

NOVEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER

AUDUBON'S COMPLICATED LEGACY

by Matt Reetz, executive director

madison
AUDUBON



The Audubon name has been in the news lately, and not for the usual bird-related reasons. Recent articles in Audubon magazine, newspapers, and podcasts have explained that John James Audubon—the namesake of the Audubon network—held beliefs and acted in ways that were objectively racist, even beyond other “men of his time.” I’d like to share what I’ve learned about the issue, and discuss our chapter’s approach to thoughtfully addressing it.

John James Audubon lived from 1785 to 1851 and is renowned as a naturalist and artist who made significant contributions to ornithology. After his death, the first organizations to bear his name were established, including the National Audubon Society in 1905. Madison Audubon adopted the name as a National chapter in 1949, as have hundreds of others around the country. Over the years, due to the significant work done by these groups and their supporters, the word “Audubon” has become associated with bird conservation. Indeed, for me that word has conjured affection that was built on years of joyful experiences with birds. But, there is more to John James Audubon’s story.

Recently, due scrutiny has been paid to the negative, lesser-known aspects

of J. J. Audubon’s life. He bought and sold people to enslavement, captured and returned people to the enslavement they fled, and openly rejected the abolitionist movement. He ransacked the burial sites of Native peoples and used knowledge from Black and Indigenous communities for his own benefit without compensation or recognition.

This aspect of John James Audubon’s life and the beliefs he held are contrary to the spirit and ethics of today’s conservation movement. Attention to this information has inspired an important, sometimes passionate, discussion about the Audubon legacy, especially among supporters of organizations bearing the name. At Madison Audubon, we are discussing this issue internally and with leaders at other chapters around the country. We’re engaged with National Audubon, which is now in the midst of a 12–18 month process to carefully evaluate their name.

While there are positive connotations associated with the Audubon name, the man’s racist actions also forge a negative legacy that creates barriers and causes pain, unease, or distrust among many of our partners and

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AUDUBON, continued

community members. We have heard this feedback first-hand, and do not take it lightly.

So, at its December meeting, the Madison Audubon board of directors will discuss the Audubon name as it relates to our own identity, values, and ability to effectively, sustainably, and equitably carry out our mission. We will engage with you as Madison Audubon members in coming months, but in the meantime, please refer to the list of resources on this page to learn more about the issue.

Madison Audubon has always held itself to high standards, and we continue to

base our work in respect, accountability, and integrity. As always, thank you for being a partner in our work together: helping birds to flourish at our sanctuaries, children to experience the joys of the outdoors, and communities to come together to enjoy and advocate for conservation.

FURTHER READING

madisonaudubon.org/audubon-name

madisonaudubon.org/values

CHECK IT OUT: WE'VE MIGRATED!

We are excited to share that our main office has changed locations! The search for new office space began in 2019, when our staff and activities had outgrown our space... since then, we have also added three full-time staff to the mix!

In addition to having sufficient space to work in, we're looking forward to interacting more with our new neighbors: staff at the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, Groundswell Conservancy, and Gathering Waters. Fittingly, we will be working in the building closest to the "Dreamkeepers" sculpture of giant metal crane-like birds created by Thomas Every (a.k.a. Dr. Evermor).

**Our new address:
211 South Paterson Street, Suite 340
Madison, WI 53703**



*If you've just mailed us, never fear! We'll be able to receive mail sent to our old office for a short while longer. Our phone number will remain 608-255-2473.

THE LAND RESTORATION PUZZLE

Views like this are breathtaking—and will be even more so after we restore the native vegetation. It's refreshing, and unfortunately not as easy as it should be, to find such vibrant, native habitats in Wisconsin. Protected and restored landscapes like these support thousands of species and provide countless opportunities to enjoy and benefit from the outdoors. But they take a lot of hard work and planning to get to this point.

Madison Audubon is a nationally-accredited land trust, and one of just a handful of Audubon chapters that owns and manages land in the name of bird conservation. Over the past 60 years, we have worked diligently with land owners, agencies, and members like you to purchase, protect, and/or manage nearly 4,000 acres of land in southern Wisconsin.

We put a lot of emphasis on this effort because habitat is a great investment: birds can nest here, butterflies can refuel here, and of course, YOU can enjoy nature here!

This year has been filled with behind-the-scenes work to protect land. We're excited to share more details soon, but let's start with a couple of nuggets:

- Madison Audubon will soon add 80 acres to Faville Grove Sanctuary in Jefferson County, increasing our protection of Faville Marsh and the surrounding uplands.
- In Green County, we just purchased at a bargain sale 155 acres adjacent to a



natural area along the beautiful Little Sugar River.

- In Rock County, we are in the final stages of acquiring 376 acres loaded with restored native habitats that will be placed under Madison Audubon's permanent management and protection.
- We're even working on an exciting grassland habitat project in Dane County too!

As a result, birds ranging from Eastern Meadowlarks to Belted Kingfishers, Sandhill Cranes to Northern Parulas will benefit, along with many other species of mammals, insects, reptiles, and plants.

All of this takes time, planning, and effort—and it certainly takes money. You'll soon be hearing more about these projects and our efforts to raise funds to replenish our land acquisition and management funds, which we use to strategically piece together the landscape into a broader, thriving ecosystem for birds, other wildlife, and the people who enjoy them. If you'd like to learn more, visit madisonaudubon.org/land-projects.

A FLIGHT OF WETLANDS AT FAVILLE GROVE

by Drew Harry, Faville Grove Sanctuary land steward

A flight of beer offers a quick taste and comparison of styles and flavors on tap. Here, we offer a small sample of the diversity of ecosystems you can find at Faville Grove; a flight of wetlands, if you will. Each has been painstakingly restored to highlight its natural uniqueness, with important features that influence the composition of flora and fauna. Different traits combine to create remarkably crafted habitats with distinctive biological, physical, and chemical characteristics.

CRAWFISH RIVER FLOODPLAIN

Style: Wet prairie, emergent wetland, floodplain forest

Origin: Sculpted and flattened by glacial Lake Scuppernong, which covered most of Jefferson County. Continued natural flooding of the Crawfish River has formed terraces, or levels with slightly different elevations parallel to the river.

Acidity: Alkaline, pH above 7.0

Notes: Northern Harrier, Short-eared Owl, Veery, Least Flycatcher

Comments: The floodplain of the Crawfish River contains hundreds of acres of prairie restorations, allowing uncommon birds like Northern Harriers and Henslow's Sparrows to inhabit this lowland tract. Additional diversity comes from a floodplain forest along the lower terrace of the river, which harbors unique forest breeding bird species. The size and diversity of habitats makes for a rich birding experience.



LEDGE SPRINGS

Style: Calcareous fen, sedge meadow, wet-mesic prairie

Origin: Natural springs emanate from the base of the Lake Mills Ledge. Ditches in the old farm field were filled, and the springs continue to flow, forming bubbling pools and small rivulets in spots.

Acidity: Alkaline, pH around 8.5

Notes: Bobolink, Dickcissel, Wilson's Snipe, American Woodcock

Comments: The Ledge Springs possess unique flowing springs, many of which provide open water at a constant temperature year-round, popular for all kinds of wildlife, especially in winter. Unique plant species have assembled around these springs, with a number of uncommon species indicating calcareous conditions like swamp thistle, flat-top aster, and marsh marigold.

FAVILLE MARSH

Style: Open bog, tamarack swamp, emergent marsh

Origin: Depression formed from a block of glacial ice, bog formed as a glacial lake filled in

Acidity: Acidic, pH around 3.5

Notes: Yellow Warbler, Sandhill Crane, Swamp Sparrow, Green-winged Teal

Comments: Faville Marsh is an acidic rain-fed wetland with a floating mat of sphagnum mosses, leatherleaf, and sedges. Harboring a unique flora more characteristic of northern Wisconsin, the mat contains an abundance of sundew, a carnivorous plant. The open character of the wetland adds to the prairie landscape of the surrounding uplands, and area-sensitive birds like Northern Harriers enjoy the vistas.

NORTH SHORE MORAIN SCRAPES

Style: Submergent marsh, sedge meadow, emergent marsh, wet prairie

Origin: Excavated areas where farm erosion or drainage eliminated pre-existing wetlands

Acidity: Variable, but mostly neutral to alkaline, pH 6.0-8.0

Notes: Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Sedge Wren, Wood Duck

Comments: The scrapes contain planted prairies and sedge meadows. Some of the ponds have high quality emergent vegetation like pickerelweed and wild rice.

KETTLE POND

Style: Emergent marsh, open bog, sedge meadow

Origin: Sculpted by a round block of glacial ice, forming the bowl shaped depression

Acidity: Acidic, pH 3.5

Notes: Eastern Kingbird, Willow Flycatcher, Hooded Merganser, Sandhill Crane

Comments: The Kettle Pond is a scenic bowl-shaped depression, with a pond in the middle. Surrounding the pond is a floating bog mat with stunted tamarack trees, and along the steep uplands a "moat" of open water and wetland vegetation add complexity.

LAAS TAMARACK

Style: Tamarack swamp, emergent marsh

Origin: Glacial lake that has filled in over thousands of years

Acidity: Acidic, pH 3.5

Notes: Black-billed Cuckoo, Virginia Rail, Marsh Wren, Green Heron

Comments: The Laas Tamarack contains a northern plant community, with many plants unique from other nearby acidic wetlands, with orchids, cranberry, blueberry, and starflower. There is good tamarack regeneration and a healthy understory of sphagnum mosses and cottongrass.

To learn more, visit our website: madisonaudubon.org/faville-grove

THE COMINGS AND GOINGS AT GOOSE POND

by Mark Martin, Susan Foote-Martin, and Graham Steinhauer, Goose Pond team

At Goose Pond, we are always keeping tabs on the weather, especially the amount of rainfall. Spring started out with low water levels in the pond due primarily to the below normal precipitation of 13.5 inches in 2021 (35.7 in a normal year). However, the low water levels provided ideal habitat for shorebirds, and 25 species were reported during spring migration.

In the first half of June, Goose Pond received 5.5 inches of rain in 11 days, but then water levels declined weekly through late July until the pond was bone dry. Rainfall totaled 5.2 inches in August, which resulted in shallow water. September rainfall totaled 7.2 inches, and raised water levels, however the water level is still low since most of the rain soaked into the ground.

When the pond was dry, deer, including four bucks at one time, were seen feeding on arrowheads, though marsh birds were almost absent. When the water returned wetland birds also returned. For example, Spike Millington reported 11 species of wetland birds on eBird including 500 Canada Geese, 250 Mallards, 61 Northern Pintails, 140 Green-winged Teal, 50 Sandhill Cranes, 1 Stilt Sandpiper, and 10 Lesser Yellowlegs on September 25.

Summer rainfall benefitted the farmer's crops and our prairies. The prairies are producing an abundance of seeds; our



interns, volunteers, and three part-time staff have already collected 90 species of forbs and grass seeds by October 1! We broke our record for the amount of seeds collected for one species: 37.4 pounds of prairie cinquefoil (at 230,000 seeds per ounce, that translates to 137 million seeds)!

Volunteer Peter Leege has been busy moving the Goose Pond Cam around the pond and uplands. The summer highlight was seeing a pair of badgers digging holes and moving along the railroad tracks, which resulted in an hour-long badger show for Pond Cam viewers! September Pond Cam highlights included a Great Horned Owl and American Kestrel that were feasting on large grasshoppers (madisonaudubon.org/pond-cam).

Thank you to all the volunteers and interns that collected seed, removed invasive species, submitted eBird reports, and assisted with many other Goose Pond projects!

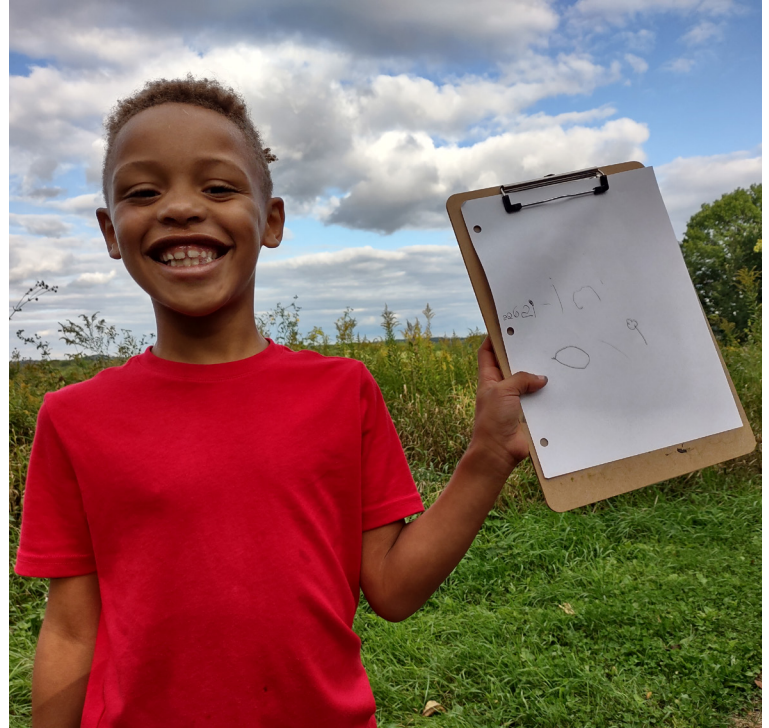
IT'S ALL ABOUT THE GRATITUDE

by Carolyn Byers, director of education

This fall we have so much to be thankful for. Crisp sunny days, migrating birds, and crunchy leaves—the best! We are delighted about our new partnerships this fall. Our educators meet regularly with 16 classrooms and a community center, adding up to 240 kids learning about nature, sharing stories, journaling, and exploring local wildlife in their school grounds and neighborhoods. We love our teacher partners: they meet with us to plan lessons that dovetail with their curricula. They tell us what their kids need from our lessons. And they are SO willing to try out all of our new wild games.

We're grateful to our funders, who help us provide programming at no cost to teachers, community centers, and kids. Because of their generous support, we're able to partner with schools and community centers that serve a majority population of families of color or low-income families. This is important to Madison Audubon because these groups have historically been excluded from the mainstream environmental movement. We're so glad we can include these kids in our Earth-loving, nature-learning, run-and-play lessons!

In September we welcomed our new educator, Mickenzee Okon! She's working for us full time, and hopefully for many years to come. Mickenzee will be teaching lessons with community centers as well as some of the classrooms we partner with. Mickenzee brings with her a calming classroom presence, a degree in wildlife ecology, and an enthusiasm



for learning that will undoubtedly inspire our kids.

Finally, we're grateful to the kids we work with. They push us to learn more with their unending curiosity. They remind us to appreciate the small things when they rush to us with hands cupped around a new natural treasure. Their grins and hugs make this job fun and our hearts light.

In our kindergarten classrooms, the teachers like to end each outdoor learning lesson with a gratitude circle. The kids go around the circle and say something they're thankful for. We hear things like "the sun," "that it's not so cold today!" and "frogs," but usually there are a lot of responses like "my friends," "my teachers," and "that we can all be together outside." Community is a big part of outdoor education. Thanks for being a part of ours.

DEALING WITH THE TOUGH STUFF

by Brenna Marsicek, director of communications and outreach

The Bird Collision Corps (BCC) just completed its ninth season of surveys. Nine! It seems like yesterday that we launched this program. Since then, volunteers have documented over 1,500 birds that crashed into windows at just a fraction of Madison's buildings. This type of volunteer work isn't glamorous, but it is incredibly important. And the people who participate in this program are made of tough stuff: they get up at or before dawn, go out in all weather in search of dead birds—all in the name of conservation. They know that if we understand the problem, we can help fix the problem.

This program has a great mix of returning and new volunteers. This fall,



of the 114 volunteers we worked with, nearly half of them have participated in multiple previous survey periods. That is incredible! Two of our steadfast volunteers include spouses Beth Ann Workmaster and Linda Crubaugh, who have been part of BCC since the very beginning in 2018. Here they share their reasons for why they find satisfaction in the effort:

"We got involved in the Bird Collision Corps after learning about the hazards that human-made constructions and activities present to birds, especially during migration. We simply could not just go out and enjoy our regular birding activities in the same way. Having been long time members of Madison Audubon and having careers in science, the opportunity to volunteer for the BCC is a great way to help collect data that could be used to help birds.

Being involved in BCC always brings a range of emotions. Every time we go out on a survey of one of our sectors, we hope that we will not find any injured or dead birds, but we know that is neither likely nor actually a good thing, since we know that collisions do in fact happen, that we must get the data, and do it right. We always mourn for a moment when we find a dead bird and take in that mix of emotions. The other morning, we found a dead Wood Thrush and it was so small and vulnerable and yet we also marveled over the intensity of its rusty brown back, the distinctness of its chest



spots, and the previously unappreciated pale yellow just below its throat. Never have we been so in awe of and moved by birds than when we are working on the BCC.

We hope that by documenting the numbers of birds that are lost to window collisions there will be strong support for change in new construction and in retrofitting current buildings that have been shown to have high numbers of fatalities. We want this project to bring awareness to the severity of the problem so that there will be support for change in future construction. We also hope

that people in decision-making positions learn better about how to think outside the box—challenges like these can be viewed as opportunities for architectural creativity, ingenuity, and artistry. Even though collecting dead birds can be emotionally challenging, knowing that gathering the hard numbers has the chance to lead to positive change is personally rewarding to us.”

Thank you to Beth, Linda, and all of our volunteers for the dedication and energy they give to the program and bird conservation!



Madison Audubon is your local Audubon chapter, serving 10 counties in southern Wisconsin.

Together with our members, we work to protect and improve habitat for birds and other wildlife through land acquisition and management, education, and advocacy.

A DONOR TESTIMONIAL

“Patrick and I became avid birders over the last two years. We love the outdoors, hiking, animals, and checklists so birding is the perfect hobby for us. We became members of Madison Audubon twice in the matter of a week. I signed him up early and planned to give him the certificate on his birthday. However, the membership coordinator called me later that day and asked why I signed up twice—Patrick had just bought a membership the day prior. Great minds think alike, and it was all for a fabulous cause!

Birds inspire us every day—whether it is the beautiful, mated cardinals living in our backyard or a lovely family of Sandhill Cranes—they help us appreciate nature and bring us together as a couple. We will never forget the first time we saw a Whooping Crane. It was a sunny day in Horicon Marsh on the weekend after our wedding! It was

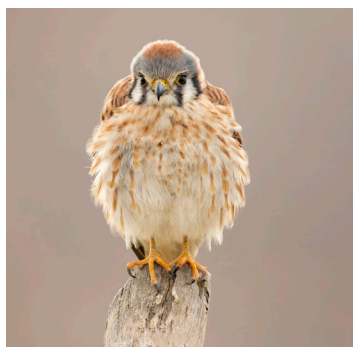


a lifer bird for us, and we stood on the trail for over an hour taking photos and appreciating the moment. That is one of our favorite moments together as a couple.

It is special moments like those that made us want to support our local Audubon chapter. We hope others can find the same joy. We even incorporated our love of birds into our wedding day in June 2022. The topper on our rice crispie cake was a pair of handmade wooden cardinals, complete with a bowtie and veil. We also had a “Dollar Dance” with our guests where we donated to two local charities. I donated to Angel’s Wish Pet Adoption and Resource Center in Verona, WI. Patrick donated to the Madison Audubon, and he did indeed win the dance off!

We are excited for a lifetime of birding together and involvement with Madison Audubon!”

**—Samantha and Patrick Heeney,
Madison Audubon members**



NEW MADISON AUDUBON DONORS AUGUST-OCTOBER 2022

The amazing donors who contribute to Madison Audubon throughout the year make so much good possible. You can find the full list of donors who have contributed to Madison Audubon this year at madisonaudubon.org/2022-donors.

EVENTS: WINTER 2022-2023

I'll Fly Away-Birds and the Enslaved in Flight in Audubon's World

Brigitte Fielder, associate professor of literature and culture from UW-Madison, explores Audubon's narratives, paying special attention to the role of race as it relates to birds.

Date: Tue., Nov. 15, 6:30-7:30 PM

Watch: Stream or recording available on Madison Audubon Facebook page

Madison Lakes Waterfowl

As winter sets in, smaller ponds and lakes in south-central Wisconsin freeze, causing migrating birds to become concentrated on large lakes.

Date: Sat., Dec. 10, 8-11 AM

Meet: UW Lot 60 (Madison)

Led by: Quentin Yoerger

Christmas Bird Count Tally Party

After counting birds for the Madison-area CBC, volunteers are invited to join us as we tally it up!

Date: Sat., Dec. 17, 5-7 PM

Meet: Goodman Community Center's Brassworks Building, 214 Waubesa St. (Madison)

New Year Sunrise at Faville Grove

We will spend the early morning exploring the winter marsh and surrounding uplands, and watch the dawn of the first day of 2023 at the MacKenzie Overlook.

Date: Sun., Jan. 1, 7-9 AM

Location: Faville Grove Sanctuary (Lake Mills)

Led by: Drew Harry, Roger Packard, David Musolf

Drawing Birds (3-part course)

Geared towards those new to drawing or artists who want to gain more skills in drawing birds, this course will help you gain confidence! Bring paper and a pencil, or your favorite art supplies.

Cost: \$20

Taught by: Carolyn Byers

Part 1: Drawing Birds

Tue., Jan. 17, 7-9 PM via Zoom

Part 2: Drawing Beaks and Feet

Tue., Jan. 24, 7-9 PM via Zoom

Part 3: Drawing Weird Birds

Tue., Jan. 31, 7-9 PM via Zoom

CITIZEN SCIENCE PROGRAMS

Christmas Bird Count

Play a role in the longest-running citizen science bird project (this is year 123!) by joining a count in your area.

Date: varies by location

Info: madisonaudubon.org/cbc

Bald Eagle Nest Watch

Watch a family of Bald Eagles as the parents rear their young and fledge them from the nest.

*Recruitment begins in December

Season: Feb. through Jun. 2023; weekly 1-hour sessions

Info: madisonaudubon.org/benw

Kestrel Nest Box Monitoring

Monitor and maintain kestrel nest boxes within south-central Wisconsin, supporting a population facing major declines.

*Recruitment begins in December

Season: Mar. through Jul. 2023; frequent visits

Info: madisonaudubon.org/kestrels

BOARD ELECTIONS COMING UP SOON

The Madison Audubon board of directors provides the organization with financial oversight and strategic direction. The board appointed three interim members in April: Matt Krueger, Dexter Patterson, and Tim Norris. All three are highly qualified and will be among candidates for longer terms to appear on the ballot in February 2023. Statements are available at madisonaudubon.org/board-statements.

Madison Audubon's bylaws allow for members to nominate candidates to the board. You may do so by submitting a brief statement from each nominee signed by at least 25 Madison Audubon members in good standing as of November 1. Member nominations are due to the Madison Audubon office no

later than December 6.

As always, our nominating committee looks to identify talented board candidates who will bring unique expertise, new perspectives and enthusiasm to our board. We will share more about any other candidates with you in preparation for the 2023 election. Watch for ballots to appear in the February newsletter and please vote!



PHOTO CREDITS

P2: "Dreamkeepers" sculpture photo by Kaitlin Svabek/Madison Audubon

P3: New Madison Audubon land purchase by Brenna Marsicek/Madison Audubon

P4: Marsh Marigold at Ledge Springs by Drew Harry

P6: Mixed waterfowl wade through low water levels at Goose Pond by Arlene Koziol

P7: Child on a nature adventure by Carolyn Byers/Madison Audubon

P8: Bird-window collision victim (White-throated Sparrow) by Brenna Marsicek/Madison Audubon

P9: Beth Workmaster and Linda Crubaugh pause along their BCC route by Brenna Marsicek/Madison Audubon

P11: Samantha and Patrick Heeney birding, courtesy of the couple.

P11: American Kestrel by Mick Thompson

P12: Sandhill Cranes at sunset by Monica Hall

MADISON AUDUBON TEAM

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Olivia Dunn
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Jeff Galligan
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Lisa Lepeak
Tim Norris
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Becky Abel, director of philanthropy
Carolyn Byers, education director
Drew Harry, land steward (Faville Grove)
Brenna Marsicek, communications and outreach director
Mark Martin (volunteer) and Susan Foote-Martin, resident managers (Goose Pond)
John Minnich, financial manager
David Musolf and Roger Packard, volunteer resident managers (Faville Grove)
Mickenzee Okon, educator
Graham Steinhauer, land steward (Goose Pond)
Kaitlin Svabek, communications specialist

We are a proud member of the following organizations:



Thank you to our major education program donors:



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