



Madeline Island

Wilderness Preserve News

Summer 2021

“IN WILDNESS IS THE PRESERVATION OF THE WORLD”

By Steve Mueller, President

This famous quote by Henry David Thoreau was on a poster in my college dorm room 50 years ago. It was accompanied by a picture of an old growth forest, dark and primeval. Now I picture it as an old growth hemlock forest on the north end of Madeline Island. The quote has become more powerful over the years and now seems to be a true call to action for a world challenged with the effects of climate change and the accelerating loss of natural habitat and biodiversity. The Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve embodies this call to action, and I am proud to be the president of an organization that is part of the local solution to this global problem.

Recently I read how scientists, governments (including the US), and nongovernmental organizations around the world are calling for a target of protecting 30% of lands, oceans and inland waters by 2030. Called 30 by 30, it is seen as one of the best ways to curb mass extinction and to address the crisis of climate change. Our organization has been doing its part to address the problem of habitat loss by building a preserve of protected woodlands and marshes on Madeline Island

for over 30 years. Our land holdings, along with the efforts of the broader Island community and the State of Wisconsin, have already set aside almost 30% of Madeline Island to be protected from development.

Land and trails The Wilderness Preserve is a healthy and dynamic organization charged with protecting the Island’s habitat and preserving its plants and wildlife, ensuring they will remain undisturbed for future generations. This past year, during the pandemic, our lands and our trails have offered much needed solace for the Island community and its visitors. In all seasons our trails have been used for exploration, learning, and recreation.

We have recently partnered with the new Madeline Island Trails (MIT) organization to help upgrade Island trails and encourage their use and expansion (see related article in this newsletter). Volunteers from both organizations will be out there, repairing and improving the trails to create a better experience for everyone. *(continued on page 2)*



Education Last year, all of our programming was canceled due to the pandemic – a huge disappointment. This year, respecting pandemic rules, our education programs will focus on outdoor hikes and talks with naturalists on the Island. We want our members and visitors out on our lands, enjoying their beauty, and learning about these unique ecosystems. Please visit our website at www.miwp.org for the latest updates on these events.

Invasive Species The invasive woody species, buckthorn and barberry, have not taken a break from their threatening spread during the pandemic. We will continue with our ongoing program of containment and eradication. We have been in this fight for almost a decade now and are achieving good results. Please follow our progress and learn about these efforts on our website and in a related article in this newsletter.

Giving back to the community The Wilderness Preserve recently made a grant of \$5,000 to the Town of LaPointe’s emergency services building fund to help pay the costs of native landscaping. Hopefully this summer you will be able to see the results coming out of the freshly turned earth.

Get involved As with many other organizations on the Island, the pandemic has made it difficult to gather together. We have not been able to celebrate with our membership at our annual spring reception, nor have we been able to provide educational outreach. There wasn’t even a 4th of July parade for us to display our creative talents!

Many of us have gotten our vaccinations and activities have begun to reopen with safety measures, so we have (tentatively) scheduled our 2021 annual meeting for Saturday, September 4th, at the Madeline Island School of the Arts (MISA). Please put it on your calendar. Invitations will arrive in midsummer. We will keep you posted should pandemic rules force us to change plans.

Farewell Friend On a personal note, I want to acknowledge the passing of Phil Greenberg, a long-time board member and one of the founders of the Wilderness Preserve. Phil was a friend and a mentor to me. He uniquely modeled land stewardship on Madeline Island. He will be missed by all who knew him.

Steve Mueller, Board President

TRIBUTE TO PHILLIP JAY GREENBERG

It is with deep sadness that the MIWP board reports Phil Greenberg’s death. Phil was a supporter of the Wilderness Preserve from its inception and a dedicated board member for 32 years until his death in December, 2020. (To learn of Phil’s many contributions to the world, please see: www.startribune.com/obituaries). Phil added wisdom, warmth, and humor to our organization, qualities we will greatly miss.

Phil was president of the board from 1994-99, presiding over defining times for the organization and a board of 20, the largest in our history. Under Phil’s leadership, MIWP reached out to engage the wider Island community in environmental concerns as it bought and preserved land.

In recent years, Phil was our official annual-meeting event planner. He attended to every detail of each event, from securing locations to seeking caterers, all while keeping a close eye on the budget. All decisions for the event are generously and coherently filed in a three-ring binder as a resource to future event planners. In a similar binder, Phil diligently kept vital records that document not only his time as president but many other important milestones of MIWP’s history.

Each of these efforts underscored Phil’s deep caring for the Wilderness Preserve’s contribution to the Island. In an interview recorded last summer, Phil spoke of his hopes for the future – for his children, grandchildren, and all lovers of the Island. He envisioned the Wilderness Preserve continuing to exist for the next 100+ years, acquiring and preserving interior land on the Island and providing “a place of refuge and recreation for all”. We will keep Phil in our hearts as we strive to continue his legacy.



Phil enjoying himself in the 2010 4th of July Parade

THE BUCK(THORN) STOPS HERE *By Victoria Erhart*

Last fall, I went with several MIWP board members to tour two sites recently treated for buckthorn by Bay Area Environmental Consulting, Nile Merton and Michael Sinclair. The first site, requiring some fancy foot work and rubber boots, was a dense black ash swamp previously infested with equally dense, pole-sized buckthorn. The buckthorn were standing but obviously dead, the ash were healthy. At the second site, across Middle Road from the first, there was a gloriously grassy open field ringed with quite beautiful mature buckthorn trees, also standing and dead in spite of the fact that they had been treated only a couple of weeks before. I was struck by how much our approach to buckthorn removal has changed since those early years when we believed we could get rid of it completely. It is always a hard, dirty business, but we now have a systematic seven-year plan, we are effective and efficient, we no longer do all that very labor-intensive cutting and hauling, and our focus is more on keeping the bad stuff from spreading than on making it go away completely.

What's so bad about buckthorn? Buckthorn, and barberry which we also treat, are non-native escapes from horticulture, from gardens. What's wrong with them is that they do too well, grow too thickly, and spread too widely. They outcompete most native plants and thrive almost everywhere including moderate shade. Buckthorn may secrete a substance toxic to other plants, barberry encourages deer ticks. Both destroy the normal diversity of the plant community which then leads to a loss of insect diversity, an ecological desert. If we do nothing, they will cover most of the Island.

What is this "seven-year-plan" you mentioned? Year one, 2018, was a data-gathering year. Nile mapped all of the buckthorn on the Island, including density and size of stands. Since most of the buckthorn arrived in nursery pots for gardens, it is not surprising that you find most of it in an area close to town, but it has been spreading outward, mostly following roads.

Based on that mapping, Nile defined six treatment zones, and for the last two years we have been treating a zone a year, starting with the outermost zones to keep buckthorn from moving into areas where there is none. 2021 will be the third year of treatment; this year we will be both treating the third zone and monitoring/re-treating as necessary in zone 1. This combination of treating the new and reevaluation/re-treatment of the old will go on for at least the next four years. At the end, most areas will have been treated at least once and we'll get to pause, reflect, and see what comes next.



Michael Sinclair (L) and Nile Merton (R) of Bay Area Environmental Consulting with recently treated buckthorn

Can the MIWP do this by itself? Absolutely not. To our embarrassment, some of the worst buckthorn infestations are on MIWP land and we can treat those without permission, but there is still a lot of buckthorn on private land. Every year Bay Area Environmental Consulting sends letters to landowners who live within this year's treatment zone and who have known buckthorn or barberry, offering to treat at no cost. We would love to treat your buckthorn for free, but know that the one thing we don't do is cut down and haul away the dead wood, although we can refer you to someone who can.

How do you get rid of buckthorn? It's easier to talk about what doesn't get rid of buckthorn. If you cut it, it resprouts and multiplies. Digging it out is not possible on any large-scale basis, and disturbing the soil brings viable buckthorn seeds to the surface and gets you more baby buckthorn. Fire might theoretically knock it back in some environments, but not on Madeline. One summer we tried goats, which eat everything, but goats are not selective and the buckthorn just grows back. There are ongoing studies of planting native plants to compete with buckthorn, an idea that I like, but I haven't seen any successes yet. Which leaves herbicides.

Herbicides? In the current state of invasive treatment, really the only way to get rid of buckthorn on a landscape scale is with herbicides. BAEC uses triclopyr and, more importantly, uses it in a very targeted way.

(continued on page 4)

(Buckthorn, continued from page 3)

There is never any generalized broadcast of the herbicide, and there's no overspray. Surrounding plants don't seem to be affected, something we were careful to notice in that black ash swamp. I don't like herbicides and I try not to use them in my garden, but the goal is to safeguard the health of the forest. In the big picture, herbicides, used carefully and with training, present a lot less risk to the environment than letting buckthorn, barberry, and non-native honeysuckle all run wild.

Might climate change have an effect on buckthorn? Yes, but not in a good way. From a U of MN study by Peter Reich: Buckthorn has slowly increased in abundance in northern Minnesota in recent decades, perhaps slowed by cool summers, but it thrived in warmer experimental conditions. This is bad news, as it suggests that buckthorn and other invasive species might take advantage of climate change and more aggressively move up north

What do you see happening to this program in the long term? Good question. My dearest hope is that

sometime soon someone develops some kind of biological control, as there is for spotted knapweed, and we can stop all this monitoring and treating and sit back and enjoy our forests in their full health and diversity. I don't see that happening soon. Realistically, I am hoping that the treatments we do are effective enough that over time we can ease off on what we are doing. Maybe we will be able to monitor every other year, and cover larger pieces of land because there is less to treat. Maybe we can do even less than that. I think there is some truth to the idea that treating invasives is forever, but I can imagine a time when buckthorn is a minor nuisance rather than a major threat.

Can I do something to help? Learn to recognize buckthorn and barberry when you see them (in small numbers you can deal with them in a non-chemical way). Say yes if we ask to treat the buckthorn on your land. Be very thoughtful about making unnecessary openings in the forest; while buckthorn tolerates more shade than many plants, it can't establish itself under a dense forest canopy. Join the MIWP, come walk our lands and see for yourself. Thank you!

SUMMER 2021 PROGRAMS

- Saturday, June 12th, 10:00 – Noon.** *Early Summer Foraging for Mushrooms* Leader: Samantha Dobson, naturalist, educator, and Island resident. Learn about how to ethically and sustainably harvest early season mushrooms, specifically oyster mushrooms, on Madeline Island. **Location:** Capser Trail, Middle Road trailhead
- Tuesday, June 15th, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.** *Summertime Book Zoom: The Bluebird Effect* Leader: Julie Zickefoose, author, naturalist, bird painter, and songbird rehabilitator shares her passion and curiosity for 'the zone where birds interact with people...the moment when her gaze meets the bright bead of its eye.' **Location:** Zoom address to be announced on MIWP web page. In collaboration with the Madeline Island Book Club
- Monday, July 12th, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.** *See the Forest and the Trees!* Leader: Margie Menzies, Education Director for the Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory, Duluth. Who's who in the tree world, and how do we know? What are trees providing for the forest ecosystem? Who lives in the trees, and what changes for the trees through the summer season? Are trees connected and can they communicate with each other? **Location:** Town Park shelter
- Wednesday, July 21st, 10:00 a.m. – Noon.** *Painting by the Water – Big Bay on Madeline Island* Leader: Janet Moore, watercolor artist and naturalist. Learn how to see this land and waterscape with an artist's eye and create a small watercolor painting to capture your own experience and vision of this amazing place. The class will focus on basic techniques in composition, sketching, and watercolor. All materials needed for the class are included. All abilities – especially beginners – are welcome. **Location:** Town Park shelter
- Monday, August 9th, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.** *See the Forest and the Trees!* Leader: Margie Menzies, Education Director for the Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory, Duluth. A forest community is more than trees, but trees play a dominant role in determining everything else that happens in that community. There's a lot more going on with trees than first meets the eye. **Location:** Burroughs trailhead, 2.5 miles north of Benjamin Boulevard on North Shore Drive
- Wednesday, August 18th, 10:00 a.m. – Noon.** *The Art of Nature Journaling – North End Burroughs Trail* Leader: Janet Moore, watercolor artist and naturalist. Experience the peace and serenity of the North End trails on Madeline Island through this guided nature journaling class. The class will focus on field-sketching and writing techniques that enable you to capture your impression of the natural world. All materials are provided for the class; all abilities are welcome. **Location:** Burroughs trailhead, 2.5 miles north of Benjamin Boulevard on North Shore Drive

Saturday, September 4th, 6:00 p.m. MIWP's 33rd Annual Meeting & Reception: *Logging Days in the Islands* Speaker: Bob Mackreth, Apostle Island Historian. At the Madeline Island School of the Arts. (*see detailed announcement, below*)

Saturday, September 11th, 10:00 – Noon. *Fall Foraging for Mushrooms* Leader: Samantha Dobson, naturalist, educator, and Island resident. Learn about mushroom identification, phenology, habitat, and safe harvesting techniques. Also learn how to store, preserve, and prepare your harvested mushrooms. Finding mushrooms is not guaranteed.
Location: Burroughs trailhead, 2.5 miles north of Benjamin Boulevard on North Shore Drive

North End Forest Guided Hikes

Saturday, August 14th, 9 a.m. – Noon.

Saturday, September 4th, 9 a.m. – Noon.

Saturday, October 2nd, 9 a.m. – Noon.

Join us as we explore the North End forest of Madeline Island. We will start each hike at the Burroughs trailhead but may drive to other trailheads to explore the forest. The trails are rustic, so good hiking boots and an adventuresome spirit are required. The Burroughs trailhead is 2.5 miles north of Benjamin Boulevard on North Shore Drive

Our Annual Fall Potluck Picnic follows the October 2nd hike. All are welcome. Location to be determined. For updates and details see the MIWP Website: <https://www.miwp.org>.

Classes and hikes will be held rain or shine; Please consult the MIWP Website for updates

All Events are free (except the Fall Reception) and open to the public

33RD ANNUAL MEETING AND EVENING RECEPTION

The Wilderness Preserve will be hosting its 33rd Annual Meeting this coming Labor Day weekend, Saturday September 4th, at the Madeline Island School of the Arts. The event will be an evening reception with an informal buffet of elegant and hearty hors d'oeuvres, select wine service, and coffee/tea and assorted desserts. A social gathering and food service begins at 6:00 pm, with the program beginning at 7:00 pm. This year's program (held over from last year) features:

BOB MACKRETH

HISTORIAN, APOSTLE ISLANDS NATIONAL LAKESHORE, RETIRED

“LOGGING DAYS IN THE ISLANDS”

Timber barons and lumberjacks left their marks throughout the Chequamegon region, while the Lake Superior environment presented loggers with challenges seldom seen elsewhere. Historian Bob Mackreth will explore the islands' unique lumbering history, from the days of oxen and ax to the era of Outer Island's flying Lumberjacks with their Cessnas and chainsaws.

The price of the Fall Reception is \$35 / person

Reservations can be made by contacting:

MIWP Treasurer, Ned Hancock

1204 Mount Curve Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55403

(952-221-7878) ✉ treasurer@miwp.org



MADLINE ISLAND TRAILS *by Marnie Sanborn Myhre*

The MIWP's charter describes us as "a non-profit land trust dedicated to the protection and preservation of natural areas on Madeline Island for everyone's enjoyment." Even though we spend much of our time and energy working to "protect and preserve," we view our Island wilderness as a community asset to be enjoyed by Island residents and visitors alike. In fact, during this past year of global pandemic, our lands and trails have offered much needed solace to many.

Local residents reported more use of our trails this past fall and winter than ever before despite the record low snowfall totals on the Island. Summer visitors flooded the Town Park and Big Bay State Park to the point that parking lots overflowed. With more people seeking refuge in the natural world, we are working hard to make our trails accessible and enjoyable, and we continue to dedicate time, energy, and resources to maintaining and improving our trail network.

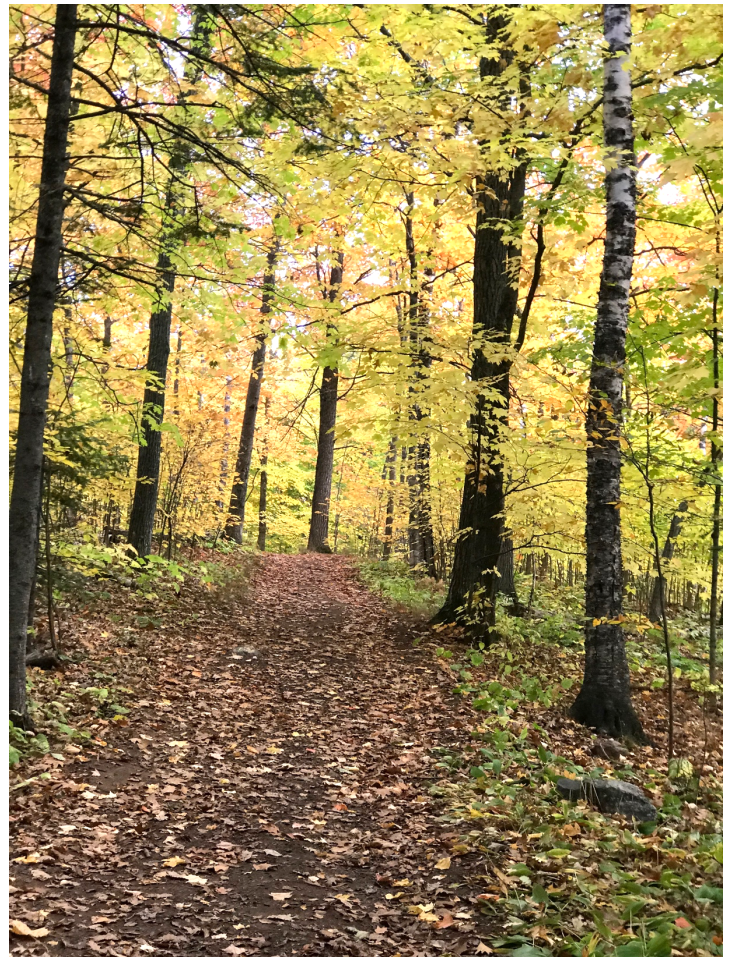
Toward that end we have begun partnering this winter with the new Madeline Island Trails (MIT) organization to help us improve our trails and encourage their use and expansion. That organization was created out of a need to maintain xc ski trails after long-time xc ski trail boss Keith Sowl and his wife Carol moved off the Island just over one year ago.

The purpose of Madeline Island Trails expanded when some younger Island residents came forward to promote the possibility of creating a "thru-trail" hiking trail from town all the way to the north end of the Island. With our trail system already offering hiking trails on so much of the Island, we became natural partners in the work of creating a better trails experience for everyone.

As an example of our recent trail work and goals going forward, last fall we cleared the Nucy Meech trail of overgrowth that had made the path impassible and created a new trail loop we're calling "Fisherman's Loop" which skirts the wetlands by the airport. It added a winter xc-ski option for those living on the south end of the Island. And although our trails are currently well

marked with red dots on trees to help hikers stay on the trails, we are planning to update our trail maps later this year to help hikers and skiers navigate the system. We will be replacing/repairing some bridges later this spring and are hoping to experiment with some boardwalk structures to promote use and enjoyment of the wettest areas of select trails.

We are excited for the return of summer residents and visitors who will explore our lands hiking, birdwatching, gathering mushrooms, along with all of the other activities that our woodlands have to offer.



YOUR VIEWS PLEASE!

The MIWP Board of Directors is updating its long-term goals and plans. Help us set priorities by telling us what is important to you. Go to our website, at <https://www.miwp.org>, to take a 5-minute survey.

MIWP Board of Directors

Steve Mueller, President
Pixie Martin, Vice President
Jane Howard, Secretary
Ned Hancock, Treasurer

Tom Atmore
Daniel Engstrom
Victoria Erhart
Fred Koerschner
Thomas Kromroy
Bonnie Matuseski
Marnie Sanborn Myhre



Madeline Island
Wilderness Preserve
PO Box 28
La Pointe, WI 54850
www.miwp.org

-----*Detach here and mail today*-----

***Yes, I'd like to support the preservation and protection
of natural areas on Madeline Island!***

Name(s) _____

Street Address _____

E-mail Address _____

\$1000 Benefactor \$500 Sustaining \$100 Supporting \$50 Contributor Other

Please make my gift anonymous.

Gift in memory of: _____

Gift in honor of: _____

Send gift card to: _____

Thank you for your generous contribution!

Your dues are tax deductible. Membership is through December 31, 2021
Please make checks payable to MIWP and send to:

**Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve
P.O. Box 28 La Pointe WI 54850**