

The BogHunter

the newsletter of the Friends of the Cedarburg Bog
Volume 16, Number 2 SPRING 2021

THE BEZELLA FAMILY AND THE CEDARBURG BOG

A note of appreciation to a family that has been friends of the Cedarburg Bog for 95 years.

The Bezella family owns one of only two privately-owned parcels of land on Mud Lake. The Friends of Cedarburg Bog and the UWM Field Station have benefited from the generosity of the Bezella family for half a century. They have granted access to the lake from their land for research and educational use whenever asked. There have been many programs over the years that would have been impossible or much more difficult without that generous access to the lake. When an entire class from the Field Station once stood on their floating bridge until it sank, the Bezellas let the Station know that it should not happen again. But they did not banish future classes from the property. Now that's generosity!

Don Bezella was a consummate outdoorsman who died way too young in 2006. Don served on the Board of the newly-founded Friends of the Bog.

Memorials from his many friends provided crucial funding for the reconstruction of the Field Station boardwalk. A plaque on the east island recognizes those contributions and Don's love for the Bog.

The 80 acre Bezella parcel (about 55 acres of land and 25 acres of Mud Lake) was originally claimed by Sebastian Darling in 1853 for a \$100 fee. The island in Mud Lake is part of the Bezella property, the south shore of that island corresponding with the southern limit of the 80 acres. Mud Lake and the Bog are in the Bezella family's blood. Their maternal grandparents August and Martha Kellner purchased the land from Martin Fechter, a local farmer, for \$1,315.50 in 1926. August Kellner built the Kellner Greenhouse business, a well-known fixture on North Humboldt Boulevard in Milwaukee's Riverwest neighborhood.

By 1928 August had built a 10' x 15', Tamarack-stilted, hunting shack on the lake. In 1928 the property was leased for 5 years to George Klug for the purpose of raising and trapping muskrats; the lease was never renewed. In 1950, two years before the founding of the Wisconsin

Natural Area program, the current hunting shack was built to replace the first. Lumber for the shack was recycled from the former Kilbourn Junior Trade School, originally a WWII barracks on the southeast corner of Auer and Humboldt Avenues in Riverwest.

The Friends of Cedarburg Bog thank the Bezellas for being friends to the Bog far longer than our organization, and for sharing their access to the lake when it has been so important for our programs.

-James Reinartz



Boreal Chorus Frog (Photo: Kate Redmond)

THE FROGS' CALENDAR

Wisconsin's 19 species of frogs, toads and salamanders are amphibians, and the word's Greek root, "amphibious" meaning "living a double life," perfectly describes their life cycle. Although many species spend their lives on land, their tender eggs must be laid in water, and their young develop there (a few species of southern salamanders lay their eggs in moist, mossy crevices). Frogs that live on land during the summer hibernate on land, and aquatic species overwinter under water.

Some amphibians, like the Blue-spotted salamander, start their journeys to the pond even before the ice disappears. Salamander courtship is silent, but for frogs and toads, courtship is about sound.



Standing: Martin Bezella and August Kellner; boys: Gary and Winfred (Win) Bezella

There's a rough order – a phenology – to their appearance that has to do with the warming of the water. Frogs reappear in roughly the same order every year, but the start date is different.

The first sounds are the “peep” of spring peepers and the “sleigh bells” of chorus frogs. The din is huge, but the noise-makers are barely an inch long. The first peepers are often heard from shallow kettles in the Beech woods rather than from the surrounding Bog wetlands. They are “marathon” breeders, and by late April, standing near the marsh at the Field Station gate is a religious experience.



Leopard Frog (Photo: Kate Redmond)

Their voices are joined by the slow “snore” of leopard frogs and the “quack” of wood frogs. American toads are next, followed by Gray tree frogs; if the spring is warm, their trills begin as the calendar turns to May. They're “sprinters” – they finish their courtship in just a few weeks.

And in early June, the water has warmed enough for the final singers, green and bullfrogs, which require permanent ponds because it takes two years for their tadpoles to complete their transformation.

Frogs sing by forcing air out of their lungs, through their throat, and into a vocal sac, a loose pouch of skin under their chin (leopard frogs have two vocal sacs). Sound is made when the air vibrates the vocal cords as it passes them. Air in the vocal sac can then be “inhaled” again, producing more sound on its way back into the lungs. In the process, the vocal sac, which acts as a resonating chamber, puffs up like a big bubblegum bubble and then deflates.

-Kate Redmond

*The Cedarburg Bog is a Wetland Gem
and an Important Bird Area*

BLACK TERN NESTING PLATFORMS ON MUD LAKE

Braden Mayer is a Grafton High School student, athlete and avid birder. Braden belongs to Boy Scout Troop 840 in Grafton. His love of birds began when he was about 4 years old, when he witnessed a Cooper's Hawk eat an American Robin in his family's front yard. In the last 4 years, his birding enthusiasm has been nurtured and grown. Braden says he has met many new people on his birding journeys, and has made several new friends. He loves chasing rare birds, as long as his parents are willing to drive him there. He has taken up photography as a hobby to accompany his birding. These interests have led to an exciting project proposal under consideration by the Friends of Cedarburg Bog.



Black Tern

Black Terns are small, gull-like birds in the family Laridae, which includes gulls, terns, and skimmers. Black Terns nest in swamps, marshes, and boggy lakes with extensive cattail growth. The terns winter off the coast of northern South America, western South America, and Mexico.

In the wild, Black Terns nest on exposed mudflats and floating vegetation. Unfortunately, this makes the nests easy targets for otters and other animals. When the birds are nesting, the primary food source for the young is aquatic insects caught in flight by the adults. Other foods include small fish and other invertebrates.

The primary threat to these birds is habitat loss. The drainage of wetlands and marshes has been detrimental in some areas, and has led to the termination of certain tern populations. Additional hardships to nesting birds (especially in the Midwest) is the use of agricultural pesticides. These



Black Tern catching prey on the fly

kill off food supplies, and poison the birds that eat the affected insects. Terns are not the only birds affected by pesticides. Many insectivorous species are experiencing downward trends in numbers due to pesticides.

Braden says, “I have seen these birds many times in the Horicon Marsh, Mack State Wildlife Area, and Harvey Wangsness Wetland Preserve. When it came time to do my Eagle Project, I wanted to do something to benefit the birds of my local area.”

When talking to John O'Donnell from the Friends of the Cedarburg Bog, Braden learned that black terns once nested in the Bog, but have since left due to improper habitat. Braden began to do his research. He located an optimal location for placement of man made nesting platforms, within the Cedarburg Bog, on Mud Lake. He found that Mud Lake has extensive cattails, ideal cover for nesting terns. It also has sufficient amounts of food: deer flies (plenty), dragonflies, and many species of small fish. Minimal human visitation to this area of the lake also makes the location ideal.

Since the nesting platforms float, they will not be affected by high or low water levels. Man made nesting platforms provide a reliable, sturdy surface for the terns to nest. If terns do not find the platforms suitable, other animals, such as ducks, may find the structures useful.

Braden plans to construct a nesting colony consisting of 5 platforms. The platform's frame will be 34x34 inches of PVC pipe.



Man-made nesting platform for Black Terns

Foam sheeting will be placed inside the frame and will be encompassed with plastic gardening fence, attached with zip ties. The whole project at this point will be spray-painted black to prevent UV corrosion. Once the basic construction is complete, the platforms will be taken to Mud Lake. Sod will be placed on the platforms to create a surface similar to a floating mat of vegetation. They will be anchored to the bottom of the lake with a dumbbell weight. A trail camera will assist observation of the platform's productivity without disturbing the terns.

Braden is currently working with the Wisconsin DNR to gain permission to place the platforms on Mud Lake. John O'Donnell and Jim Ellis from the Friends of the Cedarburg Bog helped in the process of getting signatures for the scouting paperwork. This project is also informed by Mike Alaimo, from the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, who was on the team who placed the platforms on Rome Pond. He has helped guide the construction plan.

"The final budget for my project is \$1,500, which includes: building materials; sod for the nesting platforms; and a cellular trail camera so that volunteers can monitor the nests regularly without disturbing the platforms or the birds."

How You Can Help? If you would be interested in supporting Braden's Eagle Scout Project, you can mail a check, written out to the Friends of the Cedarburg Bog, with Braden Meyer Eagle project on the memo line or visit www.bogfriends.org/get-involved/donate. **Please submit donations by April 15.** Thank you!

"Right from the get-go, Braden wanted to do a bird-related Eagle Scout project at the Cedarburg Bog. He and his family have been very good friends to the Bog and the FOCB. Braden and his father Phil have done a fair amount of volunteer work at the Bog over the past six years including repair work to the Mud Lake boardwalk and maintenance work on Wood Duck nest boxes. I first met Braden when he came to an FOCB Owl Prowl and was about 9 or 10 years old. I got to know Braden and his

family at FOCB bird events and over the last six years. Braden has become a very serious and accomplished birder over the time I have known him. He has a terrific sense of how to find and identify birds and regularly documents birds he has found on eBird. If he stays on his present course, he very likely could become an outstanding ornithologist or natural history scientist. It has been a real privilege getting to know Braden and his family." - John O'Donnell



Canada Goose nesting on muskrat den

NATURAL HISTORY WORKSHOPS

The Field Station has had to adapt the Natural History Workshop program to the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. After having to cancel most of the workshops in 2020, we began exploring online programming and started offering fully online workshops for the first time in 2021. Beginning in February, we offered "Introduction to Bird Song" in synchronous online sessions over 8 weeks. This class transitioned well to the online format and participants appreciated not having to drive to the Field Station in the cold and snow of winter. For spring, we developed another fully online class, "Making Your Own Nature Film" which will also have synchronous online sessions over an 8 week period (April 7 – May 26). The fully online format allows people from all over the country to attend, and students from Colorado and Kentucky have registered.

We have one more fully online class planned for this summer:

"Identifying Raptors in Fall Migration in Wisconsin" will be held online on Aug. 14 (10:00 am to 2:00 pm, with an hour lunch break).

One major strength of the Field Station workshop program has been that participants can engage in hands-on exploration of the outstanding natural areas at the Field Station and nearby properties. This experience can't be

replicated in an online class, so we also developed a hybrid format for some of our summer classes. In the hybrid format, lectures will be delivered online so that students do not have to gather together in our classroom. Each class also includes a one-day, in-person session at the Field Station. The in-person session will be held mostly outside, and students have the choice of attending on either Friday or Saturday. Registration on each day will be limited to 10 and social distancing requirements will be in place (social distancing requirements may be eased if conditions allow at the time of the workshop).

We will be offering the following 3 hybrid workshops in summer 2021:

"Field Herpetology: Identification of Wisconsin Amphibians and Reptiles" will have lecture material online available for viewing from May 24 – June 4 and an in-person session on June 4 or June 5.

"Fishes of Wisconsin: Taxonomy, Ecology, and Identification" will have lecture material online available for viewing from June 30 – July 16 and an in-person session on July 16 or July 17. For both of these classes, the lectures are asynchronous, with no set times for students to attend.

"Plant-Insect Interactions: Ecology and Evolution" will have synchronous online lectures Wednesdays 3:00 – 5:00 pm from July 21 – Aug 4 and an in-person session on Aug. 6 or Aug. 7. Online lectures will be recorded so that students can watch them if they are unable to attend.

For more information or to register, please visit our website at <https://uwm.edu/field-station/workshops/> or contact the Field Station at 262-675-6844 or fieldstn@uwm.edu.



American Toad (Photo: Danielle Bell)

Friends of the Cedarburg Bog:
Supporting stewardship and
appreciation of the Cedarburg
Bog through land management,
preservation, research and education.



C/O UWM Field Station
3095 Blue Goose Road
Saukville, WI 53080

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CEDARBURG BOG FRIENDS EVENTS

Events are currently suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We hope to host events in the future when it is safe to do so. Please check our website at www.bogfriends.org/event-registration for updates on the status of upcoming events, when registration will open, and proper safety protocols that will be required. If you have questions or are unable to register on the website, email fieldstn@uwm.edu or call (262) 675-6844.

FOCB Quarterly Board Meeting

April 8, 2021

All members are welcome to join the FOCB board meeting. The April meeting is being held virtually via Zoom. Please contact admin@bogfriends.org if interested in the agenda and to receive access to the Zoom meeting.

Ways to Stay Connected with FOCB



Join our Email List

<https://bogfriends.org/mailling-list/>



Subscribe to our YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHHu5IWILc0mc4GTpDzScOO>



Like us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/TheFriendsoftheCedarburgBog/>



Follow us on Instagram

https://www.instagram.com/friends_cedarburgbog/



Spring Peeper (Photo: Kate Redmond)

EVENTS HAPPENING ELSEWHERE

Many of our partners have created unique virtual ways to keep everyone connected with our natural world as we continue to keep our distance.

Wisconsin Friends Explore Challenge

March 20 to September 22, 2021

This spring, the Friends of Wisconsin State Parks and Wisconsin Friends Explore challenge visitors to explore Wisconsin state park properties in new and/or fun ways, increase healthy habits, and connect with family and friends. Complete at least one challenge per family unit to earn a social network badge. Any number of 22 challenges can be completed within the challenge time. All challenges must take place on a Wisconsin State Park System property. There is no fee to enter the challenge but a state park vehicle admission sticker and/or trail pass is required. For more information visit www.wisconsinfriendsexplore.org

Neighborhood Habitat Improvement Project (NHIP) Monthly Webinar Series - WGLBBO

April 7, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. Small Plants, Big Impact Free webinar series on topics designed to make your corner of the world better for birds and pollinators.

April's webinar will be led by Danielle Bell as she highlights native plants that are small in stature but provide big ecological impacts. This makes them perfect for small urban properties. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wglbbo-free-webinar-series-help-birds-pollinators-and-your-community-tickets-137836184739>

Seven Simple Actions to Help Birds NHIP Monthly Webinar - WGLBBO

May 19, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

Since 1970 research has shown that we have lost nearly 3 billion North American breeding birds. Habitat loss and degradation are the biggest overall causes of the declines. But there are other human caused threats. Join Chuck Hagner, author of the Field Guide to Birds of Wisconsin and director of Bird City Wisconsin as he explains how individual homeowners can help improve the state of our birds. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wglbbo-free-webinar-series-help-birds-pollinators-and-your-community-tickets-137836184739>

Please check our partner organization's websites listed below for more details and to ensure you are following recommended or required safety protocols if you are attending an in-person event.

WGLBBO - Western Great Lakes Bird & Bat Observatory
116 W. Grand Ave., Ste. 207 Port Washington
<https://wglbbo.org/>

RNC - Riveredge Nature Center
4458 County Hwy Y, Saukville
<https://www.riveredgenaturecenter.org/>

MNP - Mequon Nature Preserve
8200 W County Line Rd, Mequon
www.mequonnaturepreserve.org

UEC - Urban Ecology Center
3 Branches - Riverside Park, Washington Park and Menomonee Valley
<https://urbanecologycenter.org/>

SEWISC - Southeast Wisconsin Invasive Species Consortium
www.sewisc.org

WWA - Wisconsin Wetlands Association
<https://www.wisconsinwetlands.org/wetland-walks/>