

BMAP NEWS



BMAP
BLUE MOUNDS AREA PROJECT

Conservation and Community. Together.

Spring 2024 • Volume 27 Number 2



Learning and Burning at the Wisconsin Prescribed Fire Conference



Photo by Zach Pacana

Photo by Greg Jones

By Emilee Martell, WPFC Education & Outreach Committee Chair

Plumes of smoke rolling across prairies, oak savanna and even woodlands and wetlands are becoming a more common sight in Wisconsin as more landowners embrace prescribed fire as a vital management tool. Across our state, we currently burn about 75,000 acres each year with prescribed fire, restoring an historic source of disturbance that benefits native species, controls invasives, improves groundwater quantity and quality and sequesters carbon. However, the most recent

Wisconsin Fire Needs Assessment estimates that we need to burn 1 million acres annually in our state to prevent further loss of biodiversity.

How are we going to accomplish such a lofty goal? The Wisconsin Prescribed Fire Council began to tackle this question at our annual conference in February.

WPFC's mission is to get more fire on the ground safely and effectively

in Wisconsin. Our 2024 conference was held at UW-Platteville, where landowners, students, prescribed fire volunteers, professional restoration contractors and scientists gathered to discuss the future of fire in our state. Topics ranged from the science of fire sounds to the use of prescribed burning in Managed Forest Law lands

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Greg Jones

By the time you read this, you will most likely be getting elbow-deep into your spring projects. Spring always brings on the Garlic Mustard Wars around here. I like to spray garlic mustard in early spring, before the May-apples and wild geraniums come up in our woods. The glyphosate I use may kill any plant that gets the chemical on its leaves.

If other plants are up and growing around the mustard, I leave the poison on the shelf and turn to the weed whacker. You want to whack the second-year plants when they first start developing seed pods, or just before. Attack the plants too early, and they

may resprout. Although the resprouts will be stunted, they will still produce seeds. Attack too late, and the seeds in the newly formed pods will mature and remain viable even after the plants are cut. At this point, we need to put the weed whacker away and pull the plants by hand, removing them from the site.

When we first bought our property fifteen years ago, there were carpets of garlic mustard. I remember having a four-foot-high burn pile of pulled plants. The goal here is to leave no new seeds, as the seeds can remain viable for up to seven years. Eventually, the seed bank will exhaust itself. After fifteen years of fighting garlic mustard on our property, the piles have gotten much smaller.

This year, we were able to burn our prairies on an unusually mild day in early March. We also received some good rain that night. The next day, Linda took the Parsnip Predator and started digging up multiflora rose before it could resume growing and while the

ticks were still dormant on a chilly morning. Spring is always busy around here.

Those of you who have attended our "Winter Conversations" have had the pleasure of meeting and talking with our new Ecologist, Sam Anderson. Sam is currently working on his PhD in the Botany Department at UW-Madison. He also has impressive experience working in the field as a Restoration Specialist. It looks like Sam will have a busy summer with all the site visit requests we've had. We all look forward to working with him on conservation projects!

The BMAP Board hopes that folks enjoyed our winter events and learned some good information. All three of the lectures were well attended, with very informative speakers. We also have a full slate of events scheduled for the spring and summer. You can find them in this newsletter and on our website. I hope you'll join us! 🌍

ECOLOGIST'S REPORT: INTRODUCING SAM



Sam Anderson

My name is Sam Anderson, and I recently started as BMAP's new Outreach Ecologist. I am originally from River Falls in northwestern Wisconsin, but I have made the south-central region my home for the past five years (I'm currently settled in Lodi). I'm excited to begin working with you all for the benefit of this beautiful part of our state.

I've worn quite a few hats in my career so far, but two common themes throughout have been a strong sense of local community and plenty of time outdoors. I studied biology and chemistry at Northland College, a small environmental school

in Ashland that showed me how fulfilling environmental work in small communities can be. Since then, I have worked with environmental education nonprofits in North and South America, as well as prairie and oak savanna restoration right here in southern Wisconsin. When it comes to land management, I love every step of the process: from conversation to chainsawing. This makes Wisconsin a pretty great place to be!

Currently, I'm a PhD candidate in the Botany Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, studying Wisconsin's woody species, dynamics in shrub and understory woody communities, and how various woody species tolerate and respond to environmental conditions like shade and drought. This field of study is called ecophysiology. The "eco" part includes all of the classic questions an ecologist might ask about plants, such as, "What species are present here?" and "How

does the environment influence this community?" The "physiology" part refers to the interesting adaptations that plants have, causing me to ask, "How do these plants survive in this environment, and what adaptations do they have that increase their fitness in this community?" As you can see, I love thinking about Wisconsin vegetation and how it contributes to the amazing ecosystems we get to live in.

In my free time, I love enjoying all four of Wisconsin's seasons by spending as much time outside as I can. I love paddling, fishing, gardening, rock climbing and playing with my dog, Nana.

I can't wait to begin helping you, as a BMAP member, work towards your land management and restoration goals. If you have any questions, want to schedule a site visit for 2024, or would just like to introduce yourself, please don't hesitate to contact me at ecologist@bluemounds.org. 🌍



Winter Conversations Wrap Up



Photo by Linda Millunzi-Jones

Series Reflects BMAP Motto: Conservation and Community. Together.

Steve Gauger and Linda Millunzi-Jones

The BMAP Board was pleased to host another season of captivating Winter Conversations at the Mount Horeb Senior Center. Each event attracted at least 30 guests, who left with valuable new insights and inspiration to continue the work of restoring biodiversity. The series was truly a reflection of our motto, “Conservation and Community. Together.”

The talks covered three of the current hot topics in conservation: spongy moths, invasive species, and native pollinators.

Michael Hillstrom, a Forest Health Specialist with the Wisconsin DNR, joined us on February 15th. He told us that the spongy moth (formerly known as the gypsy moth) was introduced to the eastern United States in 1869. The moth was first found in Wisconsin in the 1970’s. Mike described the life cycle of the species and the frequency of its outbreaks. In 2023, spongy moths affected a record 374,620 acres of Wisconsin’s forests. An outbreak is also likely for 2024.

Healthy trees can survive the spongy moth, Mike told us, but an outbreak in more than one year or with other types of stress can exacerbate tree mortality. A wet spring could help trees by promoting pathogens or parasites in spongy moth caterpillars that help control numbers

of the species.

Mike then discussed various methods for controlling spongy moths. He recommended that property owners who are seeing severe defoliation should avoid thinning invasive brush for one or two years after an outbreak. In an email follow-up, he said that all the additional light hitting the soil can dry it out faster and cause stress on savanna oaks.

On February 29th, we were joined by Matthew Wallrath from the Renz Weed Science Lab at UW-Madison. (Matt is also a longtime BMAP enthusiast.) This lab maintains a statewide community science network to support invasive species education and volunteer work. Matt is also the coordinator for citizen scientists with the Wisconsin First Detector Network.

Matt also described the EDDMapS app that citizen scientists can use to map and report invasive species in Wisconsin. The app was designed so observers can report invasive species infestations from the field. For example, there is an effort to monitor the invasive tree-of-heaven, which is the preferred host for the invasive spotted lanternfly that is just starting to be found in Wisconsin. Matt encouraged us to visit eddmappings.org to

create an account.

Finally, Susan Carpenter graciously returned to speak to us on March 21st after her initial talk for BMAP in February 2021. Susan, the Native Plant Garden Curator at the UW-Madison Arboretum since 2003, informed us of the advantages of choosing native plants for your garden. She spoke especially about the benefits that native plantings of any size can provide for native pollinators.

There are 500 kinds of native bees in Wisconsin. Bees collect pollen and nectar to feed their adults and young, which makes them the most effective of all pollinators. Other pollinators transfer pollen incidentally while feeding on nectar. For the sake of all pollinators, including bats and birds as well as many other insects, it’s best to maximize the number and diversity of plants that are native to your area. As Susan said, “Native plants equal pollinator habitat.” Susan also mentioned some apps that can be helpful in documenting pollinators, such as bugguide.net or the Bumble Bee Brigade (<http://wiatri.net/inventory/bbb>).

Slides and recordings from these presentations will be made available at bluemounds.org/recorded-webinars.

Thanks to all who attended!



YOUR REVIEWS OF NATURE APPS

• **Ben Lam (Outreach & Events Coordinator, Groundswell Conservancy)**

Merlin

I've had the Merlin app since its release in 2014. This just happened to coincide with the same year that I started getting interested in birds and birding. I collect bird field guides, but the app has replaced my need to carry physical field guides when I'm birding. Over the years, Merlin has added more advanced features that help you with identifying birds like the photo ID, Step by Step ID and Sound ID. These features are not 100% accurate, but they are pretty close to it (if it's not correct, it'll at least get you close to figuring out what you're observing). The Sound ID feature is by far my favorite and the tool that is most helpful for me with learning bird calls and songs. I highly recommend this app if you are interested in birds!

eBird

I am a collector: I love lists and documenting my observations. The eBird app has been the most convenient and efficient way for me to document my bird sightings and keep track of my lists. The app also has a feature to explore other "hotspots" in the area. This is a great tool that helps you look for other places to bird and gives you a general idea of what you might see. I recommend the eBird app if you're looking for a way to keep track of your bird sightings. The eBird app is a smaller companion feature to the eBird website. I highly recommend visiting the eBird website as well, as it is an extremely powerful tool full of information. Your observations logged through eBird are data that can be used in bird research and conservation, so you're helping science while you use it!



Photo by Dory Owen

• **Dory Owen (bird and insect enthusiast and conservation champion)**

iNaturalist

On my way to the hotel pool in Ecuador, I spied a tiny purple flower growing out of a mossy tree trunk. Orchid? I had no idea! How could I know what this was?

I took a photo and uploaded it to iNaturalist.org. The very next day, a stranger online had identified it as Jameson's Utricularia: not an orchid, but a carnivorous bladderwort that mimics a sexy insect like many orchids do. I wasn't the only human to be tricked by this little flower — lots of others had also assumed it was an orchid.

Whether you're identifying a lichen, gnat, lizard, pine cone, frog or parakeet, someone eventually weighs in with an ID. On iNaturalist, ignorance is not a barrier to participation. Amateurs are welcome.

This winter, I noticed an unfamiliar tree with dark, perfectly round buds. But this time, iNaturalist.org's artificial intelligence immediately analyzed my photo and suggested Siberian elm or slippery elm. I compared the range maps, other submitted photos, and the shape of the buds and decided on Siberian. Other people on the website confirmed by clicking the Agree button. Cool! A new species I can identify in the winter. This interactive process of identification is addictive. Just get a photo, upload and wait. The better the photo, the better your chances for an accurate ID.

There is also an iNaturalist phone app that will analyze photos and guess at the species, but I've had mixed results and my phone photos aren't so great. I've been tricked into an incorrect ID too often. But it could be fun for kids who love using their phones for everything.

The "Explore" feature displays thousands of observations from people around the world. Did you see a butterfly in April? Narrow the search to Butterflies in Dane County, WI and set a filter for April only. It shows each as a dot on a map. Then click the "Species" button to see a list of species in order of how often they've been reported. In the old days, I saw 50 orange-and-black butterfly species in my United States field guide and felt overwhelmed. Now I can quickly get a list of likely suspects. Nice.

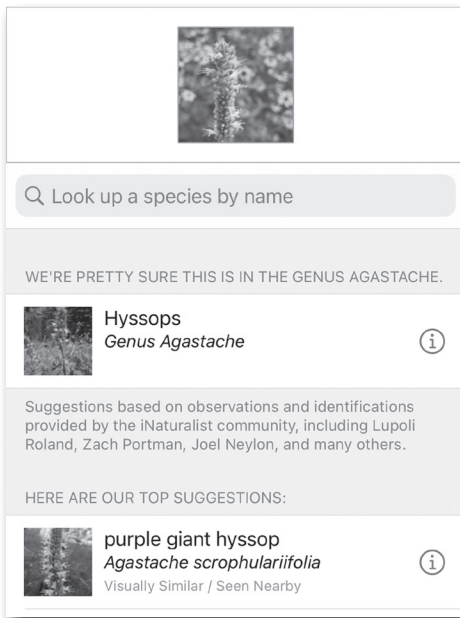
Each species page also has a section called Similar Species that can spur you to consider alternative IDs.

In addition to the species itself, iNaturalist can show you a lot of photos of animal sign such as scat and paw prints.

How do I learn to use iNaturalist? The same way we learn everything these days: online videos! Find them at <https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/video+tutorials>. You can also poke around on the website. It is an endless trove of features, photos, maps, descriptions and community discussions.

Finally, watch out for errors! And please help fix them. Every spring, people around the world upload photos of burdock plants and confidently identify them as rhubarb. Some photos even show the cut stems in the kitchen ready to be baked into a pie. Yuck! It's okay to post a photo and just call it "plant" if you're not sure — especially before you eat it. And if you're a rhubarb expert, log in and help get these burdocks out of the rhubarb collection.

Using iNaturalist also helps support citizen science initiatives. I appreciate the wisdom and generosity of all the experts on iNaturalist.org.



iNaturalist Screen



Pl@ntNet Screen

my experience, PictureThis seems to get it right most often. (PlantNet and iNaturalist are pretty close.) Despite this, I think you should use it with the most caution. PictureThis will only suggest one possible identification per photo, and it will give no indication of how confident its model is in the suggestion. It seems to stridently suggest an ID no matter how unrepresentative of the plant the photo is. In fact, during my testing it was completely unable to say it didn't know the answer, even when there was no plant in the photo! It identified a stuffed animal as a Mediterranean seagrass, a photo of our cat as durian fruit, and a photo of a carpeted floor as belonging to a family of fungi. (I assure you, my house is not that dirty!)

There appear to be many apps with similar presentations and opaqueness about their identification models' confidence on the app stores. I would urge caution when using any apps that are not transparent about how well your images match their models.

It seems like you can use PictureThis without paying the \$29.99 annual subscription fee, though it will pepper you endlessly with pop-ups asking you to do so.



PictureThis Screen

• Josh Pletzer (previous BMAP Ecologist)

Seek

Best for kids or if you are out of cell service. Seek has two major strengths: it is simple to use and can be used without an internet connection. The ability to continuously scan until an identification is made makes it easier for kids to use. It also helps you get a feel for which camera angles are best for successfully getting an ID. However, the camera function can be frustrating to try to focus on fine features, even more so than other apps. Seek uses the same identification model (although a more limited version) as iNaturalist. An added benefit is that it allows for observations to be linked to an iNaturalist account.

Pl@ntNet

Like iNaturalist, PlantNet is another project that supports citizen science. Its identification model can give you confidence percentages for each species suggestion, which is very useful to know! PlantNet also includes the ability to share photos with the community, though it appears to be a lot less active than iNaturalist at this point in time. Unlike with iNaturalist, you are able to select which major plant organ is in each photo, which increases the precision of PlantNet's model.

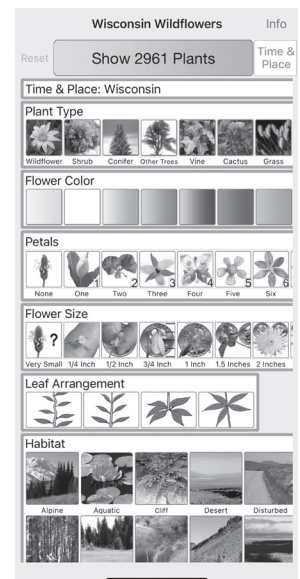
PlantNet recently added the ability to run its identification model offline if you pre-download the needed data packages.

PictureThis

Might be the most accurate overall... but with a big caveat. In

Wisconsin Wildflowers

Okay, this one can't suggest identifications, but I think its worth mentioning as an app to add to your toolkit. It is the only field-guide-style app that is comprehensive for Wisconsin plant species, and it can be used offline without a signal. It has a search function that can filter the results by basic characteristics as well as time and location. The species descriptions and pictures come from a variety of sources and most are thorough. This is a great place to start corroborating an identification suggested by another app.



Wisconsin Wildflowers Screen

UPCOMING EVENTS

PROPERTY TOURS

Jerome and Jackie Helmenstine

Saturday, June 8

3:00 - 5:00 PM

**4785 County Road FF,
Blue Mounds**

The 305-acre Helmenstine farm has been in the family since 1897, when Jerome's great-grandfather homesteaded the property. For the past 17 years, sections of savanna and woodland here have been undergoing restoration. Some areas are in the CREP, CRP and CCP set-aside programs for native grasses and pollinator mixes. The farm has a mix of upland and lowland grasslands, cultivated fields and wooded hill slopes. It includes a parcel adjacent to the East Branch of Blue Mounds Creek. The south-facing slopes have a number of impressive oaks. In addition, there is diverse wildlife, including American kestrels nesting in breeding boxes.

Mary Michal

Saturday, July 13

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

**5216 Middle Earth Road,
Town of Brigham**

Visit a 25-year-old restored prairie that was once an old field, as well as some small remnants and oak-hickory woods on 67 acres. Most of the property is Managed Forest Law land with a management plan that supports restoration. There are two small springs and creeks that allow for more plant and animal diversity. We will take an easy walk through the upper and lower prairies, through the woods and along the creek. We expect to see compass plant, leadplant, yellow and pale purple coneflowers, rattlesnake-master, wild quinine, Michigan lilies and a large variety of other forbs and grasses. We'll share challenges and

happy surprises from the ongoing restoration process, including the discovery of certain species like yellow lady slippers, bottle and cream gentian and yellow pimpernel that were never planted here as well as the existence of many mushroom species.

Taliesin

Saturday, August 10

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

**5607 County Road C, Spring Green
(Frank Lloyd Wright Visitor Center -
upper tier of the parking lot)**

Join us for a late-summer hike on Frank Lloyd Wright's historic estate. Staff and volunteers are working to restore the native landscapes that inspired Wright as a child and informed his designs. Learn how the transformation of the land through brush removal and prescribed burning is contributing to preservation goals for Taliesin. Although the buildings are private property, we'll discuss trails on the estate that are open to the public.

WALKS WITH A NATURALIST

Shea Wetland

Saturday, June 22

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

3095 Mounds View Road, Barneveld

The Shea Prairie property is part of the 833-acre Mounds View Grassland complex owned and managed by The Prairie Enthusiasts. It is bisected by a cold-water trout stream and has remnant prairie, spring seeps, a fen, restored prairie and wetlands. Originally, the entire area supported only prairie and sedge meadow plant communities, but it was converted to agriculture after European settlement. Extensive tiles installed to drain wetlands were finally removed when the wetlands were restored in 2012. The restoration work also involved

removing post-European settlement alluvium from some wetland areas, restoring straightened areas of stream to their original channels and restoring native vegetation. This continuing plant community work includes prescribed burns, invasive species removal, native species planting and seeding. A 2016 survey identified 118 native plant species at Shea, making it one of the most diverse restored wetlands in the state. Pat Trochlell, a wetland ecologist who worked for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for over 35 years, will be our esteemed guide.

Spring Green Preserve

Saturday, May 11

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

**Angelo Lane, Spring Green (short
lane off of Jones Road)**

Come join a small team of Wisconsin Master Naturalists at The Nature Conservancy's captivating Spring Green Preserve. Enjoy a spacious view on 1,362 acres with a trail that takes us through the diverse plant communities of "the Wisconsin desert." See prickly pear cactus, sun-loving lizards, black oak barrens and a woodland that has the promise of spring ephemerals. It is a moderate walk to the top of the bluff for a stunning view of the ancient terrace of the Wisconsin River. We'll pause to look at plants and birds along the way. A walking stick is recommended for those who use one occasionally. Snacks and water will be provided at the end.

Lodi Marsh State Natural Area

Saturday, September 28

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

**Robertson trailhead of the Ice Age
Trail, Lodi-Springfield Road, Lodi**

Join Sam Anderson, BMAP's Outreach Ecologist, for a fall hike at the Lodi Marsh. This is a great spot to talk about how fire, topography and hydrology can mix to create some beautiful plant communities!

Natural Communities of Southwestern Wisconsin

Saturday, April 27
Southern Mesic Forest
(location TBD)

Saturday, June 15
Dry Prairies at Mounds View Grasslands, Iowa County

Saturday, July 6
Oak Savanna
(location TBD)

Are you interested in “reading” the landscapes of southwestern Wisconsin? Would you like to improve your plant identification skills? Do you learn best in the field with new friends? Then this class is for you!

Organized by BMAP and led by the Botanical Club of Wisconsin, this is a unique opportunity for BMAP members. The class series is designed to welcome people of all levels of botanical and ecological expertise. At each location, we’ll identify the broader characteristics that define a natural community before looking more closely at the plants commonly found there. Each class will conclude with a hands-on vegetation monitoring exercise intended to reinforce plant ID skills and introduce participants to monitoring techniques.

Classes begin at 9:00 AM and formally end at noon. Everyone is encouraged to stick around for a sociable bag lunch.

To register or join the waitlist for the course, visit: <https://www.bluemounds.org/event-details/natural-communities-of-southwestern-wi-class-2024-1>

Instructions to pay the \$50 class fee will be sent to those registrants on the final roster.

Questions? Contact your BMAP Outreach Ecologist at sam@bluemounds.org or 715-529-1915. 🌍

MEMBER NOTES

No Mow May Returns to Mount Horeb

By Stephen Gauger

Conservation-minded residents of Mount Horeb are currently wondering if this year’s “No Mow May” will spark the same local enthusiasm as in 2023. Why should this matter to BMAP members? For one thing, we are looking to grow the BMAP community by offering site visits to all members — no matter the size or the location of the land they’re caring for. Our new Outreach Ecologist, Sam Anderson, will be piloting the suburban site visit program this year. Evaluating and sharing creative land management ideas will benefit everyone.

BMAP also benefits from collaborations with other related groups. A good example is the Mound Vue Garden Club’s No Mow May Committee, led by Mount Horeb resident Carolyn White.

Last spring, the Mound Vue Garden Club voted to embrace the No Mow May movement. They hoped to encourage residents to forgo mowing in May so that early spring blooms like dandelion and violets could thrive as food for early pollinators. Their newly formed committee then approached the Village of Mount Horeb’s administrators. In April of 2023, the village officially proclaimed May as No Mow May.

The initial goal of the committee was to encourage 100 households to participate. They ended up exceeding that goal and estimate that 25-30 acres of additional pollinator habitat was created within the village.

In September, the village adopted an amendment to Section 10.03 (Public Nuisances: Weeds and Grass) to allow planned natural landscapes comprising native pollinator areas. They took this action after several residents and Village Board members testified about the importance of planned natural landscaping. Mount Horeb now has an active Sustainability Committee, with many goals that overlap with No Mow May.

There has also been some discussion about variations such as Low Mow May combined with the reduced use of herbicides and pesticides. More ideas are sure to follow, as the No Mow May Committee is planning increased public education in venues such as the local library and farmer’s market. For example, a free workshop called “Creating a Native Plant Garden” is being planned for May.

The effort has generally been well received in Mount Horeb. Other communities, such as Fort Atkinson and the City of Appleton, have also supported this concept.

Anyone interested in learning more about this local movement can visit the Mound Vue Garden Club’s Facebook page or contact the committee chair at mhnomow@gmail.com. 🌍



Photo by Chang Qing on Unsplash

Continued from cover

to the ways universities around Wisconsin are training new fire practitioners. Breaks between the sessions offered networking time and lively discussions of prescribed burn successes and challenges.

Several of the conference sessions also looked to the past to inform today's work. A team of Wisconsin researchers presented data from lake sediment and tree rings that detailed a long and rich history of fire in our native ecosystems. Rob Nurre of the Wisconsin Archeological Society described restoring fire to

effigy mounds. Ron Waukau of the Menominee tribe in northeast Wisconsin shared how a long legacy of Indigenous knowledge around prescribed burning survived state and federal policies of fire suppression to inform current land management practices, including over 140 years of sustainable timber management on the Menominee reservation.

WPFC is eager to apply the lessons learned at the conference to get more good fire on the ground safely. To that end, we recently expanded our capacity by hiring a Program

Specialist. This staff member will coordinate training opportunities for fire practitioners and assist in the development of a Prescribed Fire Burn Boss certification program. We're researching how we can help establish Prescribed Burn Associations that will enable landowners to collaborate on prescribed burns for their properties.

Of course, we will also continue to share resources. Our website is home to lists of prescribed burn contractors, burn plan templates, a fire complexity worksheet template and a calendar of training opportunities. Check it out at prescribedfire.org.



Early Burn Window Opens in the Blue Mounds Area

Photo by Karina Cardella/TNC

Enjoy these photos of "spring" prescribed burns from around our region, including the remarkable February 13 burn at The Nature Conservancy's Spring Green Preserve.



Photo by Emilee Martell



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Vote in the Conservation Congress

By Tim Eisele

The annual spring Conservation Congress advisory meetings allow all citizens to vote on questions involving Wisconsin's natural resources. Often, people think that the Conservation Congress questions are only for people who hunt and fish, but that is not the case. Natural resources belong to everyone, and everyone in Wisconsin can vote on all of the questions (or on only those questions that pertain to their concerns).

This year, voting will take place at in-person meetings held in every county of the state the evening of Monday, April 8, as well as online from noon on April 10 until noon on April 13.

One item on the questionnaire has been covered in this newsletter. It concerns mowing native vegetation under power lines during the summer nesting season. The explanatory material says that although power companies need to eliminate tall trees under power lines, the low-growing milkweed, hazel and dogwood are used by monarch caterpillars and nesting songbirds.

The question asks: "Would you support the Wisconsin Conservation Congress advising the Department of Natural Resources Natural Heritage Conservation Bureau to request powerline companies refrain from mowing during the summer months and encourage powerline companies to work with private landowners to manage powerline vegetation that provides habitat for insects and wildlife?"

Doors will open at 6 PM for the meetings on Monday, April 8, with DNR staff available at 6:30. The election of open positions for County Congress delegates will take place at 7 PM, and then voting on advisory natural resources questions presented by the DNR and Conservation Congress will take place from 7:30 to 9 PM.

People who prefer to vote online or want more information can go to <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/about/wcc/springhearing>.



Photo by Tim Eisele

I took the photo above of an empty powerline corridor following the mowing and mulching of all the vegetation. I was one of eight people who submitted the powerline question in eight counties in 2023. It was approved in all of them and now is going statewide to all 72 counties. I feel that many landowners will be interested in it.



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DRIFTLESS

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www.driftlessconservancy.org

Ring in Spring with Crochet

The Madison Public Art Project has announced a community effort that will increase awareness of the plight of native plants.

From their website: "The *Wildflowers of Wisconsin* is a fiber art installation coming in the Fall of 2024 comprised of oversized crocheted flora native to Wisconsin that will be on exhibition in McKee Farms Park in Fitchburg. The Madison Public Art Project (MPAP) commissioned Kiersten Darling, a neurodivergent 'spoonie,' as the lead fiber artist. Sapphira Afifi is leading the monthly crochet workshops where the MPAP is also inviting the community into the art-making process to create individual flowers that will be incorporated into the larger artistic expression as part of the final fiber mural.

The *Wildflowers of Wisconsin* encourages individuals to rethink their own consumption habits and look at reducing, reusing, recycling, upcycling, foraging, composting, and encouraging pollinator friendly gardening spaces. This public art project raises awareness about climate change, and encourages greater stewardship of the land. It is our hope that individuals who participate in this project will feel inspired to act after coming together to create this dynamic installation."

The project will include community events around Madison. Those who can't attend but still want to participate can download a crochet pattern and mail the finished flower to MPAP.

As of this writing, there is a Community Crochet Day scheduled for Thursday, April 18 from 6:00 - 7:30 PM at the Meadowridge Library (5726 Raymond Road in Madison). Visit <https://www.madisonpublicartproject.org/wildflowersofwisconsin> to learn more.



Photo by Madison Public Art Project

FROM THE EDITOR



Grace Vosen

Thank you to those who responded to my call for reviews of nature apps and websites. To those who may be wary about bringing technology into nature study — something I have been guilty of myself — I hope you'll take the time to read about three conservationists who are incorporating these methods into their encounters with the natural world.

If you didn't get a chance to send in an app review, we are still "seeking" more perspectives. I would also like

to read about your favorite field guide, blog, textbook or other written resource. Many of us can point to a book as the starting point of our conservation journey. Let's start a "book club" for the benefit of the BMAP community! Share your experiences and opinions at newsletter@bluemounds.org.

Have a lovely spring in your corner of the Blue Mounds area! 🌱

NEW BMAP MEMBERS

New Members since last newsletter

- Edna Rhodes
- Charlotte-Ann Chenery
- Roberta & David Drews
- Sandra & Thomas Eisele
- Nathan Miller



Providing the guidance and service to help you restore your property's ecological health, wildlife and natural beauty:

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BMAP ONLINE

www.bluemounds.org

eBULLETIN

BMAP's monthly eBulletin for announcements, habitat restoration tips and more:

bluemounds.org/connect



- BMAP's Facebook page for events and environmental news: facebook.com/BMAPcommunity
- BMAP's Facebook group for sharing photos, ideas, and activities: facebook.com/groups/BMAPcommunity

OUR MISSION

The Blue Mounds Area Project is a community-based organization that seeks to inspire, inform and empower private landowners in the southwestern Wisconsin region to enjoy, protect and restore native biodiversity and ecosystem health.

OUR OBJECTIVES

1. Promote understanding, appreciation and conservation of native woodlands, prairies, wetlands and savannas and their special species in an economically viable manner, through community outreach programs and private contacts.
2. Act as a clearing house for information from people and organizations involved in preserving native biodiversity including information about plant, animal and habitat identification, management, restoration, seed sources, native plant nurseries and invasive, nonnative species.
3. Encourage cooperative volunteer restoration and management activities.
4. Identify public and private land use changes that may affect ecosystem health and promote community-based stewardship of the unique natural heritage of the Blue Mounds and the southwestern region of Wisconsin.



BMAP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Greg Jones, President
- Mark Rauls, Treasurer
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- Sarah Crittenden
- Sam Anderson, Ecologist
ecologist@bluemounds.org

Interested in volunteering with the Blue Mounds Area Project? Contact us at: info@bluemounds.org 608-571-4501

BLUE MOUNDS AREA PROJECT MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail address: _____

Membership Status:

Renewal New Member Gift Membership for: _____

Membership Level:

Basic \$40 Contributor \$70 Supporter \$100 Lifetime \$1000

All memberships, except lifetime, follow the calendar year.

Additional donation beyond your annual membership: _____ TOTAL MEMBERSHIP / DONATION: _____

Make checks payable and return to: Blue Mounds Area Project, PO Box 332, Mount Horeb, WI 53572
or you can contribute online at <https://www.bluemounds.org/donor-form>

YES, I would like to receive information about site visits. I'm interested in volunteer opportunities with BMAP.

Thank you! Your contribution is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.



BMAP

BLUE MOUNDS AREA PROJECT

P.O. Box 332

Mt. Horeb, WI 53572



**“It’s spring again, and
I wasn’t finished with winter.
That’s what I said at the
end of summer too.”**

-Gretel Ehrlich

Photo by Peter Gorman

BMAPNEWS

The Blue Mounds Area Project Newsletter is published three times yearly.

We welcome your comments, submissions and advertisements.

Newsletter editor: Grace Vosen (newsletter@bluemounds.org) Graphic Design: Tom Senatori

www.bluemounds.org

IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP UP TO DATE?

BMAP maintains a calendar year membership cycle. If you are receiving a complimentary copy of the newsletter, please consider becoming a member.