

## **President's Report ~ Annual Meeting of Members**

**September 19, 2021**

Hello fellow Bog Lovers! Thank you for checking into our virtual Annual Meeting of Members for 2021. We hope that we might have our usual Fall Picnic and gathering at the UWM Field Station on Sunday, September 19, 2021. However, given the uncertainty posed by the surging Delta variant of COVID-19, that is uncertain. So, we are conducting the “business” of the meeting, the election of Directors, virtually beginning August 23<sup>rd</sup> and extending through September 19<sup>th</sup>. This year, Andrew Struck, *Director of Planning & Parks*, is up for reelection to a 3<sup>rd</sup> three-year term. Andrew's bio can be found <https://bogfriends.org/virtual-annual-member-meeting/>. He has been an asset to the Friends, and we are pleased that he is willing to serve another term. Please cast your vote for Andrew by September 19, 2021.

The last year has been difficult. As anticipated, we continued to be challenged with the uncertainties of COVID-19. We were able to resume limited in person educational programs and we continued to add to our library of video programs on our YouTube channel. Our excitement about returning to a normal, albeit a new one, has been dampened by the surge of the Delta variant and renewed uncertainty about what will be possible in the coming months.

Despite the continued challenges presented by COVID-19, we have had a good year. New Directors, Pam Uihlein and Cory Gritzmacher have settled into leadership roles, Pam as chair of the Education and Events Committee and Cory as Chair of the Stewardship Committee.

In other Board news, Kate Redmond, a founder, long time Director and Bog Haunter editor, is leaving the Board. She will continue to lead hikes and be a valued asset to the bog and Friends.

Also leaving the Board are Andy Holschbach, Tim Vargo and Chuck Stebelton. Their generous contributions of time and talent to the Friends has been greatly appreciated. Their departures leave some voids in leadership that we are working on filling in the coming months.

We are saying goodbye to Danielle Bell, our Administrative Assistant for the past two years. Her business, Native Roots, LLC has grown to the point that it needs her full-time attention. Danielle's contributions to the Friends exceeded expectations. She has been a part of establishing our Scholarship Program and she has set up our YouTube Channel for which she has created several videos. If you have not already done so, please check them out <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHHu5lWILcome4GTpDzScOQ> And, she has been stalwart in putting together our quarterly newsletter, the Bog Haunter. She has also enhanced our presence on social media ~ FaceBook and Instagram with regular posts about Bog happenings.

We are saying hello to Michelle Inhofer who, as our Executive Assistant, she will pick up where Danielle left off plus have the additional duties of facilitating communications with the board and with our community partners.

Highlights of the past year include:

- Once again, we donated \$5,000 to the UWM Field Station to support educational programming. These funds also help to facilitate operational costs at the field station where the Friends are graciously allowed to maintain an office space.

- We were able to grant three scholarships to Katherine Kolpin, Allyn Lottouzee, and Jacob Stanley Yarbrough. All three of these students attended a Herpetology workshop and were reimbursed for course costs of \$60 per individual.
- We sponsored the placement of nesting platforms for Black Terns on Mud Lake by a youth volunteer, Braden Meyer, for his Eagle Scout project.
- The Bog Guardian Program has continued its work in controlling the Big Four -Teasels, Phragmites, Wild Parsnip and Japanese Knotweed – in the 28 square mile area around the Bog. This has entailed collaboration with SEWISC (Southeastern Wisconsin Invasive Species Consortium) as well as County and Township highway/road departments.
- We have joined a collaborative effort - A Birding Consortium is being organized in partnership with area nature centers and clubs. This would create a community of birders and member organizations would work together to provide both indoor and outdoor programming throughout the year. FOCB will participate in the consortium and host one indoor and one outdoor program in conjunction with the partners.

We look forward to your continued membership. Your generous contributions ensure that we can continue to accomplish our mission. Although much of what we are typically able to do in the way of classes, research, and public events was drastically altered due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we worked with the constraints to continue our work through these challenges. There are 27 active research projects at the Field Station. Through research such as this we continue to strengthen community support and foster an informed community by sustaining the unique wetland gem that is the Cedarburg Bog.

Please stay tuned for updates on our Fall Picnic on September 19<sup>th</sup>. We are still hoping to gather in person at the Field Station. And, once again, please cast your ballot online for Andrew Struck.