



FCNA News

Volume 3, Number 1, Winter 2003

Friends of the Campus Natural Areas

Dedicated to the Preservation and Stewardship of our Woodlands, Wetlands, Prairies and Shorelines

Eastern Bill's Woods Project

If you visited Bill's Woods this year, you have noticed big changes. Volunteers have removed non-native species and done extensive planting to replace the mid-level and understory vegetation. This spring the Campus Natural Areas Committee granted the Friends of the Campus Natural Areas (CNA) a five-year permit to help restore the east end of Bill's Woods, uniting two separate projects, the Picnic Point Entrance Project and the Upper Bill's Woods Planting Project. The Friends of the CNA will work with the CNA manager and other groups to restore this expanded area. In order to support this expanded project, we need your support! But first, what has been done . . .

Picnic Point Entrance Project

The Friends of the CNA volunteers have spent two years restoring an oak woodland at the southeast corner of Bill's Woods. Volunteers have been gradually removing buckthorn and honeysuckle and replacing them. These non-native invaders produce hundreds of berries that are scattered by birds, creating thickets that shade out native plants. In Bill's Woods, as in much of the CNA, many of the native woodland wildflowers had been killed by this thick shade. Friends of the CNA volunteers began by removing female, or "berry-bearing," buckthorn. In their place they have planted native ecotype shrubs and small trees, including nannyberry, pagoda dogwood, hazelnut, and red elderberry. In addition, volunteers have planted hundreds of native local ecotype woodland wildflowers.

Unfortunately, two summers of drought have made it difficult to keep the new shrubs alive. Several dedicated Friends of the CNA volunteers have spent many hours carrying water in gallon jugs to the dying shrubs. Without the help of grounds personnel who volunteered their time with the watering truck, most of the shrubs might have died. Even so, in August about 46% of the shrubs were dead. Most of the wildflowers probably survived because many woodland wildflowers die down in the summer and consequently were dormant during the worst of the drought.

Upper Bill's Woods Planting Project

Friends of the CNA efforts to reclaim a severely degraded area have successfully returned native vegetation to this area. As recently as 1999 this area was covered with dumped material and supported only invasive weeds. Now over 100 species of native plants occupy the site. Native butterflies and bees flit around the prairie/savanna plants in summer and fall. In the wooded portion a wide variety of native woodland plants cover the ground. Erosion has decreased dramatically. Non-native, invasive weeds, though still present, are no longer the dominant plants present. See "Hopeless Field" on page 5 for additional project details.

Success Due to Generosity

The success of these restorations is due to the generosity of people with their time, money, and plants. Over \$5000 has been spent on plants for the two projects. Glenda Denniston and Mary Trewartha and their many volunteers have worked tirelessly planting, weeding, and watering. Tom Helgeson and others cleaned up Upper Bill's Woods. People donated plants. Kathie and Tom Brock donated pounds of prairie seed.

Other groups also worked in Bill's Woods. Classes did assessments. Volunteering students fulfilled their service learning requirements. Eventually CNA manager Cathie Bruner plans to build a trail to enhance environmental education that will link the Bill's Woods Project, the geology soil pits, and other interesting features.

We Need Your Help

We need donations of money and local ecotype plants as well as the help of volunteers to expand and maintain this larger restoration. The Friends of the CNA has spent over \$5000 beginning to restore two small sections of Bill's Woods. Now the project has more than tripled in size. The Friends of the CNA needs your donation to keep this project going (see form on page 5). We need to buy additional shrubs and wildflowers and pay an employee to water next summer. Please send a donation to support our restoration work in Bill's Woods!

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Friends of the CNA
is a 501(c)(3) non-profit
organization

We Welcome Submissions to the FCNA Newsletter and Web Site

The FCNA welcomes the submission of articles and announcements for *FCNA News*. We encourage people to share their checklists and other relevant CNA materials on the FCNA Web Site. For information on submitting material, call Roma Lenehan at 238-5406 or send your articles or checklists to rlenehan@chorus.net. To reserve space in the next *FCNA News*, please tell us about your material by January 25, 2004. February 20 is the submission deadline.

Roma Lenehan, Multi-talented FCNA Contributor

Roma Lenehan's knowledge, skill, and generosity are pivotal to the Friends of the Campus Natural Areas (FCNA). She was an energetic worker in these lands well before the founding of the Friends of the CNA, and was instrumental in establishing the organization. She has been a vital member of the Board and a thorough and tireless worker on many fronts -- in our meetings, in the field, and in supporting long-term stewardship in every way and at every opportunity.

Roma's passion for birds, begun in middle school, introduced her to the CNA. Since the CNA had the best birding in the area, she became interested in its management. In 1999 she began to compile data from the birding community for a seasonal CNA checklist. Since few people had summer breeding bird information, she conducted a three year (2000-2002) Breeding Bird Project in the CNA, which confirmed 69 species of nesting birds. Her summary reports are available on the FCNA Web Site. Roma has led numerous birding trips in the CNA, and if you've had the good fortune to go birding with her, you've already discovered her incredible knowledge of CNA breeding and migrating birds.

Roma has been the FCNA's Secretary since our first meetings in 2000. As chair of the Outreach Committee and subsequently the Communications Committee, she edits, organizes, and writes articles for the FCNA newsletter, serves as Web Master, and helps plan, organize and conduct field trips. Roma's research on the history of the CNA enriches our newsletter and Web Site.

She volunteers her labors whenever and wherever they are most needed in the CNA. Every spring you'll find her compulsively pulling garlic mustard in the CNA and other places she finds it.

Thank you, Roma, for your enormous contributions to the FCNA, to the welfare of the Campus Natural Areas and, thus, to the thousands of people who benefit from the CNA. It is a better place for your efforts.

Jane R. Camerini, Richard McCoy

Friends of the CNA Membership Drive

The Friends of the Campus Natural Areas (CNA) is launching a membership drive to celebrate its third anniversary. In its first two years, the organization has made great strides. In order to continue to expand its efforts, the Friends of the CNA wants to add 200 members during the 2003-2004 academic year.

Increasing Friends of the CNA membership will:

- Make more people aware of the Campus Natural Areas. Only when people are aware of the importance of these special places can we protect them.
- Raise additional money so that the Friends of the CNA can educate people about the CNA and help restore the CNA.
- Increase the number and involvement of Friends of the CNA volunteers. In addition to expanding the Bill's Woods project, several other large CNA projects, including the Lakeshore Path and the Anglers' Cove restoration, will begin next year. An effort will also be made to remove some non-native weeds by hand rather than poisoning them. These projects will require additional volunteers.

Please help the Friends of the CNA increase its membership:

- Tell your friends about the Friends of the CNA.
- Send the names of people who might be interested in joining the Friends of the CNA to rlenehan@chorus.net or P.O. Box 55056/Madison, WI 53705.
- Invite someone from the Friends of the CNA to speak to your group.
- If you joined FCNA in the fall, now is the time to renew your membership.

Saving the Woods

by Jean Meanwell and Harriet Riley

Twenty years ago, if you had picked up a *Wisconsin State Journal*, you would have been asked to contribute to a "Save the Woods" campaign for the preservation of the Lower Eagle Heights Woods.

What was so special about this property?

Lower Eagle Heights Woods was a vital part of the woodland corridor for birds and mammals between the (Upper) Eagle Heights Woods and Lake Mendota. Furthermore, it was a connection to the wooded University of Wisconsin (UW) shoreline that stretches all the way to Picnic Point. This property, located near the Village of Shorewood Hills, was one of the last pieces of undisturbed woodland on Lake Mendota that remained in private hands and thus available for development.

The property was considered by many to be an "environmental jewel." In two visits one spring in the early 1980's, naturalist Jim Zimmerman counted 84 species of plants including hepatica, showy orchis, and moonseed vine, as well as morel mushrooms. Wildlife ecologist Joe Hickey identified 29 species of breeding birds in this small area. Wood ducks, woodpeckers, swallows, and owls were common residents.

A Brief History

Ironically, from 1911 to 1939, the UW owned this land, and, as a result of the "Save the Woods" campaign, would be getting it back. The UW had purchased this land with Eagle Heights Woods from George Raymer.

In 1924, the University Women's Athletic Association built a small cabin here. In the 1930's, the Memorial Union took over the management of the cabin and called it Black Hawk Lodge. It was a destination and rest area for hikers, cyclists, skiers, and paddlers.

The UW ownership ended in 1939 when it purchased Picnic Point from Edward J. Young. Mr. Young demanded a land transfer in addition to cash, and the Upper and Lower Eagle Heights Woods became the property of Mr. Young. In 1959, Floyd Voight bought the Lower Eagle Heights Woods from Mrs. Young and built what is now called the Cove Condominiums on the western edge. He later sold the remainder of this property to Gerald Welch who was the owner and potential developer of the property when the "Save the Woods" coalition was formed.

Initially "saving the woods" seemed to be an almost impossible job. There was opposition by the County Executive, some members of the University Planning Department, and many others. As an example, one

County Supervisor said, "As a taxpayer I can't see spending half a million dollars for three acres that aren't even going to be developed - that are going to sit there just for the woodpeckers."

A response by a Middleton Supervisor was more indicative of the feelings of the community when he replied, "I have a number of friends who are woodpeckers and owls."

The Community Responds

A series of articles in the local newspapers raised awareness of the environmental significance of the woods. The State Journal's "Save the Woods" campaign netted over \$30,000 in private donations. In addition, the UW contributed \$100,000, the City of Madison \$80,000, Dane County \$40,000, and remaining funds were provided by a federal matching grant. The lands were finally purchased for preservation in 1984 and turned over to the UW. A Conservation Easement was placed on them by the newly formed Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation, now the Natural Heritage Land Trust, which was established to "Save the Woods." That same year, the woods were named after County Supervisor and former Middleton Mayor, Wally Bauman, who worked so hard to bring this project to fruition.

Wally Bauman Woods Today

The 29 species of birds that Joe Hickey identified are still in residence and most of the plants that Jim Zimmerman counted are still present. However, as often happens when land is left unmanaged, the invasive species have multiplied. Tom Helgeson, under the direction of CNA Manager Cathie Bruner, is working to correct that problem by removing or girdling the larger buckthorns and gradually removing the honeysuckle.

The preservation of the Wally Bauman Woods is a good example of what a concerned group of citizens can do to save ecologically significant sites.



Hepatica blooms in Wally Bauman Woods

Around the CNA

GIS in the CNA

The Friends of the CNA are donating \$2000 to help set up a Geographic Information System (GIS) inventory for the CNA. GIS combines many different types of data into a single record system organized by location. This method enhances data compilation, sharing, and comparison. Under Gary Brown's supervision in UW Facilities Planning & Management, recent landscape architecture graduate Laura Spencer mapped all existing trails and the CNA boundaries. She inventoried all previously gathered GIS data, including vegetation mapping. Combining CNA data in a single system will improve planning and provide a means of measuring changes over time.

Biocore Prairie Update: Why Soybeans?

UW-Madison Biocore students and staff have been working since 1997 to turn the old field between Picnic Point and Frautschi Point into tallgrass prairie. (See article in the Fall 2001 FCNA newsletter posted at www.uwalumni.com/fcna.) Establishing a prairie on this site has turned out to be a bigger challenge than anyone anticipated, mainly because of the large bank of weed seeds in the soil. Even rototilling every 3 weeks for two growing seasons prior to planting was not effective in combating the weeds. The most successful restoration area is on the south side. This area had been covered by a large dirt pile (subsequently removed) and therefore had not accumulated weed seeds for decades.

The staff is currently expanding the prairie by 3 acres and trying a strategy that has been successful in other very weedy areas: growing Roundup-ready soybeans in the field for two to three years before planting prairie species. Hopefully, two to three years of the combination of herbicide and dense growth of soybeans will greatly reduce the weeds. (This same strategy is being used in the adjacent area to the south that is not managed by Biocore.) A 20 foot wide herbicide-free mowed buffer zone is maintained between the field and the organic Eagle Heights Gardens.

Announcements

Parking Lot 76 Construction

A new four level parking structure will be built on surface parking lot 76 located on the University Bay side of Neilsen Tennis Stadium. Construction is expected to begin this fall. This parking lot will provide parking for the medical school, replacing parking places lost to the expansion of the hospital complex.

Announcements (continued)

Gypsy Moths at Muir Knoll

Thousands of gypsy moths occupied Muir Knoll in the Campus Natural Areas in July. At high levels these non-native moths can defoliate a forest. This spring 200 egg masses on three Muir Knoll trees were sprayed with a non-toxic soybean based pesticide. Apparently many other egg masses, which can contain 500-1000 eggs, were not detected. Campus staff captured 10,000 caterpillars in burlap traps on affected trees. While this decreased the intensity of infestation, many thousands of caterpillars survived to pupate and lay eggs. In a single oak tree 122 egg masses were found this spring. This fall the same tree is estimated to have over 2000 egg masses clinging to its lower branches.

Gypsy moth caterpillars eat most tree leaves, although they prefer oak leaves, and grow rapidly in May and June. They do not make extensive webs like tent caterpillars or webworms. After the caterpillars pupate, the flightless female attracts flying males with a scent in July or August. By fall female moths have laid their eggs, which will not hatch until early spring.

Gypsy moths can move rapidly across the country when their egg masses hitch a ride on vehicles, outdoor furniture, or wood. By checking for and eliminating any egg masses you find, you can help protect your trees. In addition, after hatching, the caterpillars climb to the top of the trees and, attached to a piece of silk, drift across the landscape, sometimes for miles.

The spraying of *B.t.* (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), a bacteria that kills caterpillars but not other animals, by low-flying planes in May is designed to limit the damage and slow the spread of gypsy moths by killing about 85% of the caterpillars. Although the defoliation caused by gypsy moths usually does not kill trees, it leaves the trees more vulnerable to other stresses and diseases. Repeated defoliation can kill trees.

Like other non-native species, gypsy moths will continue to reside in Wisconsin, but you can help limit outbreaks. See the Department of Natural Resources web site, www.dnr.state.wi.us, for more information.

University Bay Drive Construction

University Bay Drive was raised 18 inches between the 1918 Marsh and the University Bay Marsh in order to prevent future flooding. The Lakeshore Path will also be raised when it is rebuilt next year.

Volunteers Needed to Maintain Tools

In order to remove invasive species and continue our restoration work, tools have to be kept in good condition. If you are interested in sharpening and maintaining tools, call or email Glenda Denniston (231-1530 or cdennist@facstaff.wisc.edu).

Hopeless Field: A Phoenix Arises

by Glenda Denniston

Ground Zero

A plot of bare compacted earth, almost devoid of topsoil, with a big erosion gully running down the center, was what remained after large piles of compost, cement and gravel had been removed. The final rough regrading was done in July of 2001, and weeds immediately invaded the disturbed soil. I named the place "Hopeless Field" (see photos at www.uwalumni.com/fcna/volunteer/billswoods).

Restoration began immediately. In late July I planted a small number of prairie and savanna forbs in a portion of the weedy field. A fall work party made up of students, the CNA Manager, and volunteers from the newly formed Friends of the Campus Natural Areas seeded the plot with prairie/savanna seed generously provided by Kathie and Tom Brock. We planted groups of acorns in several locations and protected them with chicken wire.

Signs of Hope in 2002

Seedlings of prairie and savanna plants began to emerge in 2002, but weeds were prolific. Repeatedly, I dug or pulled weeds and mimicked a "mowing" by hand-cutting the area with a weed whip, carefully avoiding recognizable prairie or savanna plants. Additional local ecotype plants were planted throughout the season and more seeds were added. A few native plants even flowered the first season.

2003: A Phoenix Arises

This year, masses of black-eyed and brown-eyed Susan, bergamot, great blue Lobelia, three species of hyssop, rosinweed, and many different species of goldenrod and aster flowered, along with hundreds of bottlebrush and other savanna grasses. Three species of blazing star, pale purple coneflower, and other rarer plants bloomed in smaller numbers. Golden Alexander, cup plant, cardinal flower, fringed loosestrife, and obedient plant replaced the garlic mustard, stinging nettle, beggarstick, and other weeds that had filled the erosion gully.

Amazingly, 85 of the 133 introduced native species flowered this season, many in large numbers. Others, like compass plant, prairie dock, and glade mallow are present but have not yet flowered. As each species has flowered, I have marked and recorded the number of flowering stems, sometimes in the hundreds and even thousands, so that there is a clear record of vegetation change.



Plant diversity in the prairie/savanna restoration, August 2003

An indigo bunting successfully nested in one of the brown-eyed Susans. I watched three fledglings leave the nest under the watchful eyes of their parents. A goldfinch was seen drinking water held in the leaves of a cup plant and a ruby-throated hummingbird was attracted by the ardinial flowers.

Insect diversity has increased noticeably. Meadow and great-spangled fritillaries, monarchs, tiger swallowtails, painted ladies and many other butterflies can now be found in this area, as can diverse species of bees, hoppers and beetles. Upper Bill's Woods is coming to life again.

Yes, I want to help restore Bill's Woods !

Name _____ \$25

Address _____ \$50

City, State _____ Zip Code _____ \$100

I understand my gift is an additional donation, not a membership renewal. \$250

Please send me information about how to volunteer Other

Please write your check to the Friends of the CNA

Mail this form with your check to: FCNA P.O. Box 55056 Madison, WI 53705

The Friends of the CNA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

Sandhill Cranes Nest in University Bay

In 2003 Sandhill Cranes produced young in University Bay for the first time in more than 100 years. The previous two years a Crane pair defended a territory in the Bay, but abandoned their territory in early May. These Cranes may have been too young to nest or they may have lost their nest. Frequently young Crane pairs attempt to nest, but are unsuccessful.

This year the Sandhill Cranes regularly visited the Class of 1918 Marsh. While only a few people were lucky enough to see the Cranes dance in the 1918 Marsh, many people saw them feeding with the Canada Geese. The Cranes also frequented the Picnic Point parking lot, surprising some early morning visitors.

The single Sandhill Crane colt followed its parents daily to the soybeans fields near Biocore Prairie to feed (see the Biocore Prairie Update, page 4). Color photographs of the Cranes are available on the Friends of the CNA Web Site, www.uwalumni.com/fcna.

Sandhill Cranes were once common in Wisconsin, but declined dramatically due to hunting and the draining of wetlands. By the 1930s only a few pairs of Cranes remained. In *Marshland Elegy*, Aldo Leopold reflected on the loss of marsh, wilderness, and Sandhill Cranes.

Due to wetland preservation and restoration, the Crane population has recovered. In 1999 over 11,000 Cranes were counted in Wisconsin. For more information on Sandhill Cranes, see the International Crane Foundation Web Site, www.savingcranes.org.



Sandhill Crane with colt feeding near Gardens

FCNA

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