



# Preserve!

FRIENDS OF THE LAKESHORE NATURE PRESERVE

FALL/WINTER 2017

## BIOCORE PRAIRIE

### The most beautiful classroom on campus turns 20

Seth McGee

In one of his most renowned essays, Aldo Leopold hailed the revolving cast of blooming prairie plants as he watched each new flowering species mark yet another “prairie birthday.” The Lakeshore Nature Preserve is also celebrating a prairie birthday this year.

Since 1997, Biocore students have been transforming an abandoned agriculture field and dumping site into a diverse prairie ecosystem that has become a living laboratory. The site has gone from ecological rags to biological riches while hosting thousands of undergraduate and graduate

student research projects. Though just a newborn in ecological terms, 20 years is a momentous milestone for marking the impact of this project.

From toad surveys to climate change, students have investigated nearly everything under the sun in this 12-acre classroom, which also caters to birders, joggers, artists, and nature lovers. On any given day, you’ll find students collecting soil samples, laying out vegetation quadrats, tagging butterflies, investigating invasive species, photographing bees, banding birds,

streaking microbiology plates, pulling weeds, planting seedlings, or simply daydreaming in the diverse prairie ecosystem that they helped establish.

Though the prairie is still in its infancy on an ecological timescale, the project has a rich history of touching the lives of UW students. Biocore students quickly establish a relationship with the ecosystem that fosters respect, curiosity, and a desire to help maintain and protect the plants and animals of the Preserve.

In the 1940s, Leopold saw the impending demise of his beloved prairie plants and finished his famous essay on a somber note. We can only assume that Leopold would take solace in knowing that the UW campus, a place where he established the notion of a land ethic, is still committed to understanding, studying, and protecting the natural world.



*(Clockwise) Students measuring plants in fire research plots; surveying for the endangered rusty patched bumble bee; Biocore Associate Director Janet Batzli teaching on the first day of class; and students at the prairie “lab bench” studying antimicrobial properties of native plants. (Photos by Seth McGee.)*

# Fall & winter field trips 2017-18

## September

- 3 End of Summer Bird Walk** (Sunday, 7:30–9:30 a.m.). We will look for early fall migrants, including “confusing fall warblers”, vireos, flycatchers, and others. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them. Meet at the UW parking lot at Frautschi Point entrance on Lake Mendota Drive. Leader: Roma Lenehan, 238-5406 (rlenehan@charter.net).
- 10 Geologic History of the Preserve and Madison Lakes** (Sunday, 1:00–3:00 p.m.). Consider the glaciers that were here 25,000 years ago as David Mickelson, professor emeritus of Geoscience, talks about geology on a walk to Picnic Point entrance. Meet at Chamberlin Rock, next to Washburn Observatory, 1401 Observatory Drive. Park on the street, at UW parking lot 26 behind the Soils Building, lot 34 at Tripp Hall, or at Picnic Point (lot 129) and walk up. Leader: David Mickelson, 262-7863 (davem@geology.wisc.edu).



Arlene Koziol

### 4<sup>th</sup> SUNDAYS—

#### Bird and nature walk

(1:30–3:00 p.m.). The Friends sponsor birding and nature walks in the Preserve with the Friends of Urban Nature (see the website for details). Expert, interesting and informative leaders alternate monthly. Meet at UW parking lot 129 at Picnic Point entrance. Contact: Paul Noeldner, 698-0104, paul\_noeldner@hotmail.com.

- 17 Trees of the Preserve** (Sunday, 1:00–3:00 p.m.). An early seasonal hike reveals the amazing variety of trees and their brilliant colors. Enjoy a day in the woods with Glen Stanosz, professor of forest and wildlife ecology, identifying and learning about the trees as they prepare for winter. Meet at UW parking lot 129 at Picnic Point entrance. Leader: Glen Stanosz, 265-2863 (gstanosz@wisc.edu).
- 24 Birding and Nature Walk** (Sunday, 1:30–3:00 p.m.). See box.

## October

- 8 Habitat Diversity in the Preserve** (Sunday, 1:30–3:30 p.m.) On a mid-fall day, join Paul Quinlan, Conservation Resource Supervisor for Madison Parks, on a hike to explore the diversity of habitats in the Preserve. Meet at UW parking lot 129 at Picnic Point entrance. Leader: Paul Quinlan, 267-4918 (pquinlan@cityofmadison.com).
- 13 The Night Sky in the Preserve** (Friday, 7:00–9:00 p.m.). Weather permitting, join the staff of the University of Wisconsin Space Place in viewing the autumn sky from the Preserve. Enjoy a brief introduction about the stars and planets and take a closer look by telescope. Meet at UW parking lot 131 at the intersection of University Bay Drive and Lake Mendota Drive. Leader: Jim Lattis, 262-4779 (jim.lattis@gmail.com).

- 22 Birding and Nature Walk** (Sunday, 1:30–3:00 p.m.). See box.

## November

- 26 Birding and Nature Walk** (Sunday, 1:30–3:00 p.m.). See box.

## December

- 9 Birding Madison's Lakes** (Saturday, 7:30–11:00 a.m.) As winter sets in, smaller ponds and lakes in south-central Wisconsin freeze, causing

migrating birds to become concentrated on Madison's large lakes, which remain open longer. We will look for waterfowl, gulls, and winter birds. This trip has produced some unusual sightings, including red-throated loons, so don't miss it! Dress warmly and bring a scope if you have one. Meet at the middle of UW parking lot 60 at the north end of Walnut Street. Co-sponsored by Madison Audubon. Leader: Quentin Yoerger, 255-2473 (info@madisonaudubon.org).

- 24 Birding and Nature Walk** (Sunday, 1:30–3:00 p.m.). See box.

## January

- 7 Animal Tracking in the Preserve** (Sunday, 1:00–3:00 p.m.). Join UW wildlife specialist and professor David Drake on a winter day as he shows how to track foxes, coyotes, and other denizens of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. Meet at UW parking lot 129 at Picnic Point entrance. Leader: David Drake, 890-0445 (ddrake2@wisc.edu).

- 28 Birding and Nature Walk** (Sunday, 1:30–3:00 p.m.). See box.

## February

- 3 The Eyes Have It** (Saturday, 1:30–3:00 p.m.). Dick Dubielzig, emeritus professor of Veterinary Pathology, will talk about visual adaptations by different animals to their varied environments, and demonstrate examples from the Comparative Ocular Pathology Lab. This event is limited to the first 20 registrants. Park in UW lot 62 and enter the School of Veterinary Medicine through the 2015 Linden Drive entrance. Contact: Dick Dubielzig, richard.dubielzig@wisc.edu.

- 25 Birding and Nature Walk** (Sunday, 1:30–3:00 p.m.). See box.

## March

- 25 Birding and Nature Walk** (Sunday, 1:30–3:00 p.m.). See box.

**SUCCESSFUL FRIENDS PROJECT: PURPLE MARTIN HOUSE**

## Purple martins in the Preserve

Anna Pidgeon

*This spring the Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve installed a purple martin house at the edge of the Biocore Prairie. Volunteers monitored the house closely, keeping compartments free of nests built by other species. By June, the structure had attracted four martins, two of whom nested and produced young. We are thrilled to report that the babies successfully fledged at the beginning of August.*

**Purple martin houses.** All members of the swallow and martin family (Hirurdinidae) nest in enclosures—bank swallows excavate, barn and cliff swallows build nests of mud, tree swallows use woodpecker cavities or nest boxes, and purple martins use single- and multiple-compartment structures.

In 1831 John James Audubon noted the use of human-built nest boxes by purple martins. Since about 1900 purple martins in eastern North America have relied almost exclusively on nest boxes. In fact, there are only a few records of them nesting in their

ancestral natural nest sites, which are abandoned woodpecker holes. This contrasts with populations in the west, where they nest primarily in natural cavities.

**Feeding on the wing.** These aerial foragers eat only flying insects. Many insect species emerge from the water as they transform to their adult aerial life stage. Therefore, areas near water bodies can be particularly productive for foraging purple martins. Our house, situated amidst the open fields of the Biocore Prairie with Lake Mendota nearby, is particularly suited for martins.

Purple martins are perfectly designed for high maneuverability, using their long, pointed wings to wheel and dive in pursuit of prey. However, a diet composed solely of flying insects makes these birds highly vulnerable to starvation during extended periods of cold wet weather, such as we had this spring.



Chuck Henrikson

**Helping a declining population.**

In Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Michigan, but not in Illinois, purple martins have steadily declined over the past 40 years. The reasons are not clear, but it's thought that the combination of a general limitation of nest sites, increasing frequency of extreme weather, and human activities in their South American wintering areas are all likely contributing factors. In addition, house sparrows and European starlings often attempt to take over martin houses. For all these reasons, the decision to erect and actively maintain a nest structure in the Preserve is a positive contribution to maintaining a robust population of purple martins in Wisconsin.



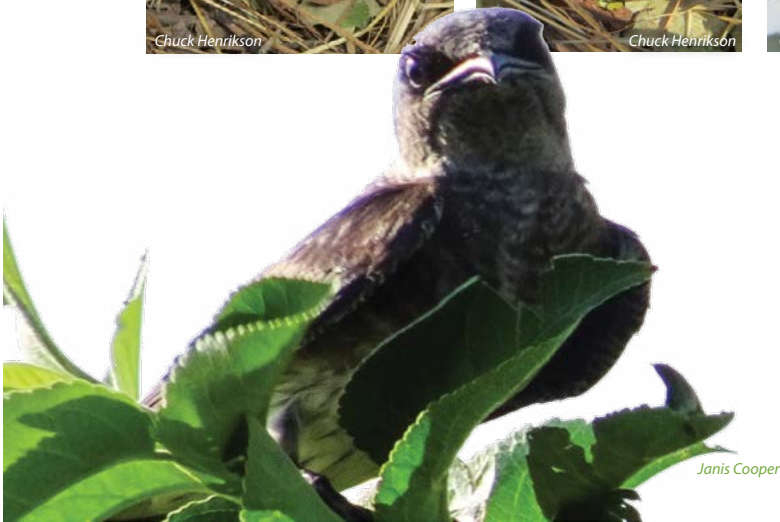
Chuck Henrikson



Chuck Henrikson



Chuck Henrikson



Janis Cooper



Chuck Henrikson

**VOLUNTEER PROFILE**

## Janis Cooper: Helping to keep the Preserve beautiful



Gisela Kutzbach

*Why do people volunteer? We asked Janis, a volunteer steward, to tell her story.*

I'm retired and recently moved from a house to an apartment. I'd had a large yard with lots of native plants that I had nurtured for years. I love being outdoors, and I always get itchy fingers when I see a natural area that could use some TLC, so I was thrilled when the opportunity came up to volunteer at the Lakeshore Nature Preserve.

I've enjoyed and admired the Preserve for years and was so impressed with all the work that's done to restore and maintain the woods and prairie. Since I enjoy being there so much, I decided it made sense to help keep it beautiful!

As a volunteer steward, I monitor the trails periodically for any problems, and I help take care of the lovely native plant garden by the Frautschi Point parking lot. I enjoy meeting and working with other volunteers and the always-helpful Preserve staff.

I also enjoy birding in the Preserve—not exactly a beginner but far from an expert—and this is a great place to see and hear a wide variety of birds with lake, woods, and prairie close by.

I've also volunteered to help monitor the purple martin house. This is a new and exciting experience for me. Around here, purple martins rely heavily on human-supplied housing for places to nest, so this can be an important resource for their conservation. We hope they take to their new home.

## Volunteer work parties

Volunteering is a great way to enjoy the Preserve. Long pants (not leggings) and closed-toe shoes required; tools and gloves provided. Groups and youth are welcome with advance notice. For more details, contact Bryn Scriver, [bryn.scriver@wisc.edu](mailto:bryn.scriver@wisc.edu), 220-5560.

**TIME:** 9:00 a.m.–noon

Date	Meeting place
Sept 16 Sat	Picnic Point, Lot 129
Oct 1 Sun	Frautschi Point lot
21 Sat	Picnic Point, Lot 129
Nov 4 Sat	Frautschi Point lot
19 Sun	Picnic Point, Lot 129
Dec 2 Sat	Frautschi Point lot

## Prairie Partner interns—2017



Bryn Scriver

Each summer, the Friends co-sponsor the Prairie Partner interns, a group of students interested in exploring restoration ecology and natural resources management. This year's interns, from left: **Alex Gall**, wildlife ecology major; **Caleb Burst**, zoology major; **Kaitlyn Kozak**, wildlife ecology—research and management major; **Krista Farrell**, landscape architecture major; and **Emily Jorgensen**, environmental studies major.

## NOTES FROM ACTION WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY CLASS

## From “bird on a stick” to action photography

Linda Deith

Many issues of the newsletter include stunning nature photography taken by Arlene Koziol. These are the types of pictures I aspire to. Animals beautifully caught in motion.

I bought a new camera this January, so it felt like serendipity when Arlene volunteered to teach a 2-day class on action wildlife photography to Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve.

This spring, six of us joined Arlene for lessons at the zoo and at the Preserve. Here are some of her tips, along with samples from your humble correspondent, who is still gamely learning how to wield a camera.

- Be ready to take the shot. Have your camera ready and on the multi-shot setting. Practice your “quick-draw” skills.



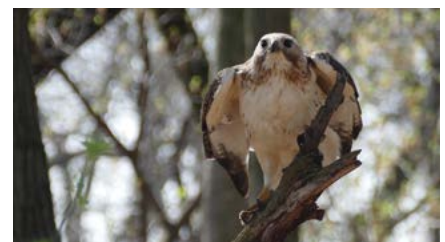
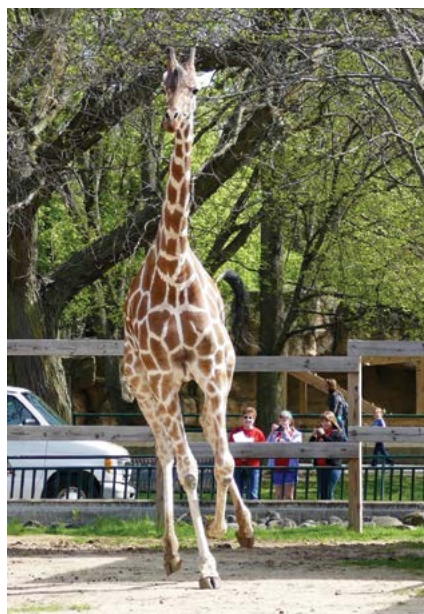
- Use a shutter speed that’s fast enough to freeze the action. For a bird in flight, 1/1600 sec or faster.
- Learn to use light. To start out, keep the main light source behind you.
- Arrive early and stay late. Try to catch that time of day when light looks best.
- Let wildlife come to you. Rather than trying to approach an animal, study its behavior and habitat ahead of time so you can be in the right place.
- Move low and slow, using cover to break up your silhouette.
- Try to get the eye in focus.
- Persistence is more important than luck. Stick with it.

Among a collection of quotes Arlene sent on the art of photography, one particularly resonated:

“The challenge for any photographer is to catch that one segment of motion that embodies the whole movement: The dancer at the apex of a beautiful leap...”

*Joseph Meehan*

I continue to try to catch that apex. Still, with my camera in hand, I find I’m much more observant—I see more in the world around me.





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\*Indicates new members

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**Carter Denniston Fund for Plants**

Roma Lenehan

**In honor of the work and dedication of Roma Lenehan**

Nancy and Jack Heiden

**In memory of**

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Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

- Join
- Renew
- Gift

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP**

- Student . . . . \$10
- Individual . . . . \$20
- Household . . . . \$35
- Steward . . . . \$50
- Patron . . . . \$100
- Other . . . \$\_\_\_\_\_

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*(For members—does not include membership)*

- Woodland . . . \$500
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- Wetland . . . . \$100
- Prairie . . . . \$50
- Other . . . \$\_\_\_\_\_

Friends of the  
Lakeshore Nature Preserve  
P.O. Box 5534  
Madison, WI 53705

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

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#### CONTENTS | fall/winter 2017

<i>Biocore Prairie turns 20.</i>	1
<i>Field trips.</i>	2
<i>Purple martins.</i>	3
<i>Prairie Partner interns.</i>	4
<i>Volunteer opportunities.</i>	4
<i>Volunteer profile: Janis Cooper.</i>	4
<i>Photography tips.</i>	5
<i>Members and donors.</i>	6-7
<i>Call for ongoing volunteers.</i>	8

## Early call for ongoing volunteers

Looking for a meaningful way to support the Preserve and get outside while getting some purposeful exercise? Consider becoming an ongoing volunteer. We're looking for folks who are interested in engaging in a regular volunteer activity, either as part of a group or as an individual.



Laura Wyatt

Our next training session will be held in early 2018. To learning more about this opportunity, please contact Preserve Volunteer Coordinator, Bryn Scriver, at [bryn.scriver@wisc.edu](mailto:bryn.scriver@wisc.edu) or 220-5560.