

AUGUST 2020 NEWSLETTER



A MOMENT OF TRUTH

The bird loving community has a long, wonderful history in southern Wisconsin. In a recent search of archival newspapers, I discovered that a “Madison Audubon Society” was operating on and off as long ago as the late 1890s! The Madison Audubon of today, however, was born of the establishment of the Madison Bird Club in 1935 that officially became a National chapter in 1949. Since then, a lot has been accomplished that is worth celebrating.

We’re highlighting a few reasons to celebrate in this issue—all made possible by you. Because of our supporters, Madison Audubon was able to purchase a new addition to our beautiful Otsego Marsh property. Faville Grove Sanctuary is restoring more than 20 acres this fall. We are working on updating maps and signs to make all of our properties more accessible. Our education department is touch-



ing lives, and our citizen science programs are making real, tangible change. Yes, indeed, there is much to celebrate both today and in our past that has benefitted birds and people alike.

Yet we haven’t done nearly enough for all people. We say it, and we mean it, that all are welcome in our sanctuaries and efforts. But how often have we reached beyond our typical community to extend that welcome? How often have we interacted with Black, Indigenous, or People of Color at our sanctuaries or in our citizen science programs? How safe do members of the LGBTQ+ community feel when birdwatching or simply considering visiting outdoor spaces?

These are hard, uncomfortable, provocative questions. Still, we must ask them, because they are important. Conservation without representation is deeply flawed. People of color are also heirs and stewards to this planet, and without the change needed to embrace that truth, conservation has neither a solid nor just future. We are not truly meeting our mission if some of our fellow community members feel unsafe or unwelcome on the land we hope they will love and

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MOMENT OF TRUTH, continued

protect. Nature is for all—and needs all.

Improving diversity, equity, inclusion, and access is a stated goal in our strategic plan and on our website. That's a start.

But we are holding ourselves accountable to do better—to move beyond statements and intent—to meaningful action that makes inclusion an intentional, conscious, living, and permanent part of Madison Audubon.

We are changing things within our organization, working toward fostering a culture of conservation that is diverse in its advocates, participants, and recipients. These changes are often conducted behind the scenes, like where we adver-

tise job and volunteer opportunities, who we partner with, and how we talk about issues relating to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access. But they will result in public-facing shifts. We will be sure to share progress with you as we learn and improve.

This work will be challenging, is essential, and cannot be done without you. Thank you for your partnership in this. Conservation is truly beautiful, thanks to you.

Matt Reetz, executive director
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ADVANCE MADISON AUDUBON'S MISSION SAFELY: VOTE ABSENTEE

Request your absentee ballot at myvote.wi.gov/en-us/VoteAbsentee. Do it soon and return your ballot promptly to help your municipal clerk deal with the pandemic-related surge in absentee voting and assure that your ballot is counted.

This November's election will likely be the most important ever for restoring the ability of government, now badly damaged, to protect the environment, to manage crises like the ongoing pandemic or the unfolding climate crisis, to develop

policy on the basis of science and sound logic, to guarantee democratic representation, and to assure broad-based prosperity.

Your vote is critical if we are to reclaim the social norms and institutions needed to support a healthy relationship between people and the world we inhabit. Vote safely, but vote.

Roger Packard, board president
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THE FUTURE OF OTSEGO MARSH

If you haven't yet visited Otsego Marsh, please put it on your list for this summer! This beautiful natural area, about 15 minutes from Goose Pond Sanctuary, features the lovely wetland called Hawkos Pond, surrounded by woodland.

We're thrilled to share that on June 1, the protected area got even bigger and better due to Madison Audubon's purchase of a parcel adjacent to Hawkos Pond. The overall goal for the 36 acres is to provide habitat for species associated with grassland, wetland, and oak savanna habitats as well as a place for the public to hike and enjoy the plants and animals.

Currently, the parcel contains five acres of wetland habitat, seven acres of farmed wetlands, 19 acres of cropland, and five acres of woodlands that will be converted to beautiful native wetland, mesic prairie, and woodland habitats. Just imagine the transformation, the diversity of wildlife!

Once restored with wetland plants and shrubs, we should see an increase in wetland birds such as wood ducks, willow flycatchers, yellow warblers, and common yellowthroats; grassland birds such as nesting mallards and blue-winged teal, eastern meadowlarks, clay-colored sparrows, sedge wrens, and dickcissels; and woodland birds like red-headed woodpeckers. Already, pileated and red-headed woodpeckers, barred owls, and scarlet tanagers nest at Otsego Marsh.

There is currently almost no suitable nesting habitat for turtles in the local area. But we are hopeful that restored wetlands will help Blanding's, snapping, and painted turtles, all present but not currently nesting, find safe habitat to lay eggs.

We are also fortunate to have seven species of frogs and the American toad

OTSEGO MARSH, continued

at Otsego Marsh. All of them will benefit from further restoration of the new parcel.

As we plant more milkweed, including swamp (red) in the wetland and common in the prairies, monarchs will find more places to lay their eggs. These migratory butterflies will also benefit from fall nectar species in the restored mesic prairie.

Many insect groups, like dragonflies and damselflies, will also benefit from restoration. Recently, Richard Armstrong photographed a horned clubtail dragonfly that has not been reported in the past 24 years in Columbia County.

We have observed a few chimneys (burrows) from crayfish—a neat sighting! In dry years when the land was farmed, the crayfish were probably plowed up, but the newly protected area will allow for crayfish to thrive.

The restoration plan calls for over 50 species of mesic prairie plants, including the federally-threatened prairie bush clover, which is found on nearby land owned by WDNR.

This natural area is truly a gem in southern Wisconsin, and we hope you'll visit soon. To access, type in 3382 Old Co Rd F, Rio WI into your map app. There is a parking lot tucked into the area just south of Hawkos Pond. A hiking trail awaits from the lot, or view the new parcel across the road. Tear out the map included here and bring it with you. Hiking boots are recommended, and binoculars and a camera will add to your fun.

To find out how you can support the purchase and future restoration of this land, check out the article on the next page. We couldn't do any of this without you!

Mark Martin and Sue Foote-Martin, Goose Pond Sanctuary resident managers
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Graham Steinhauer, Goose Pond Sanctuary land steward
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FAVILLE GROVE IS CALLING

As fall approaches and the days grow shorter, the temperatures cooler, the air drier, and the skies bluer, schedule some prairie time into your calendar. Get away from the mind-numbing barrage of hit-and-run political ads and general craziness that defines so much of our lives these days, for just a bit.

Throughout September and October, we hope you will join us and the goldfinches for the meditative act of collecting seed. We plan to plant more than 20 acres of cropped land to prairie on a parcel that Madison Audubon purchased last year at the north end of Faville Marsh. This restoration will expand habitat for grassland birds, nesting ducks, turtles, badgers, butterflies, and countless other critters, and protect the marsh from agricultural runoff. You can help make a dramatic difference in the way this land looks and functions by collecting the seeds essential to restoration.

There are lots of ways you can partici-

pate in this critical, calming activity.

Are Saturdays off-limits so you can enjoy your precious time with kids and grandkids? Join us Wednesday mornings in September and October for some quiet time in the field.

Do you work during the week and your boss doesn't agree that time in the prairie is job-related? Put Saturday mornings on your calendar.

Not a morning person? Try Saturday afternoons.

None of the above? Drop us a line and we'll work out something to fit your schedule.

Looking for other ways to enjoy some prairie time? We hope to host a tour and introduction to Faville Grove Sanctuary lands along Prairie Lane on Sunday, Sept. 20, 9 AM, with modifications made to ensure safety of participants. We can promise spectacular color in some spectacular prairie

FAVILLE GROVE, continued

restorations. Keep an eye on the website for updates.

You are always welcome to write in your own time to come out and wander independently or with members of your household. There are two primary starting points at Faville Grove, the first at W7480 Prairie Ln.,

Lake Mills. Hike through the grasses to enjoy the view from the Lake Mills Ledge, overlooking the expanse of restored prairie in the Crawfish River floodplain. Or begin at Buddy's Place, an old vacant farmstead on our property, with prairie and wetland surrounding it. The address for Buddy's is N7710 Hwy. 89, Lake Mills. Park along the shoulder, walk around the driveway fence, and explore the path to the floating bog in Faville Marsh, or check out Kettle Pond with its own floating bog. A map is available at madisonaudubon.org/faville-grove.

Faville Grove has only a few mowed

trails, but you are also welcome to make your own path through the prairie. Don't worry, the plants will rebound from your footsteps! Visit frequently and watch the prairies and wetlands turn golden as fall progresses.

How many species of goldenrod can you learn to identify? In flower and in seed? How many species of aster? Gentians? Grasses? Butterflies and birds in migration?

However you choose to enjoy the season, put it on your calendar now before time slips away.

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BROADENING OUR BOARD

Consistent with Madison Audubon bylaws, our board of directors is developing a slate of candidates for election to the board next spring. We invite Madison Audubon members to suggest potential candidates for consideration by our board nominating committee. The organization is particularly interested in meaningfully improving representation of diverse voices and experiences in our board governance. Diversity, equity, inclusion, and access in conservation are essential to our shared mission. Please send names of individuals who you feel would make a substantive contribution to advancing Madison Audubon's mission to Roger Packard, board president, rpackard@uwalumni.com.

YOUR PIECE OF THE PUZZLE

It's a giddy feeling to step onto a piece of land that has just been permanently protected, especially when you know that restoration will bring it back to noisy, colorful life.

This is the feeling I experienced, and that you can have, when exploring the new addition at Otsego Marsh. Its 36 acres are so important to the landscape puzzle that Madison Audubon used valuable reserve funds to purchase the parcel and ensure that it would be restored and protected forever. It may not look like thriving native habitat right now, but in a few short years that land will be humming with diverse native life.

And now, it's time to refill the land acquisition coffers!

Longtime Madison Audubon supporter Jerry Martin donated \$50,000 in hopes of inspiring others to help replenish our funds. This will secure a stronger

financial position for Madison Audubon when other critical parcels of land come up for sale near our sanctuaries.

We are celebrating our Otsego Marsh donations by joining in the popular quarantine pastime of working jigsaw puzzles. Each donation reveals a new piece of the puzzle. When the last puzzle piece is added, we will share the completed picture. See the image below for the inspiring progress we've made since June. You too can help! Honor your love of birds. Honor a loved one, living or passed. Save valuable lands and waters.

We hope you will donate to this beautiful marsh today. Find your puzzle pieces and track our progress at madisonaudubon.org/puzzle.

And after you have added your piece to the puzzle, be sure to head out to Otsego Marsh. Drop a canoe in Hawkos Pond. Step on to our new parcel. And enjoy that giddy feeling of knowing that you helped protect an important piece of the landscape puzzle.

Forever.

Becky Abel, director of philanthropy
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NOW MORE THAN EVER

There are a lot of uncertainties about the upcoming school year. Even between now and when you read this, plans will have changed. One thing I do know, with utter certainty, is that kids will be learning about nature.

In a time like this, when there are so many competing and contradicting priorities and anxieties, where is the space for nature education? When a teacher has to meet the challenges of instructing a classroom of 2nd graders virtually, is including nature education worth the effort?

Oh yes, it's worth it. Here's why.

We are honored to work with an amazing group of teachers who incorporate outdoor education into their curriculum, and who plan to continue

this during the 2020-21 school year. I met with a few of them online in early July to chat about what fall might look like. We shared fears and wishes, and lifted each other up. We talked about what worked well this spring and what didn't. We made plans... and planned that those plans might change. One huge success during those spring months of remote teaching was continuing outdoor education. Yes, kids were interacting with friends and teachers through screens and exploring solo, but nature held us all together.

Nature was an equalizer: all of the kids had different home lives, stressors, and experiences, but they could all step outside and breathe the fresh air. They could all look for ants on the sidewalk or a crow overhead.

CLEAR PROGRESS

Up to a billion birds die each year as a result of window collisions in the U.S. alone. A billion. Not only are the bird deaths that result from window collisions woeful, they are also preventable, making the search for solutions so very tantalizing.

In spring 2018, Madison Audubon partnered with UW-Madison to launch the Bird Collision Corps (BCC). This citizen science program is designed to study the well-known problem of bird-window collisions at a local level. Each spring and fall migration since then, with the exception of the spring of 2020, dozens of volunteers have surveyed high-priority buildings on campus, looking for evidence of bird collisions. The best days are when they find none, but many days, they and the birds aren't so lucky. The work is challenging and can be disheartening, but we're pleased to report that work is helping make a difference.

Due to the efforts of BCC volunteers, we identified significant bird collision hotspots on campus. One of biggest problems was at Ogg Residence Hall because it features a six-story glass walkway. These are known to be problematic because birds cannot see the surrounding glass and attempt to fly through the other side. A perfect opportunity for a prevention trial.

This summer, the glass on both sides of all six stories of the walkway received a retrofit that has been proven to be over 90 percent effective in reducing bird-window strikes in similar settings.

The retrofit involves adding small white dot decals to the exterior of the glass (shown below), which don't limit views for building occupants. Plus, the project includes educational signs inside the walkway. The retrofit was pricey, but was generously paid for by University Housing and a Green Fund grant from the Office of Sustainability that was sponsored by the UW Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society.

Achieving this small victory for birds was no small feat, involving lots of paperwork and persistence. We are grateful to our incredible campus partners who worked diligently with us to move this forward, and to our amazing volunteers who spend so much time and energy helping birds.

We hope to resume BCC surveys again this fall (especially for Ogg!), and to continue the work in the broader community to make bird-friendly building design a standard and a priority. To learn more and volunteer, visit madisonaudubon.org/bcc

Brenna Marsicek, director of communications & outreach
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EDUCATION, continued

Outdoor education was calming. It was a chance to step back from COVID-19, from the harsh realities of racial injustice, from family struggles. All of those things are absolutely important and deserve persistent, energetic attention—but everyone needs to take breaks and recharge, especially kids. Nature has been there for that all along.

So, this fall, we'll be continuing outdoor education with these teachers, their students, and the many new students we reach online. Together, we planned to make any potential in-person learning days later this fall or winter feel more like fun summer camp, and to capitalize on relationship-building if and when we're face-to-face. We made lists about the materials needed to keep kids comfortable learning outside each week. We brainstormed what kinds of lessons Madison Audubon could create to help with continued distance learning.

This community is a huge part of why we're all successful teachers—we support each other. And even though the plans are all still in pencil, it's reassuring to know that no matter what, we'll create something lovely for our kids this fall.

Carolyn Byers, education director
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Thank you to our major education program donors:



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Join the Frequent Flyers Club!

Every month, without even lifting a wing, you can help support the work of Madison Audubon. The Frequent Flyers Club is set up for folks like you who want to make regular, ongoing contributions. We can create an automated system for you based on how often, how much, and from which account you'd like to contribute. Thank you to our current FFF members—you help Madison Audubon soar!

More information is available at madisonaudubon.org/give



THE KESTREL LEGACY CIRCLE

Think of a kestrel.

Small, but powerful. Sharp vision. Expert at hovering and scanning for opportunities, even in the face of strong headwinds. Critical component of southern Wisconsin ecosystems. Patient.

Madison Audubon is excited to announce that our planned giving group, long known as the Legacy Society, has a new and improved title.

The Kestrel Legacy Circle

Our Kestrel Legacy Circle members have made a commitment to name Madison Audubon in their wills or estates. Membership to the Circle is not binding in any way, but members' statements of intent allow us to thank and recognize these loyal donors during their lifetimes. Membership also encourages others to make this important commitment to protecting valuable birds and landscapes during the donors' life and beyond.

By joining the Kestrel Legacy Circle, you create an enduring legacy of protection for the birds and lands that are important to you now. Your gift helps ensure that future bird choruses will include diverse voices, and that Madison Audubon's beautiful sanctuaries will remain protected forever.

Madison Audubon accepts planned gifts, in any amount, in the form of:

- Wills and trusts
- Real estate
- Appreciated stock and other assets
- IRA rollovers or life insurance policies

Speak with your financial advisor about leaving a gift to Madison Audubon or contact Becky Abel, director of philanthropy, at babel@madisonaudubon.org or 608-255-2473.

Additional information is at madisonaudubon.org/legacy

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

Our supporters make Madison Audubon tick. We normally like to celebrate our recent donors by printing their names in our newsletter. Thanks to your generosity and general awesomeness, there are simply too many names to (legibly) fit this time! You can find the full list of May-August donors on our website at madisonaudubon.org/2020-donors.

We will include a complete list of donors in our annual report issue in February. Online or on paper, we greatly appreciate your generous support.



PHOTO CREDITS

Page 1: Goose Pond prairie. Arlene Koziol

Page 3: Canoe in Hawkos Pond. Madison Audubon

Page 4: American lotus flower. Madison Audubon | Kingfisher. Richard Armstrong | Crayfish chimney. Madison Audubon

Page 5: Angelica seeds. Hannah Sigg

Page 7: Wood duck token. Mick Thompson | Scarlet tanager. Doug Greenberg

Page 8: Zoom meeting. Madison Audubon

Page 9: Window treatment. UW-Madison

Page 11: American kestrel. Andy Reago & Chrissy McClarren

Page 12: Bobolink. Arlene Koziol

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Madison Audubon is a proud member of the following organizations:

