



The HERON

Quarterly Newsletter of the Fond du Lac County Audubon Society

SUMMER NATURE WALKS

Summer Evening Tuesday Walks

Explore area nature trails with an Audubon guide.



*Carol and Roy Toepke
of Collections by Carol*



Amy Sheldon



Bill Volkert

June 6
Shaginappi County Park

June 13
Ripon South Woods

June 20
Marsh Haven

June 27
Greenway Arboretum

July 11
Oakfield Ledge

July 18
Mascoutin Valley State Trail

July 25
Eldorado Marsh Dike Road

August 1
Lakeside Park West

*All walks begin at 6:30 pm.
See page 3 for more information.
Cancelled if steady rain.*

Field Trip

August 26 (Saturday)

Birchwood Tour, 9 am

(Connie Ramthun and Bill Volkert property)

Carpool from the UW-Fond du Lac east lot at 8:30 am.

See page 3 for more information.

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Fond du Lac Student Pursues Career in Environmental Studies

Charlotte is a Fond du Lac native, who works in an environmental policy position on Capitol Hill.* Fond du Lac County Audubon firmly believes in environmental education and is proud to share her story.



I attended Fond du Lac High School 2007–2009, and finished high school at an international school in New Mexico. I graduated from Wellesley College in 2016 with a degree in environmental studies.

I spent a lot of time outside growing up, from walking in the woods at my grandparents' house to working in my mom's garden, and I naturally began to ask questions. I learned to appreciate the complex systems that enable ecosystems to function. The high school I attended in New Mexico had a fabulous wilderness program. I also spent a lot of time outdoors there, which further cemented my interest in the environment. My summer job at an organic farm in Fond du Lac is what first piqued my interest in environmental conservation. I began to read about the environmental impact of food production, and my interest in environmental policy snowballed!

I could see myself working on environmental policy on Capitol Hill long-term, but I am also interested in environmental law. I would love to be involved in public interest environmental litigation at a large advocacy organization like Earthjustice.

I am particularly interested in how the Endangered Species Act can be used as a broader conservation tool. The law requires both the organism itself and its habitat be protected, making it a very powerful conservation mechanism.

I believe it's important to increase access to outdoor education in local classrooms and would pursue this if I were in Fond du Lac. The environmental advocacy community needs to be more diverse; increasing opportunities for all kids to become interested in the outdoors at an early age is key to that goal. I am also interested in promoting



local food systems by making federal agricultural policy more favorable for small-scale farmers.

Groups can promote environmental conservation by making it relevant to people's everyday lives – highlighting the numerous ways a functioning, healthy ecosystem provides value to the community.

*Due to the nature of confidentiality in Charlotte's employment, we are using just her first name.

Go Native, Turn up Spring's Volume

"Cheer, cheer, cheer," in the gray cold February light, the Northern Cardinal announces the hope of spring. Did this call brighten your day? Now, imagine that welcome silenced. Climate change and habitat loss threaten half of North American birds with steep population decline/extinction. This staggering loss is hard to fathom. Rather than sink into an "eco-depression," we need to take action.

Science teaches us that we can make a difference. By establishing habitat connectivity/corridors, we can reduce stress on wildlife. Plants and animals have evolved to live symbiotically, each benefiting from the mutual support of the other.

Our wildlife does not recognize, nor can it benefit from non-native species.

Consider our native oak tree that supports 550 species of butterflies and moths, versus a non-native Ginkgo tree that is home to only five. Think in terms of appetite: home cooking is far better than vending machine fare.

National Audubon has launched a drive to plant 1,000,000 native plants. You can be a part of this success story. Go to audubon.org/native-plants and learn more about the initiative. Enter your zip code, which will pull up a list of native plants and links to nurseries in our area where you can purchase them. They also have detailed information on how to plant your backyard "cafeteria." If you don't have a yard, container plantings can make an impact. The website has ideas on how to make your containers a refuge.

Native planting benefits wildlife in other indirect ways. It means less Kentucky blue grass. Did you know the lawns mowed in the United States add up to an area the size of New Jersey?! Less mowing means decreased gas consumption, cleaner air, less pesticide/herbicide use, and less noise pollution.

Native plantings also act as buffers to water management problems.

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SUMMER EVENING TUESDAY WALKS

Explore some of the trails in Fond du Lac County and City with members of Audubon. All walks will begin at 6:30 pm. Carpooling is sometimes available. Be sure to wear good walking shoes, bring some insect repellent, and if available, a pair of binoculars. The walks will last an hour to an hour and a half. Cancelled if steady rain.

June 6 Shaginappi County Park

The park is a natural area of 100 acres of wetlands, lakeshore, woods, and prairie and is situated adjacent to Columbia Park, sharing Calumet Harbor. Pipe Creek also winds through the park property. (North on Hwy 151 to just north of Pipe. Turn left on Velvet Beach Road. Continue about ½ mile and turn into a parking lot on the left).

Leaders – *Dave and Kerry Schloff*

June 13 Ripon South Woods

This nature area provides hikers with a variety of natural habitats along several paths including a walk along a creek. Along the trail you will enjoy prairie, oak savanna, and glacial moraine habitats. (West on Hwy 23 to Ripon and south on Union Street).

Carpool from the southwest corner of the Menards parking lot at 5:50 pm. Leader – *Diana Beck*

June 20 Marsh Haven

See numerous bird species, including a well-established Purple Martin colony. Observe wildlife on the woodland, prairie, or wetland trails on 46 acres. (South on Hwy 151 and east on Hwy 49). Carpool from the southwest corner of the Fleet Farm parking lot at 6:00 pm. Leader – *Liz Roy*

June 27 Greenway Arboretum

Discover over two miles of beautiful nature trails along the Fond du Lac River on 24.5 acres in town. Through the efforts of ParkWatch and local citizen volunteers, restoration of native tree plantings and an

Field Trip to Birchwood

Connie Ramthun and Bill Volkert have worked over 30 years to restore their land to natural communities including an oak-hickory woods, restored prairie, and a wetland with natural springs. They have cataloged nearly 600 species of plants and animals on less than 10 acres. Carpool from the UW-Fond du Lac east lot at 8:30 am on Saturday, August 26. Tour at 9 am.

oak savanna are in progress, along with new walking trails. Meet at the west side of the parking lot at the south Pick n Save store at 55 West Pioneer Road. Leader – *Evelyn McLean-Cowan*

July 11 Oakfield Ledge State Natural Area (north end)

One of the most significant exposures of the Niagara Escarpment in Wisconsin, these prominent rock cliffs 40 feet high can be enjoyed from different elevations. See undisturbed native vegetation and forest floor habitat. (South on Hwy D, then Hwy B to Oakfield and turn south on Hwy Y. Parking lot is about ¼ mile on right). Carpool from the southwest corner of the Fleet Farm parking lot at 6:00 pm. Leader – *Liz Roy*

July 18 Mascoutin Valley State Trail

This scenic 32-mile State Park trail passes through the DNR-owned Eldorado Marsh on the trail section from Fond du Lac to Rosendale. (West on Hwy 23 and north on C about ¼ mile on left).

Leader – *Kathleen Stetter*

July 25 Eldorado Marsh Dike Road

The wildlife area consists of a rich mosaic of wetland types, small oak openings, shrubland, grasslands, and agricultural land. The .75 mile-long dike provides excellent access for wildlife viewing opportunities. (West on 23, east on Heinrich, north on Dike Road). Carpool from the southwest corner of the Menards parking lot at 6:00 pm. Leader – *Diana Beck*

August 1 Lakeside Park West

Explore on mowed trails and watch for wildlife along the shoreline of the lake and Supple's Marsh. Find out more about future plans for this area. (North on 45, east on Howard Litscher Drive to the dog park).

Leader – *Diana Beck*

For more information contact dianahbeck@gmail.com or 920-922-7931.

Wild Feast Potluck in September

Save the date of Wednesday, September 6 for our annual season kickoff – *The Wild Feast Potluck*. Plan for a dish made with some wild ingredients.

Bird Seed Sale

Mark your calendar for October 14. Bird seed information and pre-order available in September.

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P.O. Box 84
Fond du Lac, WI 54936-0084

Submit articles for the Audubon newsletter
via e-mail to evelyn@mcleancowan.com

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M E M B E R S H I P

- Yes!** I want to become a member or renew my membership to the National Audubon Society, and the Fond du Lac County Chapter. The annual membership dues of \$40 entitle me to six issues of the Audubon magazine, and all local chapter benefits. I am enclosing a check payable to Fond du Lac County Audubon.
- I am only interested in being a member and supporting the programs of the Fond du Lac County Audubon. The annual local membership dues of \$20 entitle me to receive the chapter newsletter and all chapter benefits. I am enclosing a check payable to Fond du Lac County Audubon.
- I am a new member.
- Save trees. Please send the newsletter to me via email.

Name

Address

City State Zip

Phone Email

Mail this form with payment to:
Fond du Lac County Audubon, Membership Services
N5545 Winnvue Court, Fond du Lac, WI 54937

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Rachael Carson published her monumental book *Silent Spring* in 1962. It details the consequences of apathy. I encourage you to read her book and learn how you can make a difference.

Seventeen years ago, my yard was an abandoned cornfield. I never imagined the biodiversity a prairie planting could create. The first spring when I heard a Cope's Tree Frog, I rushed out to see what was making the beautiful sound. Last week, a Green Darner flew over my small backyard pond. Did you know some dragonflies migrate? The past five years a woodcock has sought sanctuary in the damp edges of our property. His "PEENT, PEENT, PEENT," is another call for spring.

My yard teaches me something every day and reconnects me to nature. Create this healing environment in your own yard.

Let's do something; turn up the volume on spring!
—Amy Sheldon



Amy Sheldon