

Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve

Eagle Heights Woods- Be Part of the Story

Eagle Heights Woods- A place to connect with historical roots

The story of Eagle Heights Woods began over 500 million years ago when Wisconsin was covered by a warm, shallow sea. Deposits of sand and calcium carbonate built up over millions of years. Most of the sandstone of the cliffs in the Preserve dates to this time and was formed as the sand was deeply buried and the sea receded. Since then, millions of years of weathering and erosion by glaciers and water have shaped the land. Now, Eagle Heights Woods marks the highest point on the southern shore of Lake Mendota, rising 160 feet above the lake.

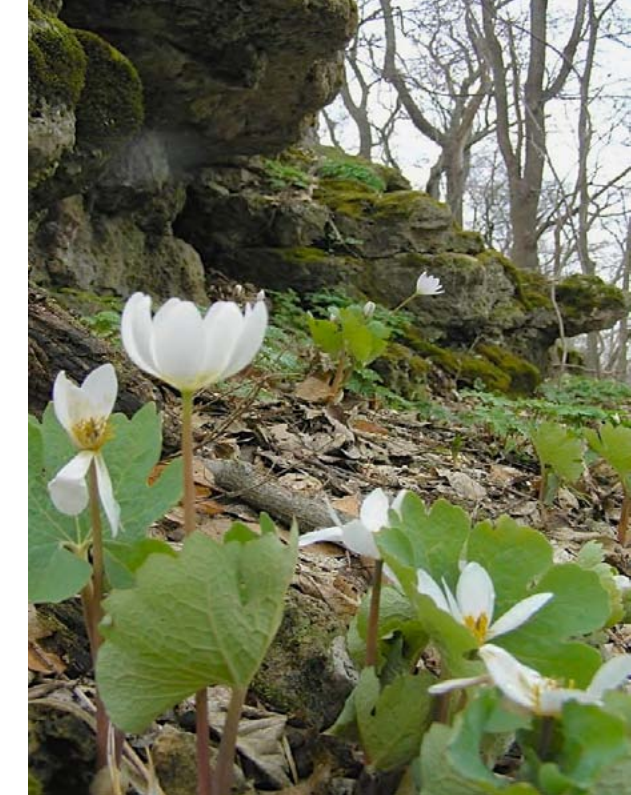
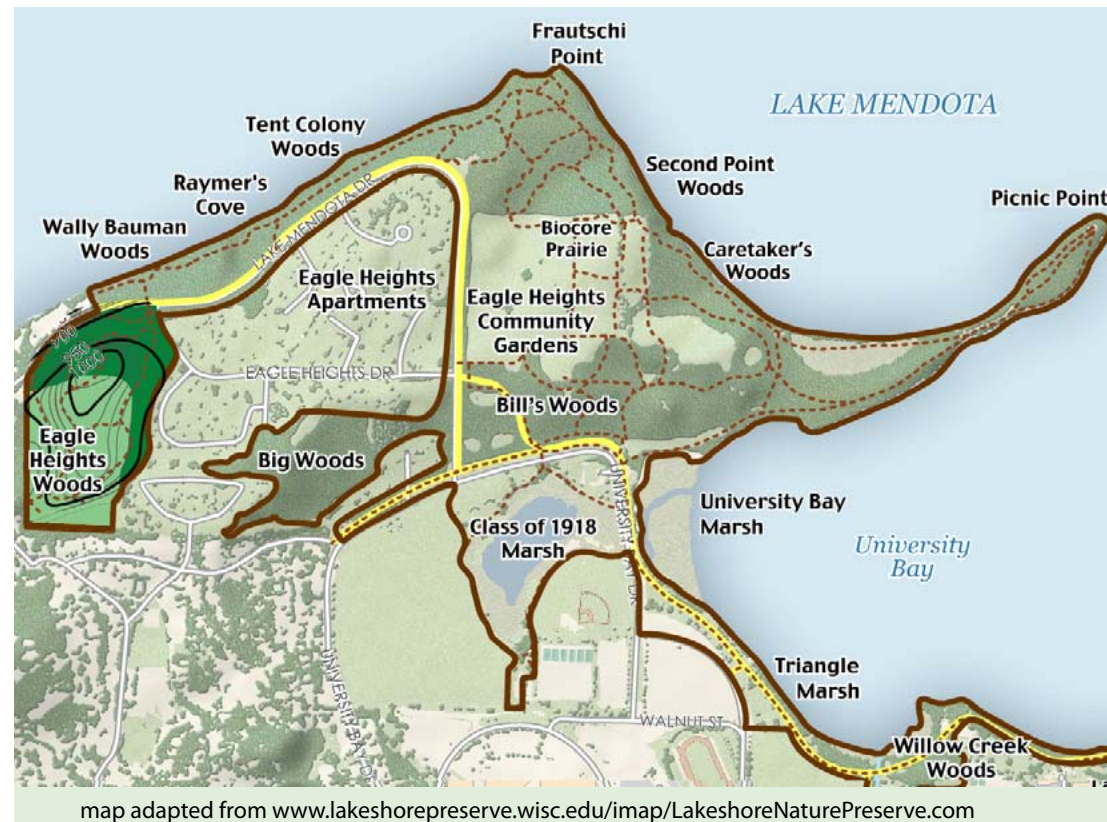
Humans began inhabiting this region after the last glacial retreat. Earthen mounds constructed over 1,000 years ago are the most striking reminder of these cultures. Drawn to the high point of what would become known as Eagle Heights, these ancestors of modern Native Americans built three mounds with commanding views of Lake Mendota. When Euro-Americans settled the area, the highpoint of Eagle Heights Woods became a popular hiking destination and in the early 20th century, part of the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive system. Today, local tribes revere ancient mound sites and many consider this land sacred. The highpoint of Eagle Heights Woods remains a place known for its inspiring view of the lake.



Eagle Heights Woods- A place to restore our minds and bodies

The story continues today where this high, tree-covered hill offers a silent green space for the surrounding neighborhoods, shielded from human noise and light scatter of the nearby city. The woods absorb pollutants in the air, filter rain into our groundwater and enrich the air with oxygen. The tree canopy cools the surrounding area in summer and provides a windbreak in winter. Tree roots hold soil along the steep sides of the hill.

In this quiet, little used woods, people walk with friends or take vigorous runs, seeking wellness and fitness. They gaze at the lake or distant Frederick Hill in the Pheasant Branch Conservancy through newly cleared vistas and search for birds in the canopy of this Wisconsin Important Birding area. They notice the changing seasons, stillness, and solitude, so close to bustling downtown Madison. They bring their children and grandchildren to share in its history. This is a place where we can measure our contribution to the continuity of the story for future generations.



Eagle Heights Woods- A place to sustain a healthy biological community

Aldo Leopold wrote that “the individual is a member of a community of independent parts. His instincts prompt him to compete for his place in the community, but his ethics prompt him to co-operate...” For example, rainwater carries whatever is at the top of the hill down into our neighborhoods. Invasive vegetation on top means seeds are carried downhill to take hold below. Eroding trails and cliffs can wash mud and debris into our yards, streets, and waterways. By caring for Eagle Heights Woods, we care for our own backyards and communal waters.

In addition, Eagle Heights Woods is a connecting corridor for wildlife which move between the Preserve, the frozen lake, the golf course, and neighboring natural areas. It is home to a myriad of birds, mammals, insects, and even reptiles and amphibians. Fortunately left undisturbed by logging, Eagle Heights Woods likely contains dormant seed banks of many native flowering plants. Here we can make a positive, enduring difference in the story of this special place.

The goal of the *Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve* is to raise \$135,000 to continue the story of Eagle Heights Woods...

As its current stewards, we are all part of the continuing story of Eagle Heights Woods. We respect and honor this history by ensuring that the American Indian mounds remain a distinctive feature of this landscape for our children and grandchildren so that they may share in the story. To accomplish this, the UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve Staff created a management plan with a 5-year implementation timeline, at a projected cost of \$135,000, that will:

- Protect the mounds by removing invasive vegetation and realigning adjacent trails
- Remove hazard trees along the trails and over the mounds to protect both visitors and the burial sites
- Enhance views to Lake Mendota
- Encourage the growth of native trees and wildflowers by removing invasive plants
- Increase plant diversity and improve wildlife habitat by planting grasses, wildflowers and shrubs
- Refurbish trails with carefully planned, mulched footpaths
- Realign steep, eroded trails to reduce washouts and improve footing
- Provide ongoing monitoring and management of vegetation to promote biological health of the area

To date, the University of Wisconsin- Madison has invested in this project by developing a detailed 5-year plan to maintain and manage this unique area for public ecological and nature study and as a living laboratory for student research. The Preserve staff began work on the first phase of this project in Spring 2014. (See details about the 5-year project plan at: www.friendslakeshorepreserve.com/eagle-heights-woods.)

The *Friends of the Lakeshore Preserve* has already obtained pledges for a significant portion of the \$135,000 needed to complete the Eagle Heights Woods project. The *Friends* Board is fully committed to the project.

Will you join us to support the Eagle Heights Woods project?

A pledge card is enclosed. Or you may donate online at <http://supportuw.org/giveto/FriendsofthePreserve>

Thank you for your consideration.

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