wisconsin favorites, including beets, carrots, collard greens, tomatoes, zucchini, herbs, flowers, pumpkins, and more. Chefs and Dining staff advise on crop varieties that are flavorful and versatile in recipes, then spend time working in the farm throughout the summer. Working with produce straight from the farm has helped Dining develop menus that best utilize Wisconsin produce at their peak season and get creative about preservation so that the summer harvest can be used all year long in

soups, sauces, and baked goods. Since 2023, 16,399 pounds of produce has been harvested from the farm and creatively used in Dining.



The farm is always open to new partnerships to help celebrate Wisconsin agriculture and campus-grown ingredients. If you would like to

get involved, all hands are welcome during open volunteer hours! This summer, volunteers are welcome on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:30-7:30pm. Fill out the [Campus Farm Volunteering Form](#) to sign up for our volunteer email list and to get notified about weather-related changes to the schedule. You can also reach out to sustainability@housing.wisc.edu to tour the farm or schedule a group volunteering session!



Preserve Report

Bradley Herrick, Director, UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve

♪ "Thank you for being a friend..." ♪

Just like Dorothy, Blanche, Rose, and Sophia showed us on hit the 80's and early 90's sitcom, *The Golden Girls*, we rely on our friends to navigate difficult times and to share in happy moments. Relationships with our friends can also change over time. Many of our childhood mates scatter far and wide with their families. We may lose contact with friends for a while but then reconnect years later. As we get older, we make new friends through work, parents of our kids' friends, and various hobbies and groups we join. Similarly, the relationship between the Lakeshore Nature Preserve and our Friends (you) continues to evolve overtime. Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve (FLNP) was formed at a time when the Campus Natural Areas (to become the Lakeshore Nature Preserve) had little collective voice and oversight. In those early years, the FLNP played a critical role in maintaining, advising, and advocating for the preservation

of the Preserve land. Now, while the support of the Friends is a strong and important as ever, our relationship has changed. The Preserve has three full-time professional staff, employs 4-6 undergraduate student Natural Area Assistants and researchers every year and is operationally housed within the UW-Madison Office of Sustainability. While our staff is now comprised of professional restoration ecologists that develop land management goals and priorities, and implement these goals using science-based restoration and conservation techniques, we still rely on our Friends to help us engage with the broader Madison community, advocate for the Preserve, and support our mission in a myriad of other ways.

I continue to be impressed with the passion and dedication of our partners, especially the Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. Thank you for your unwavering support of the work that



2026 Preserve Natural Area Assistants: Ava, Addison, Koi, and Elise

Preserve staff do to make this such a valuable campus and community resource for teaching, research, education, and outreach.

Finally, as you may have read in one of our recent newsletters, we will be hosting a second Preserve bioblitz! Last year's event was incredibly successful, and we know that there are even more species to discover at the Preserve! This year's event will be held on Saturday, September 26th. More information about the event will be shared on our website Lakeshorepreserve.wisc.edu, forthcoming newsletter, and social media in the coming weeks and months. We can't wait to see you there!

Welcome New Board Members

Two new members were elected to the Friends Board at their May meeting. Their biographies follow. Our thanks to Don Sanford who submitted his resignation.

BILL BARKER



Since moving to Madison in 1991, Bill Barker has been a regular visitor to the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. Bill would like to repay the Preserve for the privilege of spending half his life birding, botanizing, and of course, pulling garlic mustard within its boundaries.

Bill will bring deep experience in public process, policy making, and natural history education to the board. In addition to a 30 year research and administrative career on campus, Bill served ten years on the Madison Board of Parks Commissioners, including five terms as President, and chaired city task forces for McPike

Park, Garver Feed Mill Reuse, and Madison Golf.

Bill also served on the Lakeshore Nature Preserve Committee (a former UW-Madison shared governance committee), helping to foster the Gard Storyteller Circle, the Council Ring at Picnic Point, and the discussion that ultimately banned bicycles from Picnic Point.

SCOTT HACKEL



As a graduate of the UW (MS Mech Engr / Energy Analysis + Policy '08) I fell in love with the Preserve a couple decades ago. But I've gotten more involved as my two daughters have grown and we've increasingly

enjoyed exploring and learning in the Preserve, joining field trips, volunteering, and more. Given how much the Preserve trails have given me, I happily volunteer as a Preserve trail monitor to provide an "extra set of eyes" to support the staff.

I'd be interested in learning more about how the Preserve connects with younger students and kids as mine have – and how I might help with that. In my career I have focused on the sustainability of the built environment: minimizing the impact of the man-made on the natural. So I'll also be interested to see how the Frautschi Center might be used for others to recognize the importance of that integration. I'm also just excited to both see and help the other elements of the master plan come to life!



A Blaze of Orange: Secrets of Butterfly Milkweed

MJ Morgan

Butterfly milkweed is the wildflower of my childhood. Growing up in southeastern Ohio, Appalachia, I saw it poking up in abandoned fields and old mining country, widely spaced and seemingly random. Its red-orange crown was rarely in a multitude but scattered singly among chicory and a few goldenrod, often on embankments in late summer. Now butterfly milkweed blooms earlier, and because of restoration work, we see it more often. In the UW Nature Preserve, this milkweed grows along the northern Biocore Prairie and also along Lot 60 near the lake. According to Seth McGee, Director of Biocore Prairie, it is one of six species of milkweed seeded there; nationally, 16 milkweed species form the heart of our remaining tallgrass prairies. But none is as arresting as butterfly milkweed.

Butterflies are in its common name, and many are drawn to the nectar of *Asclepias tuberosa*: monarchs, skippers, viceroys, prairie fritillaries and sulphurs. I recently watched a rare Baltimore checkerspot balance for long minutes on a butterfly milkweed bloom. The flowers are flat-topped umbels, providing a landing pad for large flying insects. From the tuberous root, extending two to three feet down, a cluster of robust, hairy stems holds bright blossoms open to pollinators. The prickly stems are a deterrent to tiny crawling insects; this plant needs wide-winged visitors. It also invites hummingbirds and is especially loved by bees. Because of the widely-publicized connection between monarchs and milkweeds – the laying of monarch eggs on the undersides of milkweed leaves – the importance of milkweed for bees may be less well-known. Bees make their nests in created ground holes or in stalk, stem and rotting wood cavities, and they provide food for emerging larva rather than depending on host plant leaves. But bees critically need nectar. A recent study noted 282



Butterfly milkweed in bloom, inviting in butterflies and bees.



A particular lover of embankments, roadsides and disturbed ground, butterfly milkweed stands out near an oak savanna in Dane County.

different species of bees gathering nectar on North American milkweeds; another study counted 79 different insects visiting a single butterfly milkweed in a short time period! Eastern honeybees, the brown-belted honeybee and several species of sweat bees are major pollinators for this milkweed. Insects swarm in competitive circles all day above the

tiny orange flowers of the umbels. And even though the sap is clear, not the milky ooze of almost all other milkweeds, it still contains a strong, bitter chemical that will flavor the bodies of feeding insects. Birds can thus be deterred from snapping them up as often.

Homo sapiens also value butterfly milkweed. Nineteenth-century physicians used its root to treat “catarrhal infections of the lung,” recognizing its expectorant qualities. Centuries before, indigenous peoples of the Northeast and Midwest were digging up and drying butterfly milkweed root to use in winter months for cough, asthma symptoms and respiratory infections. They shared their knowledge with settlers, who called it pleurisy root. In the slightest of modern references to Native American use can be found connections to current restoration practices. A study of Wisconsin plant communities notes that butterfly milkweed was the primary medicinal plant of oak openings and savannas gathered by Native Americans. This strongly suggests burning practices, as butterfly milkweed is fire resilient and will sometimes appear as a ruderal, or first colonizing plant of burned or disturbed areas. Native peoples long burned prairies and the understory of burr and white oak savannas, especially, encouraging and preserving the acorn-producing giants they depended on to lure game. Perhaps burning also encouraged butterfly milkweed to arrive and endure,

bringing medicine easily spotted. The photo (center) shows this milkweed as it commonly appears in the wild, liking embankments and oak savannas, a lone flash of color at mid-summer.



Friends Members and Donors JULY 1, 2025 – JUNE 30, 2026

WOODLAND FRIENDS \$250 and above

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Carla & Fernando Alvarado
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Karen Icke
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Hilde & Julius Adler
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Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve

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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

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Field trips: Tom Zinnen,
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Preserve the Preserve

With the publication on June 22 of the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment (dated June 12), the public and the Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve Board (FLNP) first became aware that the proposed roadway to access the campus maintenance yard within the Preserve will entail bulldozing a 14-ft-wide slice through Bill's Woods. The DEIA did not stipulate the length of the road, but based on the map in the appendix of the DEIA, it appears the strip will destroy a strip of 500 feet, perhaps more.

The FLNP Board of Directors submitted written comments and participated in a public meeting held on July 7, along with numerous Friends members, UW faculty, staff, students, alumni and community members; many expressed concern regarding the destructive nature of the proposed road within the Preserve.

The Friends website Friendslakeshorepreserve.org provides additional information and updates.



Tom Zinnen, Friends President welcomes members and friends to the 2026 Annual Meeting.