

THE BOG HAUNTER

the newsletter of the Friends of the Cedarburg Bog

Volume 2, Number 4

Fall, 2007

Black Hawks at the Bog

The logistics of rebuilding the final stretch of boardwalk on the University's Bog trail have been daunting. Materials needed to be muscled a half mile over uneven trail and two lengths of boardwalk to the site where the work would "begin."

On September 4th, 21 Army National Guard personnel and two helicopters from the 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Unit from Madison, joined by four members of West Bend Guard Unit's 832nd Medical Company, gave an invaluable assist to the Friends and the University.



Barrels and pieces of boardwalk were strapped into large, metal "baskets" and air-lifted to a drop point created on the East Island. The baskets, the size of a Volkswagen, were lowered from 120 feet in the air, through the treetops, into a clearing about 30" square. Piece of cake! Guardsmen unloaded the baskets and civilian volunteers stacked the load.

Money from the Don Bezella Memorial Fund was used to purchase the building materials, and the services of the National Guard were donated because of the event's value as a training exercise.

The final stretch will, like the original boardwalk, lie close to the Bog's mat. Construction is expected to be completed in the fall of 2007. Many thanks to everyone who turned out on September 4th. Anyone who wants to help with the "home stretch" contact the Field Station at 262-675-6844 or fieldstn@uwm.edu.

Late Bloomers

Spring ephemerals compact their blooming and seed production into the period before the forest canopy matures. In June and July, at the peak of the growing season's bell curve, with the fullness of summer ahead of them, the majority of flowering plants compete for a wide range of insect and even avian pollinators, with plenty of time to bloom and to produce and disburse their seed.

But some wildflowers bloom at the close of the growing season, flirting with unpredictable first frosts that could threaten their reproductive success. What is the botany of procrastination - do late bloomers have adaptations that allow them to thrive at the end of the season?

Late bloomers tend to be tall, they often top the surrounding vegetation. Bur marigolds, goldenrods and sunflowers, as well as the asters that decorate the fall landscape, are members of the Aster or Composite family and because they can be difficult to identify, they are often called "confusing Fall Composites. Fringed and closed gentians, great lobelia, white turtlehead, and nodding lady's-tresses round out the early fall display.



Several factors contribute to a plant's readiness to bloom. Day length and weather - accumulated heat - signal plants to grow and bloom. Among plants that flower in spring and early summer, southern plants bloom earlier than their

northern counterparts, and eastern plants are a bit slower than western plants. Yet, fall-blooming flowers bloom earlier in the north, probably because day length decreases faster in the north after the summer solstice.

Habitat also influences blooming dates. In general, there are more late bloomers on open prairies than in forests. Forest wildflowers tend to come from buds produced in the current growing season. Bog species, which often bloom when air and soil temperatures are decidedly cool, flower from buds set during the preceding season.

Pollinators are still plentiful in autumn. Populations of colonial insects have peaked, and, as predators or pollinators, ants, bees and wasps join moths, flies and beetles on this final crop of wildflowers.

What allows fall plants to sneak in under the wire? Plants must achieve a specific level of growth before they can initiate flower buds. But, unlike garden plants, our native flora is indifferent to frost. Just as late spring frosts have only a temporary effect on spring-blooming flowers, asters and goldenrods continue to photosynthesize, bloom and produce seed long after the first frost. It turns out that *we* are the only ones who are watching the calendar.

Membership renewal

In order to simplify record-keeping, the Friends Board has decided that annual memberships will be based on the calendar year rather than the anniversary of members' actual date of sign-up. Renewal reminders will be mailed after the September Annual Meeting. New memberships will be accepted throughout the year, and there will be some "wiggle room" allowed for people who renewed or joined after June, 2006 and for new members who join in mid-year.

Bird Migration

In late August as the days become shorter we all think of the end of summer. But take heart; there will be amazing things happening outdoors for months. Billions of birds are migrating south. These birds don't leave to avoid our cold northern winters but because of a decrease in their food supply. Birds migrate in fall to find food (insect-eating birds must leave Wisconsin before insects disappear). In spring, they return here to breed where insects are plentiful. Many (62%-80%) of the birds that breed in North America migrate.

About 50% of birds that breed in North America are Neotropical migrants, birds that spend our winters south of the Tropic of Cancer in southern Mexico, Central and South America and the Lesser and Greater Antilles in the Caribbean Sea. Some fly more than 1,500 miles to reach these non-breeding areas. This is an amazing feat, as many land birds weigh less than 2/3 ounce, about the weight of eight pennies! Although we view these as "our" birds, they may spend up to six months each year on their tropical non-breeding grounds.



Most Neotropical migrants do not eat seeds, so they don't visit backyard bird feeders. They mainly eat insects, although some supplement their diet with fruits. Familiar Neotropical migrants include Baltimore orioles, warblers such as Magnolia warblers and Ovenbirds, and thrushes such as Wood and Swainson's thrushes. The Rose-breasted grosbeak is one Neotropical migrant that can be observed at bird feeders.

Short-distance (temperate) migrants spend the non-breeding season in

areas north of the Tropic of Cancer, in the southern U.S. and northern Mexico. They migrate only as far as they need to find food. Short distance migrants eat insects, but most also eat seeds and/or fruits. They begin to arrive in Wisconsin in March and April, and some familiar ones are American robins and Red-winged blackbirds.

To prepare for migration, birds become *hyperphagic*, that is, they eat more food, which is stored as fat to fuel their long journeys. Although fat normally makes up about 3-5% of the bird's mass (weight), some migrants add up to 30-50% of their body weight in stored fat to help fuel their migration!

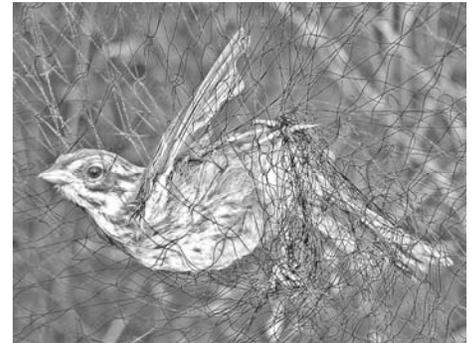
Most songbirds don't fly straight to their non-breeding grounds, but stop a number of times to rest and feed during migration. The places they rest are called stopover sites or staging areas. Birds remain at stopover sites for varying amounts of time, based on the weather and how much fat they have stored. Some birds stop only one day to rest and feed and then continue their migration. Others will remain at stopover areas for weeks.

We learn about bird migration a number of ways. Heavy concentrations of migrating birds can be seen on radar screens. Many bird observatories and bird organizations conduct migration counts and band birds to learn about the numbers and species of birds that migrate each year.

The late Dr. Charles Weise conducted bird banding research for 31 years in the Cedarburg Bog and the forests at the UWM Field Station and learned

that both are important migration stopover sites for birds. From 1965-1996 he banded thousands of migratory birds of more than 90 species.

So, this fall, don't mourn the end of summer – head outdoors and observe the amazing phenomena of bird migration! Enjoy migration in your backyard, at parks, along the lakeshore and in natural areas (like the Cedarburg Bog).



The table below lists the birds banded at the UWM Field Station at a Friends of the Cedarburg Bog bird banding demonstration conducted by Master Bird Banders Al Sherkow and Debbie Hartmann on September 8, 2007. It was not a heavy migration day, but attendees were able to get a close look at the birds captured and learn what is involved in bird banding.

For more information, read *A Gathering of Angels*, by K.P. Able, Comstock Books, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, and *Long-term population trends in songbirds: Evidence from a general netting program* by C.M. Weise, 1988. UWM Field Station Bull. 21(1), 1-9.

By Vicki Piaskowski, Board Member

Bird Species	Number Banded	Migration Status
Swainson's Thrush (<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>)	4	Neotropical migrant
Tennessee Warbler (<i>Vermivora peregrina</i>)	1	Neotropical migrant
American Redstart (<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>)	1	Short-distance/Neotropical migrant
Common Yellowthroat (<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>)	3	Short-distance/Neotropical migrant
American Goldfinch (<i>Carduelis tristis</i>)	1	Year-round resident/Short-distance migrant

A Bog by Any Other Name

The Cedarburg Bog is, technically, not a bog but a fen. True bogs get all of their water from precipitation and run-off, and they have no outlet to drain water from the system. Fens get some of their water from streams or springs. A number of underground springs deliver hard, mineral-rich water to the Cedarburg Bog, and there is an outlet stream in the southwest corner of the wetland. Despite the "extra" water and the drain, the word "current" does not apply - water creeps through the Bog at a snail's pace.

Typical Wisconsin bogs are acid; trapped in the closed system, the slow decomposition of organic matter produces acidity. The Cedarburg Bog is, throughout most of its expanse, neutral to slightly alkaline. Acidity in a large rainfall or snow melt can tip the scales slightly to the acid side, but within a few weeks the minerals carried by underground springs buffer the 2200 acre system and it bounces back.

A glance at the plant list adds to the confusion because it contains the leatherleaf, blueberries, orchids, pitcher plants, sphagnum moss, and other plants that characterize acid bogs. These are plants that can survive in harsh growing conditions, acid or alkaline.

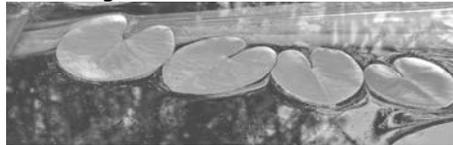
In 1960, the owner of a hunting camp on Mud Lake decided that it would be nice to have deeper water to maneuver his skiff, so he built a dam on the outlet stream. Over the next 18 months or so, the water level rose on Mud Lake and northward through the system. Tamarack that were moving out onto new soil being produced in the shrubs and sedges drowned - they persist as weathered snags almost a half century old.

The dam was discovered. While the paperwork preceding its demolition was being completed, it was mysteriously dynamited and the water receded. Fifty years later, beaver occasionally find the outlet and start to do what beavers do so well.

The result is a series of management questions: Should the beaver be left alone to build their dam and make the Bog a wetter wetland? What

would happen to the plant and animal life of the Bog - which includes rare, threatened and endangered species that are habitat specialists - if the water level rose? Deeper water might eliminate a lot of the invasive glossy buckthorn that grows from the peat, at the expense of the native herbs that call the Bog's mat their home.. Would there be more otter and water lilies and fewer sundews and Hines' Emerald dragonflies?

Because of the uniqueness of the Cedarburg Bog in southeastern Wisconsin, today's management decisions call for the dams to be removed whenever they are built and for the Cedarburg Bog to continue on its present course, with the slow but inevitable changes that will bring.



Bogwear

We must be an official organization - we have a t-shirt! The Friends shirt is jade green with Tom Uttech's original "bog-scape," seen on the mailing panel of your newsletter, silhouetted in white on the chest. Shirts are available for \$15 plus \$1.50 for shipping; make checks payable to "*The Friends of the Cedarburg Bog*" Contact Kate at the Field Station address to purchase that perfect gift.

It's all your fault.

2007 is a testament to what can be accomplished with a little help from our "Friends". It's remarkable when you think that just two years ago, The Friends of the Cedarburg Bog was an idea in the minds of a small group of folks who came together to see if a friends organization was possible.

Now as our second fiscal year comes to a close, there is a very real sense of community. The Town of Saukville has warmly welcomed us and has participated in building pride in the awareness that the "Bog" is a unique gem in the heart of the township and one that contributes a value that no other community can claim.

The friends and family of Don Bezella contributed generously, helping us

fund the boardwalk renovation and creating a legacy in memory of Don's love of the Bog.

The Natural Resource Foundation and Split Rail Foundation awarded us grants that also helped to make the boardwalk a reality. Even the Wisconsin Army National Guard joined in our efforts by answering our plea for assistance and providing 2 Blackhawk Helicopters and about 2 dozen recruits to fly the pre-built sections of the boardwalk out to the second island. The boardwalk is a tremendous accomplishment for a second year of a friends group.

There is still an opportunity for you to be involved by helping to assemble the boardwalk sections. If you would enjoy participating in this accomplishment, please contact the Field Station.

On a separate front, Board member Dave Clutter has been working diligently on a grant program to provide funding for a Volunteer Coordinator/Community Outreach position. We are beginning to receive resumes and will shortly begin interviewing candidates. Congratulations, Dave, on selling our vision to the Natural Resource Foundation and thank you for not taking "no" for an answer. Volunteer work parties have continued to fight the battle against invasive species and to provide the opportunities for volunteers to protect the beauty and biological diversity of the Bog. I have many warm memories of lunch with the crews over a steaming bowl of chili. So many wonderful and caring people.

This winter there may be an opportunity for us to build osprey platforms. We'll keep you informed about that project through the newsletter.

In summary, WOW! What a wonderful year.

Oh, and one more thing ... it's all your fault. Without your help and support, it wouldn't have been possible. We look forward to working with you in the year ahead in building a legacy for our children's, children's children. Thank you. Together we ARE making a difference.

Dan Kline, Board Chairman

Did You Know?

That the late-blooming wildflower called Touch-me-not (*Impatiens capensis*) earned its name because of its exploding seed pods? The plant produces two different types of seeds. Those, resulting from self-fertilization form near the base of the plant, are genetically identical to the parent plant. They fall onto and germinate in the same growing conditions that nurtured the parent plant.



The exploding seeds are a product of cross fertilization and develop from flowers borne at the top of the plant. Coiled filaments propel the seeds away from the parent plant when the seed pod is brushed. These hardier seeds (because their genetic material comes from two parents) may pioneer in a slightly different environment.

Other names for Touch-me-not are jewel weed (the orange flowers are, indeed, jewel-like), wax-leaf and silverleaf (referring to the way water beads on the stem and leaf), and impatiens.

Help Wanted

Join the Stewardship Crew on the second Saturday of each month to control invasive plants and work on other stewardship programs.

More Help Wanted

One of the goals of the Friends' Education Committee is to help develop a self-guiding nature trail on the north edge of the Cedarburg Bog.

Anyone interested in joining the fun can contact Kate at the Field Station address.

"Turtles of the Cedarburg Bog"

The first of a series of special bulletins about the Bog and its inhabitants. Special Bog Bulletins will appear from time to time as inserts.



Dates to Remember:

Riveredge Bird Club

First Tuesday of each month, except December. 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Read the checklist and hear about bird-related topics. Riveredge Nature Center Barn. Admission is free.

Quarterly Board Meeting

Friends of the Cedarburg Bog
October 10, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.
UW-M Field Station
Members welcome.

Luminary Walk

October 13, 7:00 to 9:00 pm
Hike the trails of Lac Lawrann in the dark of a new moon, guided by luminary lights. Lac Lawrann Conservancy, West Bend. 262-335-5085 or kpwbpfrf@ci.west-bend.wi.us. Admission is free.

Riveredge Speaks Out

October 18, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.
"Milwaukee: A Region Built on Water," with John Gurda.

November 20, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.
"Prehistoric Agriculture in Eastern Wisconsin: The Oneota of Lake Koshkonong" with Robert Jeske

Peiper Power Center, 8200 County Line Road, Mequon. (Programs is free; a \$4 donation is suggested)



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