

Forest View

Spring/Summer 2024

Newsletter
of the
Friends of the
Kettle Moraine

State of the Forest

Figures, Projects, and Partnerships

Samantha Lindquist, Forest Superintendent, provided the following Kettle Moraine State Forest–Northern Unit updates.

Forest Figures

Last year, 2023, proved to be another busy year for the Northern Unit. An estimated 607,000 people visited the Forest including almost 11,000 at the Ice Age Visitor Center. With more sophisticated car counters at many locations, the staff hopes to get more accurate attendance figures in the years moving forward. The staff sold almost \$1.2 million in vehicle admission stickers.

Currently, the staff at the Forest includes six full-time employees. There are three full-time vacancies: Park Ranger, Parks and Recreation Specialist (maintenance), and Natural Resources Educator. With the restricted budget, there are only twelve limited term employees filling various positions with the potential of hiring two more for the warm season.

The Ice Age Visitor Center is scheduled to be open Friday through Sunday from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. The Forest Headquarters scheduled hours are from 9 am to 4 pm Monday through Thursday. The Long Lake and Mauthe Lake entrance station hours will vary with the seasons. Please call before venturing to the Forest to make sure the facility you wish to visit will be open.

Mauthe Lake Kayak Launch

When you read this, the Mauthe Lake Kayak Launch should be installed. In cooperation with Mod-U-Dock, the Forest staff is scheduled to install the accessible kayak launch during the last half of April. The boat rental concessionaire at the Mauthe Lake boat launch will offer an adaptive kayak for rent. The Friends of Wisconsin State Parks provided the adaptive kayak. This project was made possible with funds from very generous donors, the Friends,

a Stewardship Matching Grant, and the Northern Unit operating budget.

Greenbush Kiosk

A Boy Scout for his Eagle project is fundraising and constructing a new kiosk at Greenbush near the recently installed bollards. He hopes to install the kiosk this summer. It will be for Department of Natural Resources postings. The existing kiosk will be refreshed and utilized by our partners, the Northern Kettle Moraine Nordic Ski Club and Sheboygan County Cycling, for posting information about membership, events, fundraising efforts, volunteer days, etc.

New Fane Bike Wash Station

Another Boy Scout will use his Eagle project to conduct a trail stewardship day at the New Fane Trails. His project will also involve fundraising for and constructing a bike wash station to be installed this summer.

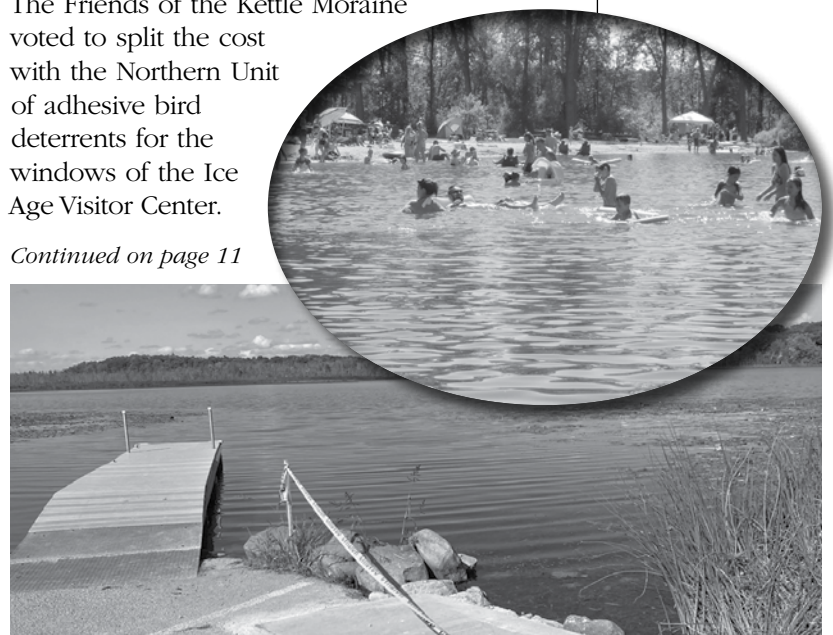
Ice Age Visitor Center Bird Deterrents

The Friends of the Kettle Moraine voted to split the cost with the Northern Unit of adhesive bird deterrents for the windows of the Ice Age Visitor Center.

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Board of Directors Update

January 23 Board Meeting

Because of a snowstorm, the meeting was held via Zoom. The meeting began with the election of officers: President—Mike McFadzen, Vice President—Jamie Beaupré, Secretary—Gary Nickel, Treasurer (in-name)—Jackie Scharfenberg.

Mike informed everyone that he completed and submitted the Stewardship grant application for a drinking fountain/bottle filler that will be placed outside the Ice Age Visitor Center.

The board approved the hire of Jackie Scharfenberg as the Administrative Assistant for the Friends of the Kettle Moraine. She will work as a private contractor for the group. Her responsibilities will include editing the newsletter, coordinating Friends events, managing day-to-day finances, and other business. She will be paid \$20/hour with an annual maximum of \$3500. Jackie is already signed up to take a QuickBooks class so she can have a better understanding of keeping track of the group's financials. The board approved by-law changes to allow the Administrative Assistant position.

The approved five-year Friends' agreement with the state was signed and submitted. The group is still waiting on the concession agreement with the Dept. of Natural Resources.

There was a discussion about how to improve the Friends' membership numbers and public face of the group. They agreed that more work is needed to improve the group's social media presence. Jackie said she would contact Sheri Amidon who is currently posting information for the Friends to Facebook and reach out to other interested folks to see if they can work out a plan of attack.

Mike informed the group that Master Planning for Southeast Glacial Plains which includes the Northern Unit, will begin later this year and wrap up in early 2025. He mentioned that there will not be any citizen committees, but the Friends can play a critical role in developing this plan. The Northern Unit's last master plan was completed in 1991. He encouraged everyone to sign up to track these plans.

Roger Clark reported that he is working with Derek Mayolet on the design for the Friends' new website. The website will include updated information and a way to pay for memberships and events online. He hopes that it will be up and running in late spring.

Jackie shared the Annual Meeting/Volunteer Appreciation Event was a success with thirty people attending. Everyone enjoyed the dinner and the presentation, "For the Birds" by Beth Goeppinger.

Jackie said she is planning on one Friends' event each month with a big fundraiser in October, Leaf Stomp. The board asked her to provide an outline of the Leaf Stomp to see what commitment will be needed by the Friends to pull off this event.

Connie Ramthun informed the board that the invasive species mapping by the Glacial Lakes Conservancy was performed, creating a valuable and comprehensive interactive mapping tool. Due to this collaboratively funded project with the Friends, it is now possible to see where and what type of invasive species exist. Hopefully, the map project will help with obtaining grant funding for invasive management. This map has been shared with the Ice Age Trail Alliance for potential invasive control along the Northern Unit's section of the trail.

Joe Giesfeldt, Deputy Superintendent, shared updates on the Tamarack Trail and Mauthe Lake Kayak launch projects. He mentioned that one park ranger position was filled and hopefully, another ranger will be hired in spring.

After reviewing the Northern Unit's capital projects list, the board took interest in the one regarding a vegetation rehabilitation project. The project would involve work around the Ice Age Visitor Center.

The meeting ended with talk about all the downed trees from the January major heavy wet snowstorm. Staff said it will take a lot of hours and help from other State Park System staff to completely free the trails from downed trees.

April 9 Board Meeting

Mike McFadzen reported that the Friends of the Kettle Moraine bylaws were changed to include language regarding the Administrative Assistant position. The board agreed to fund the purchase of a laptop and share the cost of a printer for the Administrative Assistant to conduct Friends' business.

Mike shared the exciting news that the Friends did receive a Stewardship grant for the water fountain/bottle filler outside the Ice Age Visitor Center.

After a discussion, the board approved transferring the remaining \$20,000 from the Land Fund to the General Fund with the stipulation that it be used in matching grant

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Join Us

Friends Board Meeting

Tuesdays, July 9 and October 15, starting at 6:00 pm at the Ice Age Visitor Center.

Anyone is welcome to attend the Friends Board meetings. Interested and dedicated people are invited to join the board at any time. For more information contact the Friends at friendsofthekettlemoraine@gmail.com

Behind the Scenes Tour – Friends Only Event

Meet at the Mauthe Lake Recreation Area Picnic Shelter; Thursday, May 9, 5:30–8:30 pm

Friends of the Kettle Moraine members and a guest are invited to join us for a simple supper at the Mauthe Lake Recreation Area. After eating we will head out to tour some of the new additions and projects recently completed or underway within the Kettle Moraine State Forest–Northern Unit. **Register by May 5** by emailing friendsofthekettlemoraine@gmail.com or call Jackie Scharfenberg at (920) 269-7399.

Dinner and a Show Fundraisers

Mauthe Lake Recreation Area Picnic Shelter Saturdays, June 22, July 27, and August 24; 5:30–8:45 pm

Savor a delicious alfresco meal followed by great musical entertainment. The funds raised will be used to support a variety of Friends of the Kettle Moraine projects including the Ice Age Visitor Center Complex enhancements. To find out the meal offerings, contact Three Sweets Bakery and Café at (920) 322-7908. Cost: freewill donation.

- 5:30–7:30 pm—purchase a meal from Mauthe Lake Concession Stand
- 5:30–8 pm—bring cash to buy tasty homemade baked goods
- 7–8:45 pm—enjoy a toe-tapping concert

June 22 – Fox Crossing String Band (bluegrass/folk)

July 27 – Ken Lonnquist (eclectic folk)

August 24 – Paddygrass (Celtic/folk)

Paddle, Hike, Eat

*Mauthe Lake Recreation Area and Zillmer Trailhead; Saturday, September 21, 3–7 pm
Cost: \$10/person*

Bring your own kayak or canoe to paddle Mauthe Lake and the East Branch of the Milwaukee River. We will then hike the Lake-to-Lake Trail to the Zillmer Trailhead or a loop of the Zillmer Trails before enjoying a lovely dinner at the Zillmer Shelter. Shuttles will be provided between Mauthe Lake and Zillmer. **Register by September 14** by emailing friendsofthekettlemoraine@gmail.com or calling Jackie Scharfenberg at (920) 269-7399.

Leaf Stomp

Meet at the Mauthe Lake Recreation Area Picnic Shelter; Saturday, October 12

- 22-mile and 15-mile start at 7 am
- 10-mile starts at 8:30 am
- 5-mile starts at 9:30 am

Cost

- \$35/person for 10-mile and 5-mile
- \$40/person (includes lunch) for 22-mile and 15-mile

Join us for a day of hiking on the Ice Age National Scenic Trail through the beautiful autumn woods of the Kettle Moraine State Forest–Northern Unit. Hikers will be bussed to their starting points to make their ways back to the Mauthe Lake Recreation Area. Watch for more details and registration information on the Friends of the Kettle Moraine's website. This is a fundraiser for the Friends to support the Ice Age Visitor Center Complex enhancements.

Kettle Moraine State Forest – Northern Unit Programs

Find a schedule of Northern Unit events: dnr.wisconsin.gov/events



Spring through Fall Work Days

Stewards of the Kettle Moraine Invasive Species Work Days

Haskell Noyes State Natural Area Garlic Mustard Pulling

- Wednesdays, May 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; 4:30–7 pm
- Thursdays, May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; 4:30–7 pm
- Saturdays, May 4, 11, 18, 25, June 1; 9 am–noon

Meet at the Haskell Noyes parking lot on County Road GGG near New Prospect.

Spruce Lake Bog State Natural Area Reed Canary Grass Control

Saturdays, June 8 and 15; 9 am–noon
Meet at the Spruce Lake Bog parking lot on Airport Road near Dundee.

OutWiGo Invasive Species Awareness Day

Saturday, June 22; 10 am–noon
Meet at the Ice Age Visitor Center at N1765 Hwy 67, Campbellsport (near Dundee).

Zillmer Trails Japanese Hedge Parsley Removal

- Wednesdays, June 26 and July 3; 4:30 pm–7 pm
- Saturdays, June 29 and July 6; 9 am–noon

Meet at the Zillmer Trail Shelter, W833 County Road SS, Campbellsport (near New Prospect).

Zillmer Trails Cut-leaf Teasel Removal

Saturdays, July 13 and July 20; 9 am–noon
Meet at the Zillmer Trail Shelter, W833 County Road SS, Campbellsport (near New Prospect).

Note: we may travel to the town of New Fane on the second date.

Greenbush Kettle Prairie Invasive Species Control

- Wednesday, July 24; 4:30–7 pm
- Saturday, July 27; 9 am–noon

Meet at the Greenbush Kettle Parking lot off Kettle Moraine Drive north of Hwy 67.

Come dressed for the weather. Bring work gloves, drinking water, pruners, and insect spray. Questions: contact Connie at connieramthun@gmail.com

New Fane Trails Work Days

Mondays: May 13, June 10, July 8, Aug. 12, Sept. 9, and October 14; 10 am–noon

Help cut and remove brush to improve the mountain biking trails; no experience is required. Meet at the New Fane Trails parking lot, W431 County Line Road, Kewaskum (near New Fane). Bring drinking water, snacks, bug repellent, sunscreen, sturdy shoes, and gloves. Hand tools provided. Questions: (262) 626-2116.

Lizard Mound State Park Work Days

Thursdays: May 9, June 13, August 8, November 19; 10 am–2 pm

Work activities include brush cutting and hauling to preserve mound integrity and enhance native plant regeneration; no experience necessary. Meet at the Lizard Mound State Park parking lot, 2121 County Road A, West Bend. Be sure to bring drinking water, bug repellent, sturdy shoes, snacks, and work gloves. Tools will be provided. Poison ivy may be present. Questions: contact Samantha Ortlieb at samantha.ortlieb@wisconsin.gov or at (262) 808-3750.

Bake Sale Bakers

As part of each Dinner and a Show fundraiser, we would like to include a bake sale. We need folks who are willing to bake and then donate tasty treats to sell. Items should be delivered by 4:30 pm on the day of the event so that they can be packaged/prepared for sale. The dates of the Dinner and a Show are June 22, July 27, and August 24.

Dinner and a Show Helpers

The Dinner and a Show events are fundraisers for the Friends of the Kettle Moraine. Volunteers are needed to help with setting up, staffing the bake sale, and cleaning up for each of the dates: June 22, July 27, and August 24. For more information or to sign up to help with the Dinner and a Show events, please contact Jackie Scharfenberg at friendsofthekettlemoraine@gmail.com or call (920) 269-7399.



Forest Trivia

How many campsites are there within the Kettle Moraine State Forest–Northern Unit?

200 – Long Lake Recreation Area
136 – Mauthe Lake Recreation Area
22 “family” and 3 group – Horseshoers’ Camp
6 backpack shelters – Ice Age National Scenic Trail (5) & Zillmer Trail (1)
9 group sites – Greenbush Recreation Area

Answer:

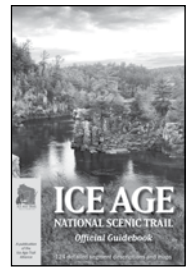
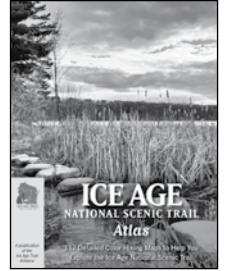
Gift Shop News

Check Out the New Arrivals

Orders have been placed and new items arrive weekly. You should visit the Ice Age Visitor Center to check out the new merchandise. We will be carrying many new T-shirts with whimsical to beautiful nature-themed designs. Tote bags will be returning along with bird and mammal posters. Ice Age National Scenic Trail enthusiasts should check out the new 2024 Guidebook and Atlas and other Ice Age Trail T-shirts, patches, pins, and stickers. Plan on making several visits as the selection of merchandise will change frequently.

The Gift Shop at the Ice Age Visitor Center carries a wide assortment of T-shirts, books, and other nature related items and is the largest fundraiser for the Friends of the Kettle Moraine. Your purchases help fund the many projects the Friends support to enhance and protect the Northern Unit. Remember Friends members receive a ten percent discount on items they buy.

— Jackie Scharfenberg, Gift Shop Manager



Fundraising Event

Planners and Organizers Needed

Leaf Stomp – Saturday, October 12

Mark your calendars for the Friends of the Kettle Moraine's Leaf Stomp on Saturday, October 12. This is a new fundraising adventure for the Friends who will use the money raised to support the Ice Age Visitor Center Complex enhancements. The event will involve folks paying to hike one of four different length segments of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail that runs through the Northern Unit. The hike lengths will be 22-miles, 15-miles, 10-miles, and 5-miles. This is not a "timed" competition. Hikers will be bussed to their starting points and then hike back to the Mauthe Lake Recreation Area. There will be rest stops with refreshments/snacks spaced along the trail and crossing guards at each road crossing. Each participant will receive a T-shirt, a certificate of participation, and a completion medal. We are limiting the event to the first 600–650 people. Our goal is to raise at least \$10,000.

We are currently looking for people to serve on the overall committee as well as on specific task groups. These task groups include registration, logistics, sponsorships, volunteers, and marketing.

We hope to find sponsors to cover the costs of the buses, rest stops, and the finish line. Please pass along the contact information for any businesses or organizations that you think may be good sponsor candidates.

Contact Jackie Scharfenberg, Friends' Administrative Assistant, for more information or to sign up to help before or at the event. You may reach her at friendsofthekettlemoraine@gmail.com or (920) 269-7399.



Business Members

Please Show Them Your Support

Badger Trails

Join us for the following hikes:

- Glacial Trails Backpack Hike – May 3–5, 2024
- Devil's Lake Hike – October 4–6, 2024
- Scuppernong Trail Hike – April 26, 2025

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Gourmet's Delight Mushrooms

Eden

Schlaefter Optometrists

Campbellsport

Wisconsin State Park System At a Breaking Point?

This article represents the opinions of Mike McFadzen and not necessarily of the entire Friends of the Kettle Moraine organization.

Declining infrastructure and deferred maintenance have created a Wisconsin State Park System facing a breaking point with costs estimated at \$1 billion to remedy.

The Wisconsin legislature is desperately underfunding our State Park System's infrastructure, operations, and staff.

To get a better understanding of the situation on a local level, I took a behind-the-scenes tour of the Kettle Moraine State Forest—Northern Unit. Many buildings, including bathrooms, septic systems, and drain fields were built in the 1970s, making this infrastructure over 50 years old. Do you think that's old? The Forest Headquarters and some other structures were built by the Wisconsin Conservation Corps in the 1930s and early 1940s.

My tour started with an overview of the water and sewage system for the Long Lake Recreation Area. Pumps costing \$30,000 each have failed. Cracked sewer lines become infiltrated with rainwater. The staff puts in 40 hours/month monitoring and overseeing this one system. When pumps and other components fail, the work hours can double. A reasonable solution would be to abandon the current septic system, including affluent ponds, sewer lines, and other components, and build a traditional mound septic system at the cost of approximately \$1.4 million. While upfront replacement would be costly, there would be no more major repairs and staff time to monitor and maintain the system.

Repairing some of the electrical and water infrastructure is no longer feasible as many parts and components are no longer available. Once a needed part is found, it often cannot be retrofitted as the amperage or voltage of the new part differs from the configuration of a 50-year-old component. The staff works to locate older parts on eBay as aged parts become increasingly difficult to find through

conventional sources. This is just one element of the decrepit and aging Kettle Moraine infrastructure.

The Northern Unit contains ninety buildings with 80 percent of these being bathrooms, all of which need upgrade or repair. A practical solution might be to replace these decaying buildings with newer and larger bath/shower facilities which would cost significantly less to maintain.

The road, bridge, and culvert systems are of similar vintage. During my tour, a camper approached us and pointed out a collapsing road segment due to a culvert washout. The camper put rocks and stones to block the hole as her small dog became stuck in the washout. Forest staff are aware of the issues, but there is no money available for repairs.

Currently, there are only six full-time and two limited-term maintenance employees (in the "off" season) for the 30,000-acre Northern Unit which features two major recreation areas, the Ice Age Visitor Center, contact stations, and hundreds of miles of trails. By DNR metrics, the Northern Unit is one of the busiest facilities in the state hosting hundreds of thousands of annual visitors with these numbers ever increasing. The demand for "events" such as skiing, running, biking, and adventure races continues to increase, adding additional challenges for staff and property.

Dwindling state funds make partnership groups critical to maintain current offerings. Organizations like the Friends of the Kettle Moraine, Northern Kettle Moraine Nordic Ski Club, Sheboygan County Cycling, Northern Kettle Moraine Horse Association, and others make it possible to sustain and grow programs. Over the years at the Northern Unit, these groups provided funding for supporting the Forest's education programs, installing the Greenbush lighted cross-country ski trail, upgrading the New Prospect Horse Camp electricity, and purchasing equipment to groom the Greenbush off-road bike trails. This offers only a glimpse into the many ways these groups have helped out the Northern Unit.

The legislature seems to be out of touch with the troubled reality of a declining system. They don't even allow Parks to totally tap their own \$20 million Park's Segregated Fund!



Legislative Corner

Due to legislative mandates, there have been considerable staff cuts. *“We’ve lost 40 FTEs in the last 15 years with visitation doubling,” according to Wisconsin Parks Director Steve Schmelzer. “There are approximately 6000 projects including bridges and water systems that are failing.”* There is no way to fund these on user fees alone. Governor Evers’ last state budget included \$100 million for these projects, but even this amount dwarfs the problem. “This far surpasses what’s been approved in the past and we appreciate Governor Evers’ efforts, but we still have a long way to go. We have fewer permanent and limited-term employees. It’s very hard for staff to keep up. Unfortunately, we must keep raising fees to keep up which hurts people on limited incomes,” Schmelzer explained. This is further complicated by surrounding states picking off Wisconsin Parks employees due to better compensation and work environment.

Overall, outdoor recreation added \$8.71 billion to Wisconsin’s economy in 2022 and supported more than 89,000 jobs. The industry accounted for 2.4 percent of state GDP compared to 1.9 percent nationally, attaining the 16th-highest state in the country, according to a 2023 report by the Wisconsin Policy Forum. The Wisconsin State Park System adds significantly to these numbers which the legislatures seem to overlook.

Tax revenue for state lands has steadily eroded over the decades. Prior to 1995, Wisconsin State Parks were equally funded by taxpayer general-purpose revenue and user fees. Taxpayer support was slowly whittled away until 2015 when the legislature passed and Governor Walker signed into law Wisconsin Act 55 that removed tax support. To offset this reduction, Act 55 raised park admission, trail use, and camping fees. The pay-to-play model can price out families and low-income wage earners from enjoying our beautiful State Park System properties.

Wisconsin is one of the only state park systems in the country that funds its operations almost solely from user fees. This has led to the gradual deterioration of our system’s infrastructure and operations. The transition to a self-funding model views parks as a commodity that ignores planning and upkeep and directly conflicts with the Wisconsin State Park Charter. On a national basis, Wisconsin State Park’s funding ranks

near the bottom. Wisconsin spent \$19.6 million to operate its state parks, or \$3.39 per state resident, which was less than any other state except Texas. The state spent an additional \$3.6 million on projects within parks, or 62 cents per person, the seventh lowest among the 45 states with data available. Increased funding and support for the Wisconsin State Park System is necessary to ensure their continued viability.

Many decision-makers don’t seem to understand the economic and health benefits of our State Park System. One group trying to change this is the Friends of Wisconsin State Parks (FWSP), an umbrella group for the 80-plus local Friends groups. FWSP and local Friends groups play a critical role in fundraising and helping pay for infrastructure projects and public programs as well as educating the citizens including the Wisconsin legislatures about the many natural treasures and benefits of our State Park System.

The State Park System needs general-purpose revenue (tax-payer support) to survive. The self-funded, user-fee model is not working and will have a negative impact on the future generations of State Park users. *With a \$1 billion backlog of necessary infrastructure improvements, an unsupportive legislature, and a self-funding model, the future remains uncertain if not precarious. Have we reached the breaking point for our beloved Wisconsin State Park System?*

— Mike McFadzen, President



Stewards of the Kettle Moraine Projects in 2024

This marks the sixth year of volunteer efforts to affect positive change in our local environment. Many of the invasive species that we have been working on can easily diminish the biodiversity of the native flora in the Northern Unit. We are lucky to have 12 State Natural Areas in the Kettle Moraine State Forest–Northern Unit. Our State Natural Areas (SNA) are designated

to preserve the best of Wisconsin's undisturbed prairies, forests, and wetlands. These unique places provide homes to 90 percent of Wisconsin's threatened and endangered plant species and 75 percent of the animal species. We have been working intensively in two

of these SNAs for the last five years.

Haskell Noyes SNA's 61 acres of prime dry-mesic forest was never heavily logged or clear cut during the logging era of the 19th century. The land was purchased in 1947 to prevent imminent logging and received SNA designation in 1952. Its rich diversity of plants faces the threat of invasive species, such as garlic mustard and buckthorn. Because of our volunteer efforts, we are finding fewer and fewer of these plants throughout this SNA.

Spruce Lake Bog SNA is one of the most southerly bogs in Wisconsin. Within the site grows a rich assortment of plants more characteristic of northern Wisconsin sphagnum bogs. It received SNA designation in 1968. It contains a variety of sedges, shrubs, and herbaceous plants. A boardwalk leads to the 35-acre lake. For many years, reed canary grass has been spreading into the bog. After four years of volunteer efforts, we now see a return of many more orchids, ferns, and other unique plants along the boardwalk.

The Friends of the Kettle Moraine are excited to fund some of the invasive species control work around the Ice Age Visitor Center this year. We plan to hire a contractor to open up the view from the deck to the outwash plain. Over the years, trees have grown and now block the view. We also plan to manage the prairie, planted when the building was erected, and rid the adjacent trails of buckthorn and honeysuckle. We would like to show visitors what a healthy ecosystem looks like.

We are expanding our volunteer efforts to target two other invasive plants, Japanese hedge parsley and cut-leaf teasel, starting in the Zillmer Trail Area. Japanese hedge parsley, an easily overlooked member of the carrot family, grows abundantly in this part of the Northern Unit. We will concentrate on the hiking trails since its seeds cling to clothing and animal hair spreading to new areas. Past control efforts by Forest staff and our volunteers have had positive results.

Cut-leaf teasel is well established and spreading in surrounding areas. To date, cut-leaf teasel has only been found in the Zillmer Trail Area and a few other sites in the Forest and past efforts show that we can contain it.

The Greenbush Kettle Prairie is one of the few sites in the Northern Unit that contains original prairie vegetation. The site's two steep, undisturbed slopes were never plowed and are separated by a flat area that was farmed several decades ago. Unfortunately, the past soil disturbance provided an opportunity for non-native weeds to grow. We will continue our efforts to remove the exotic plants to encourage reclamation of the native prairie plants.

The Friends of the Kettle Moraine have long

“Action on behalf of life transforms. Because the relationship between self and the world is reciprocal, it is not a question of first getting enlightened or saved and then acting. As we work to heal the earth, the earth heals us.”

—*Braiding Sweetgrass, Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*
by Robin Wall Kimmerer



Resource Management

been committed to preserving and protecting the Northern Unit's land and water. We hope by volunteering, you will experience the deep rewards that come from contributing to the preservation of biodiversity in the Forest.

See the Volunteer Opportunities page for the scheduled workdays for May through July. If a group or individuals cannot make any of those dates, call Connie Ramthun, Volunteer Coordinator, at 920-533-8939 with any requests

or proposals. We will not be volunteering in August but will start again in fall with woody invasive species removal. Our fall volunteer schedule will be in the next issue of the Friends' newsletter.

Please contact Connie with any questions or concerns. She will include you on the email list with details of the work involved, what to wear and what to bring. Her email address is connieramthun@gmail.com

Staff Updates

Meet the Staff

Welcome Back Paige Ballard

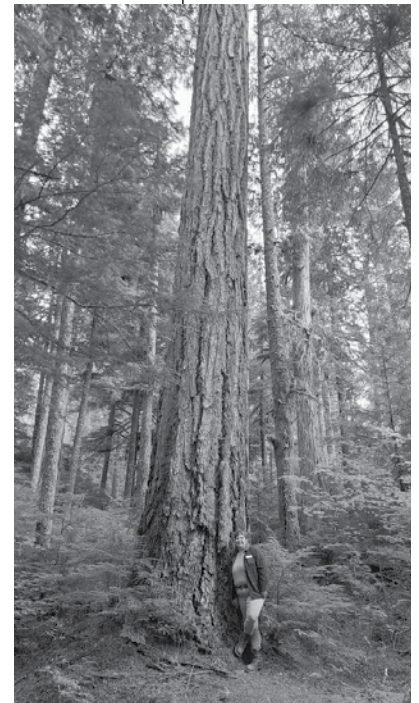
Paige is excited to take on the role of Park Manager at Kettle Moraine State Forest–Northern Unit. She started her career with the Department of Natural Resources as a Limited Term Employee (LTE) for Northern Unit from 2014 to 2019 while earning her degree at UW-Madison. In June of 2019, she left the DNR to pursue a full-time position at the Milwaukee County Zoo. There she spent her time learning various operational and administrative duties for one of the most popular zoos in the nation with more than 1.2 million annual visitors. In Fall of 2022, Paige came back to the DNR when she accepted a Park Ranger position at Peninsula State Park.

Paige and her husband Joe both grew up in Kewaskum and are happy to be back home, especially with the thrilling news that their family will be growing in August!

Samantha Ortlieb, the New Ranger

Samantha (Sam) graduated from UW-Stevens Point in 2017 with a bachelors in forestry. In 2015, Sam started at the Kettle Moraine State Forest–Northern Unit as a Limited Term Employee on the trail maintenance and visitor services crews. She moved up north to the Minocqua area to work as a customer service representative, facilities repair worker, and then forestry technician. In 2019, she moved back south joining the Southeast Recreation Management Team. She worked with that team for two years. At the start of 2022, she accepted her first full-time position as the Park Ranger for Harrington Beach State Park and this past January Sam transferred to the Northern Unit.

Her love for the outdoors came from her parents who took her sister and her on trips to state and national parks when they were kids. Now she and her husband enjoy outdoor adventures together—hiking, camping, kayaking, biking, and snowshoeing. She loved being on the Lake Michigan's shore, but she's excited to be back at Northern Unit working in the beautiful Kettle Moraine.



Cheerily, Cheer Up

“Cheerily, cheer up, cheer up, cheerily, cheer up!” That’s how an American robin (*Turdus migratorius*) greets the day, sings for a mate, and defends a territory—all from a high tree perch! We boast of being the largest thrush family member and the most widespread.

Robins range across most of North America into Central America setting up territories in a wide variety of habitats from gardens to forests. In winter we come together in huge mixed-aged flocks occupying moist woods with lots of berry-producing trees and shrubs.

We males love to show off with our singing and good looks. Males sport classy plumages of gray-brown backs, wings and tails, orange-colored breasts, almost black heads, white specs around the eyes, and black and white striped throats. In flight, take note of the white patches on our lower bellies and undertails, and white tipped tail corners. Females possess paler colored heads and less vibrant orange breasts. Young blend in with their streaked breasts, mottled backs, and pale facial markings.

Most of us migrate from our northern summer homes to spend winters near the Gulf of Mexico. Each year a few hardy individuals decide to remain in the cold North throughout the winter, so what you think is the first robin of spring, may be one of those who stayed all winter.

To keep up our energy, we forage a lot on the ground for insects, earthworms, snails, and lots of fruit (up to 60 percent of our diet). We

really like eating fruits that contain bugs. We prefer earthworms in the morning and more fruit later in the day. You may spy us as we run on the ground, make quick stops, check out our environs, and cock our heads to one side to look for worms. Parents feed their young mostly insects and earthworms.

Nesting starts early in spring so that we have time to raise two or three clutches each year. The female selects a sheltered spot among the leaves in a tree, shrub, or vine, or on a shelf-like spot on a building usually not too high up. Next, she builds her nest from the inside out. Using the “wrist” of one wing, she presses grass, twigs, and other materials into a cup shape which she reinforces on the outside with mud often gathered from worm castings. She finishes by lining the inside with soft grass. She constructs a new nest for each clutch. After completing the nest, she lays three to five plain blue eggs that she incubates for 12 to 14 days. The young, born helpless, mostly naked, and blind, quickly grow, leaving the nest in about 13 days. The parents feed the young for another two weeks before they head out on their own. If you find one of our fumbling young, just leave it alone, for the parents are probably nearby ready to defend or feed it.

On a spring/summer day, step outside to listen for our “cheerily, cheer up.” Aren’t you glad to have such a cheery official Wisconsin state bird?

—*Jackie Scharfenberg, Retired DNR Naturalist*



State of the Forest

Continued from page 1

Ice Age Visitor Center Drinking Fountain/Bottle Filler

The Friends of the Kettle Moraine received a Knowles/Nelson Stewardship Grant for the installation of a new water fountain/bottle filler. This addition will be placed outside the Ice Age Visitor Center near a new automated sticker selling kiosk. The Forest staff will complete this project by mid-summer.

Mauthe Lake Fishing Pier

During the winter of 2022, the Mauthe Lake Fishing Pier was removed because of severe damage. Currently, the staff is looking for funding to replace the pier.

Partnership Projects

- Northern Kettle Moraine Horse Trail Association committed to \$8,000 for new fire rings for the Horseriders' campground.

- Sheboygan County Cycling did not get much of a chance to use their new off-road bike trail grooming equipment this winter. The group plans to continue with trail maintenance and improvements at Greenbush throughout the summer months.
- Fond du Lac Cyclery is collaborating with Forest staff to conduct volunteer stewardship days at the New Fane off-road bike trails. Volunteers will work to clear woody vegetation and improve the trail tread. Staff will continue to work with our partners on finishing these projects and looking at possible new ones to tackle in the future. The staff extends a special thanks and heart-felt appreciation to the donors and volunteers who contributed to make these current projects a reality.

—*Samantha Lindquist,
Forest Superintendent*

The Greenbush Trails received 20 inches of heavy wet snow over a three-day period in mid-January. Trees and branches were down throughout the system. The Northern Kettle Moraine Nordic Ski Club grooming team spent hundreds of hours cleaning up the debris. The trails were skiable within two days due to this monumental effort.

Board of Directors Update

Continued from page 2

money. This motion brought up the idea of investigating setting up an endowment with the Natural Resources Foundation. This topic will be brought up at the July board meeting after more information about the endowment has been obtained.

Through a written report, Mark Sasing informed that group that he had sent out special thank you notes to those who donated above the membership fee. He is in the process of sending out letters to those whose membership has lapsed.

Jackie Scharfenberg provided an update on the May through December Friends' sponsored programs. She provided a report on the first meeting for the Leaf Stomp fundraiser. She mentioned that the current priorities are to create an event logo and find sponsorships, especially for the refreshment stands, buses, and finish line.

Jackie reported that she is developing a more sophisticated means of tracking the Gift Shop inventory. She mentioned that she is starting to make orders to replenish existing stock and to purchase some new items to keep the Gift Shop fresh in its offerings. Roger is investigating new credit card vendors that can be used in the two entrance stations and at the Ice Age Visitor Center.

Jackie told the group that Evelyn McLean-

Cowan is currently working on the new Friends' brochure. Roger provided an update on the new Friends' website.

Connie provided an overview of the Ice Age Visitor Center Complex Vegetation Rehabilitation project. Connie, Jackie, Samantha Lindquist, and Joe Giesfeldt met and produced a preliminary plan that includes mapping the project area, developing a project outline/proposal, creating a list of vendors, and a potential timeline. Connie said that once we get project costs, Glacier Lakes Conservancy can help the Friends apply for grants to cover the cost of the project.

Samantha Lindquist, Forest Superintendent, introduced Paige Ballard, the new Park Manager. She shared updates on various Forest projects. She reported the Candlelight Ski/Hike was canceled because of melting snow conditions. Warden Supervisor Juan Gomez informed the board that there will not be an assigned warden to the Northern Unit, so law enforcement will be limited this coming summer.



Tom Werner

Friends of the Kettle Moraine
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Campbellsport, WI 53010



**Friends of the
Kettle Moraine
Board Members**

Mike McFadzen – *President*
Jamie Sue Beaupré –
Vice President
Jackie Scharfenberg –
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Gary Nickel – *Secretary*
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*Articles and contributions
are invited. Deadlines for
submissions are the
fifteenth of March, July and
November.*

Have You Moved?
*Please let us know your
new address so we can
keep in touch with you.
Email your new address to
friendsofthekettlemoraine@
gmail.com*

Friends of the Kettle Moraine Membership

Membership Levels

- \$20 Individual
- \$30 Family
- \$50 Contributing
- \$100 Patron
- \$500 Life Membership
- \$50 Business
- \$1000 Steward
(acknowledged at the Ice Age Visitor Center)

\$_____ Contribution

*All memberships are tax deductible
to the full extent allowed by law.
Make checks payable to the Friends
of the Kettle Moraine. Please mail
your check and membership form to
Friends of the Kettle Moraine, P.O.
Box 143, Campbellsport, WI 53010.*

Yes! I Am Interested in Volunteering

- Contribute Newsletter Articles
- Prepare Mailings
- Help with Fundraising
- Enhance Online Presence
- Help at Special Events
- Assist at the Ice Age Visitor Center
- Other

_____ Name

_____ Address

_____ City State Zip

_____ Phone Email Address

Who are the Friends of the Kettle Moraine?

The Friends is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting conservation, recreation, and education within the Kettle Moraine State Forest-Northern Unit. The goals of the organization include:

- To publicize the unique recreational and educational experiences that are available in the Northern Unit.

- To develop a public appreciation for the Northern Unit and its resources.
- To recruit public involvement in the activities and input in deciding the future management of the Northern Unit.
- To provide financial assistance for educational programs and other forest projects.