

# The BogHunter

the newsletter of the Friends of the Cedarburg Bog  
Volume 11, Number 3 Summer 2016

## **NATURAL RESOURCE BOARD APPROVES BOG MASTER PLAN, INCLUDING BOARDWALK**

After nearly four years in the making, the DNR's master plan for the Cedarburg Bog was approved by the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board in late May. This plan addresses the state's management goals for the Bog and includes plans to build a boardwalk from Cedar Sauk Road to Mud Lake. This boardwalk and associated boat storage for waterfowl hunters had been a sticking point when the NRB tabled the plan last summer.

Without a clear public consensus on the boardwalk proposal in the original plan, the NRB sent the entire plan back to the DNR for resolution last August. The DNR then convened a public stakeholder group consisting of duck hunters, bird watchers, kayakers, and other users of Mud Lake, including the Friends of the Cedarburg Bog and the UWM Field Station. This stakeholder group met over the winter and developed shared recommendations for the design of the boardwalk and guidelines surrounding boat storage.

"Many people worked together to get this approved," said Bruce Ross, President of the Friends of the Cedarburg Bog. "They collaboratively addressed the thorny issues and reached a consensus proposal" for the DNR. Among those issues was the design of the boardwalk and a 15-boat storage area for duck hunters, which is now included in the revised plan.

In approving the plan, the NRB also commented on the group's collaborative spirit, adding it was "a model of how concerned citizens, even those with opposing opinions, can come together to reach consensus."

The plan calls for a rustic boardwalk to be constructed between Cedar Sauk Road and Mud Lake, making it

safer and protecting the vegetation along the current path. It will also allow easier and safer access for a variety of users from spring through the fall seasons and allow boat storage during the waterfowl season.

The Friends have committed to building the boardwalk, with the anticipated project start sometime this fall, pending additional discussions with DNR and lining up any necessary approvals. A campaign to raise money for the project is already underway, and the FOCB welcomes contributions. Checks can be made out to Friends of the Cedarburg Bog, Inc. or contact [bogfriends@gmail.com](mailto:bogfriends@gmail.com) for more information.

*Peg Edquist, FOCB Board*



*Southern Flying Squirrel*

## **WE'VE GOT FLYING SQUIRRELS!**

If you're one of the visitors to the Field Station who thought you saw a flying squirrel gliding through the forest—you were probably correct. Gary Casper, an Associate Scientist at the UWM Field Station, conducts mammal surveys in Milwaukee County. He detected Southern Flying Squirrels in those surveys, so he was surprised to find they weren't on the mammal list at the Field Station. Casper and Gretchen Meyer, Field Station Manager and Senior Scientist, decided to find ways to detect flying squirrels in the Cedarburg Beech Woods State Natural Area. I worked on the study as part of an undergraduate research project. They attached ten nest boxes to trees in August of 2015.

The boxes were about twelve feet off the ground, with a door that could be opened to check inside the box for flying squirrels, nesting materials, droppings, or leftover food.

In October of 2015, a motion-activated camera and feeding tray were installed in the Beech Woods. The tray was stocked with peanuts and sunflower seeds multiple times a week around dusk. The camera took pictures of any nightly visitors to the tray. The Friends funded a camera for the project.

The first picture of a Southern Flying Squirrel was taken on November 2, 2015, only 18 days after the camera had been installed. No sign of flying squirrels was found in the nest boxes. We found that the squirrels frequented the feeding tray between 6 PM – 9 PM and 11 PM – 4 AM. Squirrels consumed four times more sunflower seeds than peanuts, and they most often ate around the edges of the tray.



*Flying Squirrel Nest Box Work*

Despite their name, Southern Flying Squirrels occur throughout much of the eastern United States (with some disjunct populations in Central America), while Northern Flying squirrels are found across Canada and in the northern Rockies. They are omnivores that consume seeds, nuts, and insects. These squirrels are nocturnal and live about 5 years in the wild. They don't actually fly; they have membranes spanning the space between their front and back legs that allow for gliding. This is

especially helpful for predator evasion, allowing them to quickly escape a potentially fatal encounter with a snake or owl. Southern Flying Squirrels mate twice a year, and the young are dependent on the mother for the first few months of life.

This is an important find for the Field Station because Southern Flying Squirrels only reside in high quality forests where there are abundant natural cavities. Confirming the presence of this species in the area of the Cedarburg Bog indicates that the environment here is in excellent condition, but the Friends of the Cedarburg Bog knew that already!

*Amanda Holly Keyes, UWM Student*

### **ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS TO THE BOG**

The Stewardship committee of the FOCB has released a list of the most important threats to the Cedarburg Bog in the coming years.

The committee was asked to create a list as part of a strategic action plan that the Friends organization has developed for the past year. It is hoped that it will provide an effective framework to understand where resources are best spent going forward.

"It's really important that the Friends of the Cedarburg Bog have a plan to guide the actions they can take to best help with management of the Bog into the future," said Jim Reinartz, director of the UW - Milwaukee Field Station that is located at the Bog. "This is an ongoing effort and only begins to define and prioritize these threats. A big question will also be which ones we have any ability to impact."

Among the list are:

**Climate Change.** Since at least 10% of the native plant species are at or near the southern limit of their range, a shift in the climate could create an unsuitable habitat for some species. Climate change could also cause a shift in the plant community, and increase the threat of invasive plants.

**Groundwater disruptions.** In order to maintain the Bog's hydrology, disruptions in areas where groundwater is recharged have the potential to change the quality and quantity of water reaching the Bog.

**Urban Sprawl.** Additional housing development near the Bog could increase runoff from impervious surfaces and bring pollution from chemicals and poorly designed septic systems, compromising the quality of the water in the Bog. This kind of development could also threaten the environmental corridors and wildlife habitats as they relate to nearby habitats, notably the Riveredge area and the Milwaukee River corridor to the north.

**Invasive Plants.** Shifts in the plant community bring unwanted species to the Bog, which currently include glossy Buckthorn, non-native cattail, non-native Phragmites, and purple loosestrife. Over time it is a virtual certainty that other wetland invasives will become new threats to the Bog's plant communities.

**Runoff Pollutants.** Road salt, agricultural pesticides and other pollutants from the Bog's watershed could reduce the ability of the Bog to act as a pollutant filter and impact the plant communities. Luckily, the Bog has a very small surface water drainage basin relative to the size of the wetland.



*Emerald Ash Borer*

**Emerald Ash Borer.** Most of the mature ash in the Bog have been eliminated by EAB. While this is causing some change to the plant communities, it is impossible to predict the full impact of that loss. Other new plant pests are likely to become threats in the future.

**Exotic Bird introductions.** Although this threat is currently minimal, there is potential for new introductions to disrupt the native bird communities.

If you want more information, or if you would like to contribute to the FOCB effort to discuss threats to the Bog, please contact Jim Reinartz at jimr@uwm.edu.

*Peg Edquist, FOCB Board*

### **OVENBIRD**

Ovenbirds provide background music for summer walks at the north end of the Cedarburg Bog, off of Highway 33. Their calls, often described as Tea-*CHER'* - Tea-*CHER'* - Tea-*CHER'* - Tea-*CHER'* - are loud and sharp, but you'll rarely see the singer.

Ovenbirds (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) are warblers. Originally grouped with Northern Waterthrush (another Bog voice) and Louisiana Waterthrush, they are now alone in their genus. Unlike most of their relatives, Ovenbirds spend much of their time on - and even nest on - the ground. Disruptive coloration camouflages them well for life on the leaf litter - they are olive brown above, their light undersides are streaked with black spots, and they sport a black-bordered orange stripe on their head (*aurocapilla* means "golden-haired").

While many wood warblers are far northern breeders, Ovenbirds nest in woodlands and forests throughout much of eastern North America (except the Gulf States), and into Canada as far as British Columbia.

The species gets its name from its curious, domed nest. According to Cornell University's "All About Birds" website, the female "weaves the cup, side entrance, and roof of her domed nest from the inside as a single, integrated piece. Then she drops leaves and twigs on top to hide it." She lines the cup with hair. The finished product may be nine inches across and five inches high on the outside! During her work clearing buckthorn in the summer of 2015, sharp-eyed Friends employee Jamie Beaupré found an Ovenbird's nest.



*Ovenbird Nest with Eggs*

When she is finished, the Ovenbird lays three to six speckled eggs. Males don't help incubate, but they do help find food for the young. The flightless nestlings hop out of the nest after only about eight days (young Robins stay in the nest for at

least two weeks) and are able to fly just a few days after that. The newly emerged brood is split by the parents, which continue to care for them for another two to three weeks - half stay on territory with the male, the rest hop away with the female.

Though they may feed in bushes or trees, Ovenbirds find most of their food - insects and other invertebrates - as they bob and strut along on the ground. Ovenbird eggs, young, and adults are preyed upon by the usual suspects - snakes, owls, Blue Jays, squirrels, raccoons, skunks, and weasels. Eastern chipmunks, known to feed on a variety of amphibians on the forest floor, also feed on Ovenbirds, often burrowing into the nest to do so.



Ovenbird Nesting

Two territorial males may sing in a "call-and-response" format, stringing their songs together, perched in trees so their voices will carry. Rival males may chase and sing, but they rarely fight. Males also have an astonishing evening flight song (Thoreau commented on the song but apparently never identified the singer). Hear it at <http://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/ovenbird>.

Ovenbirds appreciate large, shady woodland tracts, and forest fragmentation that results in widely separated "tree islands" can be harmful to their populations. A side effect of smaller woodlots is that the distance between the woodland's edge and its center is shorter. In fragmented woodlands, a nest is more easily found by Brown-headed Cowbirds, nest parasites that will lay their eggs in the Ovenbird's nest so that she will raise her young, often to the detriment of her own.

### PLANT PROFILE - SPECKLED ALDER

It's commonly said that the Cedarburg Bog "feels like Up North," a feeling that is due to the "Cooler

near the Lake" influence of Lake Michigan and to the Bog's position relative to the "Tension Zone," a line that roughly marks the division of plants with northern and southern affinities and that runs parallel to the lake in southeastern Wisconsin. About 10% of the Bog's plants are at or near their southernmost boundaries in the state here in the Bog.

Anyone who has canoed the small streams in northern Wisconsin is familiar with speckled alder, a "north-loving" shrub that makes impenetrable thickets along the shorelines - shorelines that are kept in place by the alders' roots. It grows in disturbed habitats, forest edges, moist woodlands, shallow wetlands (where it can form hummocks), and along shorelines. Alder grows in a wide range of soil and moisture conditions (it enriches the soil in its immediate vicinity by fixing nitrogen with nodules in its roots, which benefits nearby trees), but it doesn't like dense shade. In the Bog, speckled alder, sometimes called gray or swamp alder, is found side-by-side with poison sumac and a variety of willows and dogwoods.

It's in the birch family Betulaceae, and depending on the age of your tree book, it might be called *Alnus rugosa* (older books), *Alnus incana*, or *Alnus incana rugosa*. Speckled alder gets its name from pale pores called lenticels that dot its smooth, thin, gray-to-reddish-brown bark. Alder often produces multiple trunks, which typically grow 10 to 15 feet in height but can reach 25 feet. It reproduces by seeds, but it also spreads vegetatively, by sending up shoots from the root, and by "layering," developing roots and new trunks where a branch comes in contact with the ground.



Speckled Alder Catkins

Speckled alder blooms early - often by the end of March - producing tassel-like male catkins and small female cones on the same shrub. A

few songbirds eat the buds, catkins, and seeds, and the twigs are eaten by deer, but only as "starvation food." Alder thickets are popular nesting and hiding places for wildlife. A conspicuous insect associate of speckled alder is the woolly alder aphid - a small, white, feathery insect that lives on red maple in the early part of the summer and then forms colonies on alder twigs and trunks.

The wood is not used commercially, but parts of the plant have been used as teas and compresses to treat sprains, bruises, eye problems, toothache, and difficulty in childbirth, and it's a dye plant.

Please join us for the  
**Annual Fall Potluck**  
(and mini-Annual Meeting)  
at the UWM Field Station

October 2, 2016  
3 PM hike  
5:30 PM eats  
6:30 campfire (and meeting)

We supply brats, burgers, and beverages. Join us for the walk, the potluck or both.

If your last name starts with A to M, please bring a side dish.

If your last name starts with N to Z, please bring a dessert.

*Please, No Pets.*

Please RSVP at [bogfriends.org](http://bogfriends.org)  
(Click on Events)

Questions?  
Call 262-675-6844, or email  
[fieldstn@uwm.edu](mailto:fieldstn@uwm.edu)

The Friends of the Cedarburg Bog supports stewardship, understanding, and appreciation of the Bog through land management, preservation, research, and education.



UWM Field Station  
3095 Blue Goose Road  
Saukville, WI 53080

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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#### FRIENDS EVENTS

Unless otherwise noted, walks meet at the UWM Field Station on Blue Goose Rd. Space is limited, so please register. To register, visit [bogfriends.org](http://bogfriends.org) (click on Events). Walks are free and open to the public; a \$5 donation is appreciated. Questions? Contact (262) 675-6844 or [fieldstn@uwm.edu](mailto:fieldstn@uwm.edu). Please, No Pets.

**Summer in the Bog**  
July 10, 9 AM to Noon

**Quarterly Friends Board Meeting**  
July 14, 7 to 9 PM

**Dragonflies and Butterflies for Beginners**  
August 7, 10 AM to Noon

**Ethnobotany with Lee Olsen**  
August 20, 9 AM to Noon

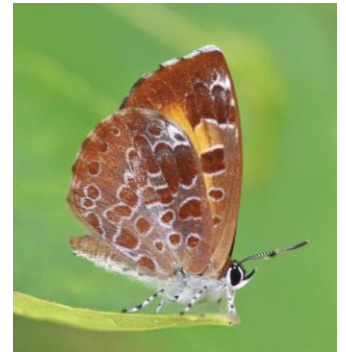
**Introduction to the Ferns**  
September 4, 10 AM to 12:30 PM  
Meet at the north end of the Bog at the Highway 33 parking lot. No bathroom available.

**Fall Potluck and Annual Mini-meeting**  
October 2, 3 to 7 PM  
See information elsewhere in this newsletter.

**A Walk in the Beech Woods**  
October 16, 12:30 to 3 PM

**Fall Owl Prowl**  
November 4, 7 to 8:30 PM

**How do Trees Grow?**  
November 13, 12:30 to 3:30 PM



Harvester butterfly

#### CALENDAR

Check the Treasures of Oz website [treasuresofoz.org](http://treasuresofoz.org) for a listing of events held by our partner organizations.

#### Noel J. Cutright Bird Club

Free and open to the public held at RNC on the 1st Tuesday at 7 PM.

#### Science for Everyone

Programs on Natural History held at RNC on the 3rd Tuesday and at LLC on the 4th Tuesday 7 to 8:15 PM. Programs will resume in September. Check the RNC and LLC websites for topics and driving directions. Free, \$5 donation appreciated.

#### Annual Dragonfly Count

July 23, 10 AM to 3 PM RNC  
Join us for all or part of the day to record the kinds and numbers of dragonflies and damselflies at Riveredge. Bring a lunch.

#### Roger Kuhns' Monologue – Adventure in Sustainability.

August 5, 7 to 8:30 PM RNC Solutions to climate change are found in the realms of environment, economy and community. \$5 donation appreciated. Pre-registration requested at 800-287-8098.

#### Bat Mist-netting

August 16 7 PM MNP  
Learn how biologists study bats in the wild using a mist-net and acoustic monitoring equipment with a conservation biologist for the Wisconsin DNR. To RSVP, contact Jason at 262-242-8055 or [jnickels@mequonnaturepreserve.org](mailto:jnickels@mequonnaturepreserve.org).

#### Annual Fly-In Celebration

August 21, 3:30 to 10 PM FBMP  
Join Ozaukee Washington Land Trust for an evening of eating, drinking and celebrating our brotherhood of land. Hikes, silent auction, supper and music. Registration required.

#### Knee Deep in Prairies!

August 26, 8 AM to 4 PM RNC  
Immerse yourself in all things prairie. Explore the prairie, go on a tour, attend workshops. This all-day event includes lunch. Registration required.

Grass Pink Orchid



#### Sturgeon Fest

October 1, 11 AM to 3 PM  
Join us to celebrate the release of the latest crop of young Lake sturgeon. For more information or to register to release a fish, go to the RNC website or call 800-287-8098.  
At Lakeshore State Park, Milwaukee

**RNC** – Riveredge Nature Center  
4458 County Hwy Y, Saukville  
[riveredgenaturecenter.org](http://riveredgenaturecenter.org)  
(262) 375-2715 (800) 287-8098

**MNP** – Mequon Nature Preserve  
8200 W County Line Rd, Mequon  
[mequonnaturepreserve.org](http://mequonnaturepreserve.org)  
(262) 242-8055

**FBMP** – Forest Beach Migratory Preserve  
4970 Country Club Road, Belgium  
[owl.t.org](http://owl.t.org)  
(262) 338-1794

**LLC** – Lac La Poudre Conservancy  
300 Schmidt Rd, West Bend  
[lclawrann.org](http://lclawrann.org)  
(262) 335-5080