

BMAP NEWS



BMAP
BLUE MOUNDS AREA PROJECT

Conservation and Community. Together.

Summer 2022 • Volume 25 Number 2



By Edgar Flores Gomez,
Wisconsin DNR

When the sun goes down, they swarm the skies, swiftly dancing down the river side. Bats are some of the most misunderstood mammals in the animal kingdom. Though there are 1,400 bat species in the world, bats are shrouded with mystery. In just the United States, there are 47 species of bats that are nectar and insect-eaters. Bats provide invaluable ecosystem services as they aid in pollination, seed dispersal, and pest control across the globe.

Of the 47 bat species in the United States, Wisconsin is home to 8 species. Wisconsin bats are separated into two groups - cave bats and tree bats. The primary difference between the two is how they spend the winter. Tree bats are migratory, traveling south to warmer climates to avoid harsh winters and include silver-haired bats, eastern red bats, hoary bats, and

evening bats. The cave bats are little browns, big browns, northern long-eared bats, and eastern pipistrelles. WI cave bats hibernate in caves or mines during winter, and are listed as state-threatened species due to their susceptibility to white-nose syndrome (WNS), a deadly bat fungal disease impacting bats across North America.

A bat's lifespan is surprisingly long for a mammal of their size, with a number of species known to live over 20 years. In addition to having long life spans, they are slow to reproduce, usually only having one young per year. Bats mate in fall and delay fertilization until emergence or migration. Female bats gestate for about 60 days and give birth in summer roosts. These factors make it difficult for bats to recover from population declines from WNS, habitat destruction, and climate change.

The fungus responsible for WNS is

called *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (Pd). Pd appears as a white powder on a bat's nose and wings, giving the disease its name. WNS causes bats to be active during hibernation and behave strangely; some bats will leave their hibernation sites midwinter and in the middle of the day. When they are active during hibernation, bats use up precious fat reserves. For bats that hibernate, it is crucial for them to have these fat reserves to survive winter during their torpor state. Because WNS disrupts their hibernation, it can cause 90%-95% mortality in infected hibernation sites. WNS was first observed in New York in 2007 and has been confirmed in 38 States and 7 Canadian Provinces, including Wisconsin in 2014.

Now, what can we do to help? Fortunately, there are many ways to help our state's bats. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Bat Program offers two citizen-based monitoring projects: acoustic and roost monitoring. Acoustic monitoring helps identify species distribution in different habitats across Wisconsin using an ultrasound detector that records bat echolocation calls. Roost monitoring entails volunteers counting bats as they emerge from a summer roosting site and reporting the numbers to the bat program. This helps the Bat Program determine population numbers, roost behaviors, and roost conditions. Another way people can help is by building bat houses. Bat houses are a great way to provide a safe home from predators and elemental forces. Not only do

Paige Cody on Unsplash

Bats! continued page 2

IN THIS ISSUE

2 President's Message/
Ecologist's Report

3 Walk with
Naturalists

8 Class Series
Review

9 Battle Over CHC
Continues

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Greg Jones

Things are finally settling down at BMAP after some personnel changes in the past six months. We were sorry when it was time for Micah Kloppenburg, our Outreach Ecologist, to move on. We're

happy to share that Micah has a new position with the Xerces Society, and we wish him well in his role there. Micah — thank you for your service to BMAP over the course of several years!

We will miss Micah very much, but we are delighted to welcome Josh Pletzer as our new Outreach Ecologist. Josh has a background working with both large and small nonprofit

organizations dedicated to ecological restoration, and concurrently works as a Restoration Ecologist with a local restoration and consulting contracting company. Many of you have met him at our events this summer. Look for his first Ecologist's Report in this issue.

By the time this newsletter is published, we will have had three Summer Property Tours, three Walks with a Naturalist, and the Natural Communities of Southwest Wisconsin class will have wrapped up. Each event has been very well attended, and I want to thank our hosts for making these wonderful events such successes. The Summer Property Tours have been educational and fun for all of us who were in attendance. We've visited some wonderful prairie sites and had great conversations during our Walks with a Naturalist.

We have one big event left for the nice weather: our Annual Picnic at Brigham County Park where we will present our Bur Oak Award. The prairies at the park are managed by Dane County employees Lars Higdon and Shane Otto. Lars and/or Shane will be our featured keynote speaker and share the history of the Brigham County Park's prairies. The presentation will also include information on how the site was prepared, planted, and maintained. Hopefully we can take time to walk the prairies after our meal.

In other news, we are currently looking to fill a couple of BMAP roles: Treasurer and Membership Committee Chair. Please look in the "Help Wanted" section of this newsletter for more information.

I hope you've all been able to get outside and enjoy the range of beauty summer has to offer. 🌍

ECOLOGIST'S REPORT



Josh Pletzer

In early 2022 I took over as BMAP's Outreach Ecologist. Thank you all for welcoming me, and thanks to Micah Kloppenburg for his guidance and dedication to preserving

continuity within BMAP! I know I have some big shoes to fill.

It is heartening to see how dedicated the members of our community are to conservation

and nurturing the land. During the Summer Property Tours we have seen some beautiful sites in various stages of restoration. It is heartening to see how dedicated members of our community are to conservation and nurturing the land. So far I have visited eleven properties in four different counties and talked with many of you about restoration priorities, values, and practices.

At time of writing, I am busy working on the site reports for those eleven site visits. I appreciate everyone's patience as I complete these reports. Your restoration goals are of the utmost importance to me. I have also authored one e-bulletin and this is my first Ecologist's Note; it's a

joy to connect with all of you reading our regular updates. I also want to thank all of our members who have donated this year. Your generous contributions support the ongoing site visits for our growing membership of land stewards.

Your dedication to your land as members moves me, and I have appreciated learning from all of you over the past couple of months. My background has given me wide-ranging experience and knowledge, though I like to say I know a little about a lot but not a lot about any single little...the natural world is a humbling teacher, but its infinite lessons are a joy to learn and share! 🌍

Bats! continued from page 1

these houses benefit bats, they can also benefit people. Having bats in your area can help control pests like mosquitos, moths, flies, and other garden pests. Bats can eat thousands of insects every night and pregnant or nursing mothers can consume 100% of their body weight each night! In addition, their guano can also be used as fertilizer for your pest-free garden. We encourage you to participate in bat monitoring if you have an interest and you can find more information on the Wisconsin Bat Program website. 🌍

FURTHER READING

- Learn How to Build a Bat House: dnr.wi.gov keyword <bats>
- WI Bat Program: wiatri.net/inventory/bats
- WNS Response Team: whitenosesyndrome.org
- Bat Conservation International: batcon.org



Barneveld Prairie SNA – Botham Tract: Rob Schubert

By Sarah Crittenden

On June 26th, BMAP members joined naturalist Rob Schubert for a walk at the Botham Tract of Barneveld Prairie State Natural Area (SNA). Rob works for Quercus Land Stewardship Services which specializes in ecological restoration and invasive plant management. The Botham Tract of Barneveld Prairie SNA was acquired by The Nature Conservancy in 2002 and contains a mix of remnant and restored prairies, oak savanna and wetlands. Rob started our walk on a hillside prairie overlooking cattle grazing in an oak-shaded bottom pasture. The area we walked had been burned earlier in the spring in accordance with a patch-burn grazing management system. We talked about the plants we saw and the importance of the prairie not only as a preserve for plants but also as habitat for diverse insects, birds, and animals.

Rob then took us to a restored wetland at the junction of K and Prairie Grove Road. The wetland was restored by removing dirt until the non-agricultural layer was exposed; many plants likely came back from seedbank. We saw a huge diversity of grasses and sedges, as well some baptisia, quinine, and prairie indian plantain taking advantage of the drier year. We talked about the importance of these plants for holding the stream banks as well as the adaptability of the plants for wetter and drier growing conditions.

If you are interested in visiting Barneveld Prairie SNA or want to learn more, there is additional information on the WI Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and Nature Conservancy (TNC) websites:

- WDNR: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Lands/naturalareas/index.asp?SNA=405>
- TNC: <https://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/places-we-protect/barneveld-prairie/> 🌱

Black Earth Rettenmund Prairie SNA: Pat Trochlell

By Linda Millunzi-Jones

The Black Earth Rettenmund Prairie SNA in Dane County is a rare and prime example of one of the few remaining dry-mesic prairies in Wisconsin. On July 2nd, a group of BMAP members gathered by the SNA kiosk and listened with anticipation to Pat Trochlell, retired WDNR wetland ecologist who conducts plant community inventories and assessments. In addition to being a longtime BMAP member, Pat is a talented instructor for the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program and a board member for The Prairie Enthusiasts. Pat spoke to us about the tremendous amount of work that volunteers did to remove shrubs, trees, and other invasives from this dolomite topped Driftless Area ridge. Removing encroaching woody species opened up the smothered remnant prairie below and gave it a chance to breathe and grow again. Many showy and blooming forbs drew us along the path. Impressively, this incredible diversity of plants had sprung without any over-seeding of the historic and patient remnant prairie.

Josh Pletzer, our new BMAP Outreach Ecologist, also joined the walk and answered questions at the tail end of our 15-person snake chain along the narrow prairie path. Serenaded by songs of dickcissels and field sparrows, it was a beautiful day to be out learning in the prairie. 🌱



Greg Jones

Naturalist Cindy Becker assists BMAP members with grass identification in York Prairie SNA.

York Prairie SNA: Cindy Becker

By Greg Jones

Seventeen people braved the hot and humid weather in late July for BMAP's last scheduled Walk with a Naturalist at the York Prairie SNA in Green County. We were led by Cindy Becker, who is the project manager for the Southern Driftless Grasslands partnership (some of you may remember Cindy as BMAP's Outreach Ecologist from a few years ago). We were also joined by Julia Wiessing, from the Entomology Department at UW Madison, who shared her knowledge of bees and all things in the insect world. We spent the first 20 minutes or so on the edges of the parking lot identifying plants and bees. Cindy said something along the lines of, "A true botanist doesn't even have to leave the parking lot."

Eventually, we headed out into the prairie. The dry, hot, sunbaked hilltop awaiting us didn't look like it had much to offer from a distance, but as we walked up to the top, the great diversity of plants in this dry mesic prairie was revealed. The flora changed as we traversed to the lower lands that offered better growing conditions, and we found ourselves in a big patch of compass plants (*Silphium laciniatum*) before circling back to the parking lot. Cold apples and sliced watermelon awaited, and on a day as hot as it was, nothing tasted better to me than the well water that we had on ice. 🌱

WALK WITH A NATURALIST

Ridgeway Pine Relict SNA
October 23, 1-3pm
4121 County Rd H,
Ridgeway, WI 53582

BMAPNEWS

Come join us for a fall "Walk with a Naturalist" event at the Ridgeway Pine Relict, SNA on Saturday, October 22nd (rain date is the next day, Sunday, Oct. 23rd). The walk will be led by Wisconsin Master Naturalists of Iowa County and joined by Mary Kay Baum, a longtime Friend and Volunteer at the Pine Relict. Meet at the small parking lot on the east side of County H and a little north from the large SNA sign on the west side of the road. Hope to see you there! 🌱



Summer Property Tour Reviews



Participants admire the restoration work completed by April Prusia and Steve Fabos on their property.

Tracey and Scott Gross

By Greg Jones

On July 9th, Tracey and Scott Gross hosted about 25 BMAP members for our second property tour. There are two aspects of this property that made it interesting to our members. First, Tracey and Scott live several miles from the property and work on it during their evenings and weekends, as do many folks. Second, Tracey and Scott bought the land and started their restoration only three years ago; it was nice to visit a property that is a burgeoning work in progress.

Irish Hollow Creek runs through the property and empties into Trout Creek. Along the creek bed, we found riparian plants and sedges. As the creek slopes up toward the edge of the woods, there are areas of prairie plantings and some managed mowed areas just waiting to be seeded with a prairie seed mix. Three years ago, this area was densely populated with the usual suspects (buckthorn, honeysuckle, boxelder, and poison parsnip). Tracey and Scott have had many a bonfire in order to burn up what they've cut down, and their work has paid off as things are looking great. It will only get better as the "good" plants become more established.

Moving along the edge of the woods, the scenery was dense, dark, and forbidding. We then proceeded up into the woods on an old farm road that had been cleared. Soon we came to another area Tracey and Scott have worked on. To our left, we saw a hillside that was heavily shaded only a few years ago now covered in several varieties of ferns. To our right, we could see a newly cleared opening in the forest. It was illuminating to see the contrast between how Tracey and Scott had found this part of their property versus what they've accomplished - a woodland revival featuring mighty oaks and hickories. What a difference they are making!

I want to thank Scott and Tracey for graciously giving us a tour of their property. All of us on the tour learned a lot.

April Prusia and Steve Fabos

By Greg Jones

Our first Property tour of 2022 was a return to Dorothy's Range with our hosts, Steve Fabos and April Prusia. On June 11th, approximately 35 of us assembled on a small, well-manicured lawn next to Steve and April's house with a prairie right next to us. BMAP members toured this property seven or eight years ago, and I was fortunate enough to be there for that tour as well.

Steve and April raise pigs on the property, and there were a few small ones that were curious about the goings on and wanted to join us until April shooed them away. We started the tour by climbing a hill on an old farm road. The slope to our left was south facing and fairly steep. Steve described it from ten years ago as densely packed with black locust trees, honeysuckle, knapweed, and who knows what else. Light could not even penetrate to the ground, but you would never know today. It is now covered with little bluestem and a wonderful variety of forbs. It has truly been restored to something different than when Steve and April found it.

Steve described to us some of his restoration techniques. Site prep was minimal in areas of old pastures — he just started interseeding. Steve still acquires seed every year and interseeds forbs in the fall and grasses in the spring. He also burns every year in the spring. When things get more established, he may leave out more refugia in some areas. Steve spot-sprays when he can by walking the areas with a backpack sprayer. We could see the evidence of this on our

walk from the dying red clovers and crown vetch scattered about. We also saw some very happy pigs grazing in a fenced area on the high ground.

After descending down the south slope to the valley with a creek running through it, the flora changed. We crossed the valley and walked past a lovely sedge meadow of hairy-fruited sedge (*Carex trichocarpa*) by the creek. The angelica was standing tall and blooming. I learned about a new plant there by the edge of the creek, two-flowered cynthia (*Krigia biflora*), which was blooming with a small but proud yellow flower.

We then left the floodplain and headed up the north facing slope into an oak woodland. Full of big, beautiful bur oaks, the understory vegetation and accumulated leaf litter make it possible for Steve to run fire through there regularly. The waning blossoms of shooting stars were all around us; we had just missed a big showing of this spectacular plant. The top of the slope was teeming with spiderworts in full bloom.

The beauty of this property is a testament to the effectiveness of the techniques, diligence, and hard loving work that went into it. I remember seeing the property seven or eight years ago with a lot of cool season grasses and not many forbs, and it is dramatically different now. As the native forbs and grasses are multiplying, the pasture grasses are getting pushed out. A beautiful restoration is in progress, and I'm thankful to Steve and April for hosting such an inspiring tour.

HELP WANTED

Farewell to Carroll Schaal: BMAP Seeks New Treasurer

By Greg Jones

Carroll Schaal has been helping BMAP tirelessly since our inception in the late 1990s. He has contributed in many ways over the years—from serving as President to staying back and cooking brats during many of our summer property tours. Most recently, Carroll has served as the BMAP Treasurer. However, it is becoming more difficult for Carroll to continue to serve. We sure hate to lose his service; I consider Carroll to be the glue that has held us together and am so thankful for all that he has done for the organization.

We are hoping that one of our members will be able to step up and fill the role of Treasurer. This role is perfect for someone with knowledge of accounting practices and writing budgets. Though an essential and very important job, because BMAP is a small organization, it would not be a significant time commitment. Carroll will stay on and help train the new treasurer as needed.

BMAP Membership Committee Chair

We are also in need of someone to spearhead our Membership Committee. This person should have some familiarity with database programs.

If you would like to discuss these roles in more detail, have any interest in filling these roles, or know of someone who would be interested in these roles, please email us at info@bluemounds.org



CAPITAL
BREWERY®

*Brewing Award-Winning
Beer for Over 35 Years*

We have over 20 seasonal, annual, and small-batch beers, ciders and hard seltzers on tap in our Bier Stube, Grain Room and Bier Garten!

Celebrate Oktoberfest in the Bier Garten on
September 24th!
1 PM - 2/5ths Polka Band
6 PM - Madison County

Check out our 240+ medals, 100 year old Brunswick Bar, and authentic copper brewing kettles from Hoxter, Germany.

To schedule a private event or room rental call
608-826-1099 or email
capbrew@capitalbrewery.com.

Capital Brewery
7734 Terrace Avenue
Middleton, WI 53562
608.826.7100



CapBrew



CapBrew



CapitalBrewery



CapitalBrewery

www.CapitalBrewery.com



Driftless Area Land Conservancy:

*protecting land in southwest
Wisconsin*

Nearly 8,000 acres of land
protected from
development, forever

4 public nature preserves

Landowner workshops,
community events,
volunteer opportunities

**Come see what we're all
about!**

driftlessconservancy.org



GOOD OAK
ecological services

LANDSCAPING RESTORATION CONSULTING

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

- Invasive Species Control
- Woodland Restoration
- Prescribed Burns
- Prairie Establishment
- Shoreline Restoration
- Sustainable Landscaping
-and more!


(608) 209-0607
www.goodoak.com

Tom Broman and Lynn Nyhart

By Tom Broman

The first of the new BMAP work parties took place on a breezy, chilly day last April 16th at the home of Tom Broman and Lynn Nyhart. Along with Tom and Lynn, attendees were Scott and Tracey Gross, Brooke Lewis, Linda Millunzi-Jones, and Sarah Crittenden.

Our targets were stands of prickly ash that had made their way into the large open prairie that we have been slowly improving for the past several years. The group went at it with energy and passion, and the results of these efforts are still clearly visible even now, four months later. The prickly ash has come back, to be sure, but in far less dense numbers than before. That will make it far easier to get at, once we start working on it again in the fall.

We are so grateful for this work and look forward to participating once more in work parties next year. 




Tracey Gross

An impressive pile of thistle, burdock, and wild parsnip.

Scott and Tracey Gross

By Scott and Tracey Gross

When BMAP offered to organize work parties for landowners, we became excited about the opportunity to collaborate with people who share our passion, so we signed up to host a group on June 13. Our goal for the day was to pull thistle, burdock, and wild parsnip out of a two-year-old prairie. Usually, it is just two of us working on the weekends, so the addition of three more enthusiastic people equipped with parsnip predators boosted our motivation and productivity. The hours and work went quickly as we shared war stories and strategies about working on the land, learned about each other's lives, and created huge piles of unwanted weeds. After a couple hours of digging, it was so rewarding to look back at the results of good work while sharing delicious food with new friends. We are so thankful for the help and look forward to future opportunities to work together with the wonderful members of BMAP. 

Class Series Review

Natural Communities of Southwest Wisconsin

By Linda Millunzi-Jones

Organized and led by the Botanical Club of Wisconsin and in partnership with the Blue Mounds Area Project, the 2022 Natural Communities of Southwestern Wisconsin class series was designed to welcome people of all levels of botanical and ecological expertise. Held once a month from May to July, during each three-hour class participants examined a particular natural community under three separate lenses: ecology, plant identification, and plant pollination. In the following article, Linda Millunzi-Jones describes her experience as a participant in the 2022 class series.

May 7th was our first meeting of this summer's Natural Communities of Southwest Wisconsin class series. The four volunteer instructors from the botany club were Kevin Doyle, Mary Ann Feist, Brenda Morales and Christopher Noll. Fifteen students stood in a circle at Abraham's Woods SNA in Green County and introduced ourselves before receiving our introduction to the Southern Mesic Forest that stood before us.

We then turned to a narrow yet worn path lined with blooming spring ephemerals. We were drawn as one long chord into the well-loved old growth woods of predominantly sugar maple trees along with white and red oaks that stood as sentinels above an open understory. The forest floor was carpeted with

flowers of spring beauty, toothwort, Dutchman's breeches and the bold leaves of the bloodroot plant that had already finished blooming. Those ephemerals often depended on ants for their seed dispersal.

We saw again those old plant friends, whose names we often forget from spring to spring, that hurry up to bloom before the buds burst open on the trees and leaves grow to block the cherished sunlight. Today, the sun fell warmly through the unclad trees and helped the spring ephemerals with their life cycle while their pollinators worked busily among them.

The group stuttered forward with movement as our instructors detailed the lives of the plants we encountered. A small bird flew into the air above

and the birders among us scanned with their binoculars and declared that it was a blue-gray gnatcatcher. The natural communities of plants, insects, animals, birds, and the entire environment that surrounded us created the mosaic that was our learning experience.

Onward we walked to blue cohosh plants growing alongside trillium and Goldie's fern, a plant name I hadn't heard before, was uncurling along the path. We came to a bladdernut shrub which was generally the only bush found in a Southern Mesic Forest. Rounding the last bend of our oval path we discussed the effects of earthworms on an otherwise healthy forest soil.

Earthworms, which to my surprise are not native, eat humus and plant roots, which alters the diverse layers of soil into one hard layer of bare mineral soil. That harmful change depletes nutrients that had been available to plants and mycorrhizal fungi. Digging with our fingers underneath the leaf litter, we found light compost-like soil that had not yet been degraded by earthworms. Before we knew it, our three-hour class full of questions, answers, observations and camaraderie ended with snacks and water before we dispersed until June.

June arrived and we worried about the radar showing rain, rain, rain, but most of us showed up and donned rainsuits and a positive attitude to visit the Shea Prairie in the Mounds View Grasslands of Iowa county. Off we went through the rain to cross the wetlands and the creek. Brenda and Chris were our instructors today but

we all turned to Jan Kettle, a student in class and a long-time volunteer for Shea Prairie. She filled us in on the restoration process of the wetland which included removal of drain tiles and several feet of soil that had blown in or slumped off the hillside over time and buried the wetland. After the suffocating top layers of soil were hauled away, the freshly released native wetland was seeded with local seed collected by the volunteers of Mounds View Grasslands. We slipped quietly through the wet foliage in the rain and enjoyed the beauty of burgeoning native plants like the blooming wood lilies, spiderwort, tall meadow rue and angelica. We climbed out of the wetland and onto the slope that took us up to the dry Shea Prairie.

Pale spiked lobelia bloomed among the one-day flowers of spiderwort. We learned that the lobelia can have both male and female sex parts on one plant and can successfully produce seeds. It's called a "perfect" plant. That lobelia will stay hermaphroditic from year to year.

We climbed the hillside into the prairie remnant but stopped at my favorite named plant, bastard toadflax (*Comandra umbellata*). It is a hemi-parasitic plant which means it connects to root systems of other plants to use nutrients which causes those plants to be shorter and less dominant in an area. Brenda said, "These plants act like mini-grazers by eating smaller portions than bison or elk."

Chris stopped near the top of the hill to give us a "5 minute, 2-million-year geology lesson": I knew that

Wisconsin was covered by sea water at one point, but I didn't know that it also used to be closer to the equator due to continental drift.

The top of the remnant included fields of shooting stars gone to seed. Brenda spoke of "buzz pollination" and detected a blank look from us. "So, bumble bees grab a flower and use their flying muscles to vibrate, zzzzzz, to shake the pollen onto their bellies before flying off to another flower." She did a buzz dance for us but stopped before we had a chance to get a clip for YouTube.

Brauna Hartzell, another class member and volunteer at Shea Prairie, told us of the 20-year study of regal fritillary butterflies. She walks a transect and counts all the butterflies she sees between July and August. Counts have shown a difference in numbers of butterflies on a transect from having been burned that year versus not burned. There is strong debate among entomologists regarding the worrisome effects on insects with frequent prairie burning.

Chris finally took his rain poncho off at the top of the hill and of course then the rain blew in again. We observed how the previously degraded hilltop was making progress towards health. Jan told us of a day the volunteer work party stood and looked in horror at hundreds of mullein plants with their tall sturdy spikes standing like "Methuselah's birthday cake." She recalled that Rich Henderson, Mounds View Grassland manager and our favorite guru in prairie

Continued on page 8



Linda Millunzi-Jones

Participants identify various plants at the 2022 Natural Communities of Southwestern WI class.



WiBee Community Science Workshop

By Sarah Crittendon

This May BMAP members joined UW-Madison Entomology Professor, Dr. Claudio Gratton, to learn about Wisconsin's diversity of bees, what they do, and how we can improve their environment and aid in their conservation. BMAP members also learned more about a Wisconsin-based community science project called "WiBee" (we-bee) and gained hands-on experience using the WiBee app. Sarah Crittendon describes her experience participating in the workshop.

The day began in the classroom with Dr. Claudio Gratton first discussing the importance of bees and the dangers they face. Bees play a large role in pollinating both wild and agricultural plants. We have over 400 species of wild bees in Wisconsin. These wild bee populations are known to extend the pollination season and complement honeybee pollination. We can help maintain our wild bees by providing habitat and learning more about how to aid in their conservation.

Then we went outside where Dr. Gratton taught us the use of an app developed by the Gratton Lab: WiBee (which stands for "wild bee app"). Using this simple smartphone app, community members can observe bees and collect data that will be used to better understand bee abundance and patterns. It was a perfect day to see hundreds of bees in flowering trees right outside the door. We used the app and learned how to identify different bees with help from Claudio as well as some bee experts in the class. 🐝



Greg Jones

BMAP members learning how to use the WiBee app.



Sarah Crittendon

Dr. Claudio Gratton presents on why wild bees are important, why we need community science, and how the WiBee app works.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- To download and learn about the WiBee app: pollinators.wisc.edu/wibee
- To assess pollinator habitat on your property: pollinators.wisc.edu/habitat
- For help with bee identification from photos: Beemachine.ai
- To get more involved with monitoring WI-native bumble bee populations: WI Bumblebee Brigade wiatri.net/inventory/bbb
- For more information about pollinators: Xerces xerces.org

Class Series Review continued from page 7

restoration, said not to worry, "They will disappear." And the next year they started doing just that. Chris summarized that once the land has been degraded it can take decades to restore it to health, even with all the management tools that we have to improve its condition. The land takes time to recover and it takes time for prairies to set their course and develop into a healthy community.

The day of our last class dawned clear at the oak savanna of The Pleasant Valley Conservancy SNA in Dane County. We gathered with Kathy Brock, the enthusiastic owner, and started our hike up the open slope that had once been covered with invasive shrubs and trees but was now breathing the sun and the wind and swaying with blooming forbs and grasses. At the top we stopped to ponder a couple of ancient burr oaks, gnarled and beaten up over the decades but still alive. Our instructor, Kevin Doyle, told us how oaks compartmentalize by forming a protective layer of cells along the burned cells in a fire. How they can "take a licking but keep on ticking." Also, burr oak acorns germinate below ground so their root collar is protected from fire whereas the root collar of other trees is above ground which makes them susceptible to destruction in a fire.

The oak savanna is a transition area that has a more complete spectrum of sunny versus shade loving plants than other ecosystems. A plant species growing here can be taller or shorter depending on the available light it has. Woodland boneset, rue-anemone, bloodroot, spiderwort, golden alexander, elm leaf goldenrod, woodland Joe-Pye weed, white wild indigo, and bottle brush grass are some examples. This healthy oak savanna has incredible plant variety that is more diverse than a prairie.

We stopped in an area where the leaves on a few trees surrounding our path had a shiny sticky substance coating them; it was aphid honey. "Taste it," said Alon Coppens, a class member, "it should be a little sweet." Brenda, our other instructor that day, put her tongue to it for a quick lick as if meeting his dare and said, "Yes, it is sweet." Later as we all stood around eating watermelon and other snacks at the end of class, Brenda said, "I didn't know this class would be so interactive. It's been so much fun." 🐝

Battle Over CHC Continues

By Chuck Tennesen, Climate and Energy Coordinator at the Driftless Area Land Conservancy

The Cardinal-Hickory Creek (CHC) high-capacity transmission project cuts a 100-mile swath through the Driftless Area of southwest Wisconsin. Casual observers who have watched the 18-story tall towers rising across the landscape could easily assume that the battles over this controversial project are over, but it's far from a "done-deal." Legal challenges initiated by Driftless Area Land Conservancy, other environmental groups, and by both Iowa and Dane Counties are in full swing.

Opponents to this project are convinced that there are less expensive and less environmentally damaging ways to reduce carbon emissions and to provide reliable, economical energy to Wisconsin and the upper Midwest.

FEDERAL COURT

In January, Judge William Conley blocked the project from crossing the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Nevertheless, the developers — American Transmission Co. (ATC), ITC Midwest, and Dairyland Power Coop — continue building two line segments, one in Iowa another in Wisconsin. The fact that they have no legally permitted means to join the two segments results in what Judge Conley characterized as "little more than an orchestrated trainwreck at some later point in this lawsuit."

The developers have appealed this ruling to the U.S. 7th Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago. Oral arguments are scheduled for Sept. 28, 2022. The public is encouraged to attend in person or to follow via videoconferencing. Watch the Driftless Area Land Conservancy website, <https://www.driftlessconservancy.org/>, for details.

STATE COURT

The state court case focuses primarily on issues concerning the initial approval of the project and route. This case has been delayed two years because of the developers' appeal to the Wisconsin Supreme Court concerning one particular issue. With that issue settled, it's anticipated that the court will schedule oral arguments within the next several weeks. Opponents believe they have a strong case and are eager to present it to the court. 🌱



Linda Millunzi-Jones

Standing at 18-stories tall, the newly installed CHC tower dwarfs BMAP president Greg Jones.

Iowa County Solar Group Buy 2022

The Iowa County Solar Group Buy is an easy, affordable way for residents, small businesses, and nonprofits to save on energy costs while helping the environment. This effort is proudly supported by Driftless Area Land Conservancy's project — Iowa County CLEA-N, in collaboration with solar installers Timmerman's Talents, Eagle Point Solar, and All Sky Energy. Would you like to see shiny examples of solar arrays in Iowa County? Look for more information on the Iowa County Solar Group Buy website: [driftlessconservancy.org/solar](https://www.driftlessconservancy.org/solar).

Iowa County friends, fill out a solar assessment form today to get started! Act now, installers have limited room left for 2022 projects!



Dreamstime

UPCOMING EVENTS

SUMMER PROPERTY TOUR 3

August 27, 2022 at 10am - 12pm

Caroline Beckett and Frank Sandner

5452 County Rd K, Blue Mounds, WI 53517

Caroline Beckett and Frank Sander care for their 66-acre property that features an oak woodland, prairie, and pasture-to-prairie conversion. Caroline and Frank have worked with WDNR to establish pollinator and wildlife-friendly prairie areas and improve habitat for critters and plants in their woodland. On-going techniques include burning, brush clearing, and some carefully-applied spraying and mowing. Each year brings new surprises, and Caroline and Frank look forward to sharing the results of buckthorn clearing that happened this spring — half of the work was done by machines and half by a crew armed with chainsaws and sprayers.

BMAP ANNUAL PICNIC AND BUR OAK AWARD PRESENTATION

September 10, 2022 at 11am

Brigham County Park, Shelter #1

**3160 County Highway F,
Blue Mounds, WI 53517**

Join BMAP members from across South Central WI to celebrate another successful year of stewardship! The event will begin with a short overview of BMAP's accomplishments and future vision before honoring the 2022 BMAP Bur Oak Award recipients. Keynote speakers, Lars Higdon and/or Shane Otto from Dane County Parks, will give a presentation about managing the prairie at Brigham County Park. Brats, beer, and water will be provided; please bring a dish to pass.

RSVP at bluemounds.org so that we can plan for our grilling and beverage needs.



BMAP MEMBERS

LIFETIME

Brooke & Jon Lewis
Jim & Rose Sime
Frank Grenzow
Eric Udelhofen & Amy Alstad

Maggie Jones
Jerry Goth
Tim & Betsy Pierce
Jess & Rich Bernstein

NEW

Theresa Bears & Mike Rubens
Jess & Rich Bernstein
David Boutwell
Alon Coppens
Douglas Davis & Marilyn Duguid
Dennis Dreher
Randy Eidi
Madeline Friske & Michael Randall
Michelle Godez & Stewart Schilling
Brenda & Richard Hamel
Rebecca & John Hegner
Eva Kuzmanich
Ron Lutz II
Bruce Malm & Renee Graef
John McWilliams

Ashley Moore
Kaitlyn O'Connor
Neal Patten
Kurt Peters & Elizabeth Hopp-Peters
Jerry Picha
Tim & Betsy Pierce
Mark Rauls & Connie Swanson
Grace Vosen
Amanda Weise
Tim & Karen White
Marcel Wuethrich
Gary Zamzow
Dawn Zuengler & Nicole Wagner



Helping Wisconsin Landowners Since 2004

Invasive Species Control
Prescribed Burning
Native Plantings
Ecological Landscaping

(608) 767-3553

www.quercuslandstewardship.com

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.

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

☐ 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 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Greg Jones, President

Carroll Schaal, Treasurer

Bill Sonzogni, Secretary

Steve Gauger

Brooke Lewis

Linda Millunzi-Jones

Sarah Crittenden

Josh Pletzer, Ecologist
ecologist@bluemounds.org

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

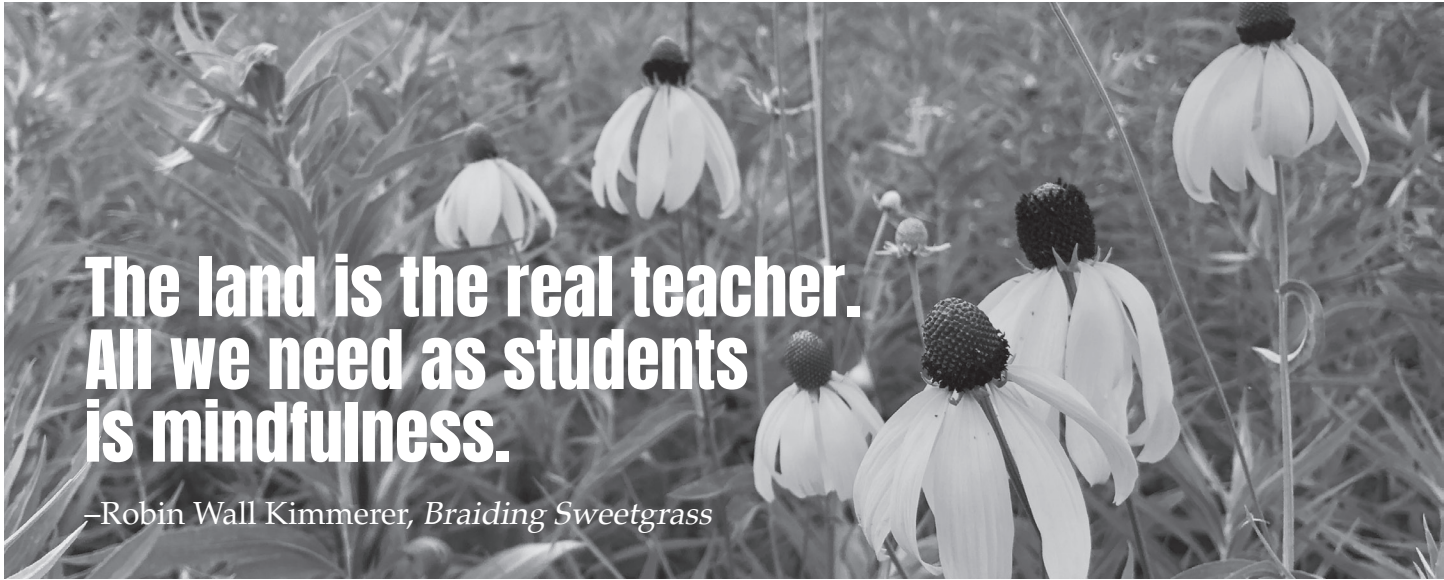


BMAP

BLUE MOUNDS AREA PROJECT

P.O. Box 332

Mt. Horeb, WI 53572



**The land is the real teacher.
All we need as students
is mindfulness.**

—Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*

B. Lewis

BMAPNEWS

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

We welcome your comments, submissions, and advertisements.

Newsletter editor: Jenn Chakravorty (newsletter@bluemound.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.