

AUGUST 2019 NEWSLETTER



Summer is all the things

Flyin' high and all a-twitter
with activities

Summer never fails to surprise. There is always something new, something different, something challenging, something delightful. This particular summer is no different. If this issue of the newsletter seems like a bit of a hodgepodge, it's because it reflects the variety and quantity of things we do in summer.

As a new nationally accredited land trust (as of August 2018... we're still giddy from that fact!), the stars have aligned to facilitate numerous land purchases this year—including three completed at Faville Grove, one in the works at Goose Pond, and others in the wings. Then there are the regular activities at the sanctuaries of weed control, seed collection and cleaning, plant and animal surveys, overseeing and supporting summer interns, and much more. The prairies and wetlands are alive with the sounds of vibrant life.

The education department is buzzing among community centers, Operation Fresh Start programs, adult education class settings, and the office to plan out fall schedules and keep up with



correspondence.

Our citizen science programs are at max capacity, with hundreds of volunteers gathering data on butterflies and other insects, endangered orchids, purple martins, kestrels, bald eagles, and breeding birds generally... lots of interesting questions, and lots of new data to help answer them.

And through it all, a love for birds and nature rings out clear as a bell. These busy times are fun and hectic, and they are meaningful. Because of Madison Audubon's wonderful donors and members like you, we can all do these important and fulfilling activities with the joy and passion they warrant. Thank you for supporting this work, and enjoy the hodgepodge on these pages!

Brenna Marsicek, communications
director

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A look ahead at fall events

Mark your calendars for these activities on the horizon

Monarch Tagging

MID-SEPTEMBER: In Wisconsin, monarch butterflies begin their great migration to Mexico each August through October, with the highest numbers passing through our area sometime in September.

Our annual monarch tagging events are timed to capitalize on peak migration in mid-September. They involve a presentation on monarchs' ecology, declines, and conservation, and a demonstration on safe handling and tagging techniques. Then, everyone gets a net and the freedom to chase butterflies in the prairie, catching as many monarchs as possible and placing tiny stickers on their wings. It's fun,

educational, and important for understanding migration and population dynamics.

Events are held at Goose Pond Sanctuary on Sept. 10, 14, and 21. Register at madisonaudubon.org/events.



Behind the Scenes: Field Museum

OCTOBER 16: Join us for an intimate, behind-the-scenes tour of Chicago's Field Museum specifically tailored for Madison Audubon members. The jam-packed day will include all of the following:

- Special presentation and guided tour of the museum's extensive ornithology collection
- Meet-and-greet with the museum's Mary Hennen and her live peregrine falcon and red-tailed hawk
- Tour of artist-in-residence Peggy Macnamara's studio
- Tour of the Bird Lab and opportunity to meet museum scientists and volunteers

Participants will also have the afternoon to explore the rest of the museum with a special access pass.

Registration is open at madisonaudubon.org/field-museum.





A kettle pond protected

Faville Grove Sanctuary grows again

Back in 2015, Madison Audubon purchased 94 acres at Faville Grove that included the south half of a 23-acre deep-water kettle pond and the adjacent uplands. Last month, we permanently protected the remainder of the pond and nearly its entire watershed when we purchased the north half of the pond as part of a 52.5-acre acquisition.

The pond formed as the last glacier melted. A massive block of ice lingered in this spot, redirecting runoff and the rocky, sandy till carried in the fast-moving water. It left a water-filled depression, or kettle, surrounded by undulating moraines.

Today, more than half of the wetland is covered with a mat of floating sphagnum that hosts a community of fascinating bog plants including tamarack, chokeberry,

leatherleaf, steeplebush, poison sumac, sundew, cotton grass, and marsh shield fern. Pickerelweed, white water-lilies, and blue-flag iris make up some of the emergent vegetation around the open-water areas. The water is home to minnows, frogs ranging in size from tiny chorus frogs to beefy bullfrogs, as well as painted, snapping, and Blanding's turtles. River otters feast in the pond as they make the rounds of their large territories. Herons, egrets, hooded mergansers, and belted kingfishers likewise find abundant prey in the pond.

We have devoted several winters to clearing invasive trees and brush from the south perimeter of the kettle pond and will now be able to do the same around

Faville Grove, continued

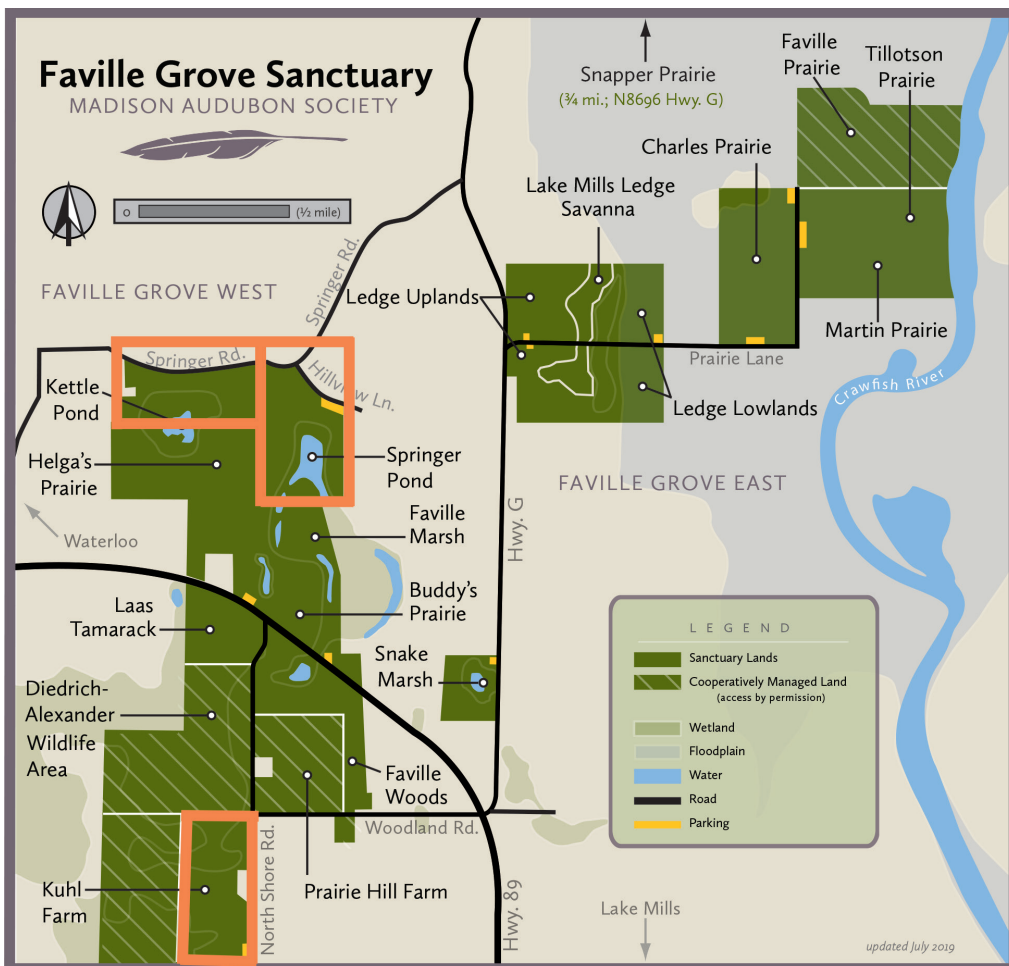
the north end. Savanna and prairie restorations in the surrounding uplands will expand available nesting habitat for waterfowl and grassland birds alike, while eliminating agricultural runoff into the pond.

This is Madison Audubon's third land acquisition at Faville Grove this year, bringing the total acreage protected in the sanctuary to 869. In May, we acquired 63 acres immediately east of the kettle pond parcel, protecting the north end of Faville Marsh. In April we purchased 88 acres of restored prairie and wetland nearly two miles to the south—with all the land in between already protected. Working with the University of Wisconsin-Madison and other owners of lands adjacent to the sanctuary, we are

now managing 1,200 acres at Faville Grove, restoring habitat and scenic vistas on a landscape scale, in one of the fastest-developing areas of Wisconsin.

Many thanks to the generous Madison Audubon members who have made these acquisitions possible. And thanks in advance for your continuing support for future land acquisitions and the ongoing restoration and management of critical habitat in this special part of the state.

Drew Harry, Roger Packard, and David Musolf, Faville Grove Sanctuary crew
faville@madisonaudubon.org



Faville Grove's updated map as of July 2019

New additions are outlined in orange

Field updates

Summers are hoppin' at Goose Pond Sanctuary

Rainfall was above normal in June and in the first week of July, with over seven inches in a single week. Due to the rain and cool weather, we planted our sorghum/sunflower food plot late, but with warmer and drier weather in July the plants have really taken off. There are about 180 acres of surface water this summer, compared to the 60 acres in most years, and flooded areas are providing ideal habitat conditions for wetland birds.

One highlight this nesting season was confirming a brood of green-winged teal. This is only the 19th time that green wings have been documented breeding in Wisconsin, and the first time in Columbia County for the Breeding Bird Atlas II project. Broods of mallards, blue-winged teal, northern shovelers, and American coots are a joy to see zig-zagging through vegetation in search of seeds and invertebrates.



This is the sixth year we have participated in the Mud Lake Butterfly Count, part of the North American Butterfly Association's efforts to tally butterfly species and populations



across the continent. On July 1, our Goose Pond group found 14 species in our prairies, including the sanctuary's first documented bronze copper, and high numbers of crescents and monarchs. We will hold our annual monarch tagging events in mid-September (see page 2).

Invasive plant species send up fresh green shoots after April burns alongside native prairie plants. We've spent hundreds of hours battling aggressive exotics like wild parsnip, sweet clovers, and reed-canary grass. Much of our time is spent maintaining the quality of prairie habitats by eliminating invasive plants, so it is a pleasant change when the seeds of native species begin to ripen in mid-summer and we can alternate our focus between facilitating the good and suppressing the bad.

We plan to begin restoration on 43 acres of mesic prairie this December. This requires A LOT of seed. So far this

Goose Pond, continued

year we've collected seed from 14 native species, and hope to collect seed from at least 80 more by November. Send us an email if you would like to collect seeds with us and promote high quality grassland habitats. Volunteers are crucial to what we do here at Goose Pond Sanctuary and as always, thank

you for your time, interest, and enthusiasm.

Mark Martin and Sue Foote-Martin, Goose Pond Sanctuary resident co-managers and Graham Steinhauer, land steward
goosep@madisonaudubon.org

Restock your toolbox

A treasure trove of free resources for educators

We share a lot of stories about the work our educators do with kids, but did you know that we also offer a lot of resources for educators? Whether you are a teacher, troop leader, or non-traditional educator, we want to help you teach kids about nature in all its glory. The materials we have created are made possible by you—donors and members—and a number of wonderful granting organizations. So, thank you! And please feel welcome to spread the word that these are available to anyone, anywhere, for free.



LESSON LENDING KITS

Choose from games like Migration Obstacle Course and Hunger Cranes, or teaching tools like Mammal Furs, Skulls, or Animal Tracks. All of the kits come with everything you'll need to confidently and successfully conduct the activity (kids not included!). We even loan out binoculars for your bird-watching adventures. Kits are available to borrow for one to two weeks, and we generally allow two kits to be borrowed at once. Visit our website to find out more, or to request a kit: madisonaudubon.org/lesson-kits

DOWNLOADABLE ACTIVITIES

There are lots of free lessons, games, and activities on our website, just a few clicks away. Looking for ways to have kids burn off energy? Try our bird yoga, scavenger hunts, or running games. Seeking some high quality quiet time? Art and reflective projects nurture a love of nature. Many of these activities require only materials that you can find around your home. All are available at madisonaudubon.org/stand-alone-activities



CURRICULA FOR CLASSROOM EDUCATORS

Our lessons for teachers are fun, engaging, and are guaranteed to get kids excited about nature. Each lesson has everything you need to teach: the information, the lesson plan, and tips on adjusting it to fit your specific classroom's needs. Several curriculum sets are now aligned with Wisconsin State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards. We hope to be able to offer even more this fall: madisonaudubon.org/education-resources

MADISON AUDUBON OUTDOOR EDUCATION HANDBOOK

We've been working hard this summer to complete our new Outdoor Ed Handbook that'll be chockful of tips and tricks for getting your students outside, along with more than 130 games and lessons. It should be available in October, at which point you'll be able to download a free copy: madisonaudubon.org/education-resources



Of course, we'd love to visit your classroom, too. To learn more about scheduling a visit, just send an email to info@madisonaudubon.org.

Carolyn Byers, education director
carolyn.byers@madisonaudubon.org

Putting on our science caps

Hands-on experience and wonder through citizen science

It's not every day you get to hold a baby purple martin or spend an hour in comfortable silence with a bald eagle family. Seeing up close the delicate build of a fringed orchid or the tiny might of a kestrel never gets old. The passionate indignation that comes from finding a dead bird below a big bank of windows is eternally motivating.

We want to make citizen science powerful, delightful, and accessible for you too. Which is why we've greatly expanded the number and variety of

opportunities we offer.

The success of these projects is 100 percent due to the hard work of hundreds of amazing volunteers who make space in their schedules for these activities. Birds, butterflies, and botanical treasures are better off for it. Below is a recap of our spring and summer 2019 citizen science projects, all volunteer-led. Thank you to everyone who makes this work, and its benefits, possible!

Breeding Bird Atlas

II (in Columbia County only)

50 volunteers
250+ hours volunteered
550 checklists submitted

Bald Eagle Nest Watch

61 volunteers
1,400 hours volunteered
15 successful nests
10 documented nest failures
23 fledglings

Bird Collision Corp

28 volunteers
232 hours volunteered
14 buildings monitored
61 bird-window collisions
54 bird mortalities

Kestrel Monitoring

33 volunteers
200+ hours volunteered
172 boxes monitored
54 boxes used by kestrels
89 chicks banded
26 adults banded

Songbird Nest Box Monitoring

10 volunteers
105 nest boxes monitored
120 hours volunteered
350+ tree swallow chicks
More data coming in!

Red-shouldered Hawk Banding

7 volunteers
25 hours volunteered
2 trees climbed
5 young banded

Butterfly Count

10 volunteers
26 hours volunteered
9 prairies surveyed
261 butterflies counted
14 species of butterflies documented

Orchid Counting

4 volunteers
14 hours volunteered
197 eastern white-fringed orchids documented

Purple Martin Banding

29 volunteers
169 hours volunteered
5 Amish farms
2 Middleton ponds
4 adults banded
654 chicks banded

On the lookout

Now accepting suggestions for new board members

The Madison Audubon board of directors will soon develop a slate of possible candidates for election to the board next spring.

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.



Belize is calling

Join us this March for an unforgettable birding adventure

March 8-15, 2020

Want to get away this winter? Come exploring with us! On this exciting eight-day expedition to Belize, set your sights on hundreds of neotropical species with the help of our expert guides. Enjoy birding in the pine savannas and wetland habitats of Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary, in the primary and secondary tropical moist forest at Cockscomb Basin, and in private reserves, a botanical garden, and along the Macal River Valley.

Participate in several talks with members of the local community about these efforts, the training programs, and other activities that promote birding tourism as a viable option for local economic development.

Registration costs include a small donation to Madison Audubon.

Trip details, costs, and registration at: holbrook.travel/madison-bz20



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madisonaudubon.org/legacy-society

Let's talk membership

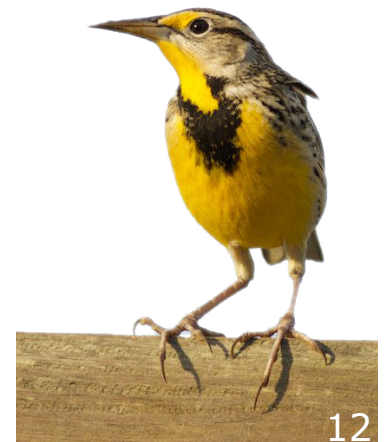
We get asked this a lot: How do I know when my membership expires?

Good question! You're always welcome to call or email to ask!

If you'd like to renew, you have a few options: OneAudubon members (those of you who signed up with National and received complimentary enrollment in your local chapter—ours!) should renew on National's website (audubon.org/renew). Please consider an additional, direct donation to Madison Audubon.

For local-only members, a donation of \$20 or more made online (madisonaudubon.org/donate), over the phone, or via mail will keep your membership up to date.

Thank you for your membership and support of birds, kids, and habitats!





Birds, Bikes, & Brews

Bike the route • see the birds • sip the brews

**SUNDAY
SEPT. 29**

12 PM - 5 PM

MIDDLETON

Same great event, but bigger, better, and in a brand new location! Join Madison Audubon, Capital Brewery, and Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy for a bike ride through Middleton's most beautiful natural area, complete with four guided birding stations. Then cap it off with a refreshment and some fun at Capital Brewery.

REGISTER AT MADISONAUDUBON.ORG/BBB



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Page 12: Eastern meadowlark. Arlene Koziol

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