

1000 Islands Environmental Center

November/December 2025 Naturalist Report

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1000 Islands Update

Admin/Finance

- The City's Nexus Payment System (Credit Card Processing) was upgraded and all staff now have login credentials. The fee for CC processing is still 2.5%, but the minimum amount was raised to \$2.00. Debit cards are processed with a 3.5% fee.
- Our annual Tree Trimming and Volunteer Appreciation party was held on December 3rd. We had about 25 total attendees who enjoyed hors d'oeuvres and a rousing game of holiday themed bingo for some fabulous prizes.
- Cassie spent time with Communications Manager Andrea Fencl to get training on the functionality and how to make updates and add events to our new web pages.
- Staff was able to enjoy some time off in late December for family time and holiday celebrations.
- Congratulations to Kat on her wedding on December 6th! She and her husband John held a small ceremony at the Nelson Overlook. She has chosen to take John's last name and is now Kat Benson.

Education / Programming

- Rosy's tank was tipped over and demolished. She is ok and spent some time in a temporary enclosure through the end of the year and is now in her new tank and back on public display.
- As previously shared and discussed, our longtime parrot friend Jabber passed away on November 20th. We had a memorial table for the public to express their feelings and write messages to Jabber and coloring sheets. A donation fund was set up to benefit 1000 Islands as well as Wildlife of Wisconsin and J&R Aquatics for their work with rescuing and rehabbing animals and exotic pets. Just under \$400 was raised. Jabber's cage will be donated to J&R Aquatics for their use with surrendered birds.
- Staff and volunteers braved the early December cold snap to decorate Truck 19 and participate in the Electric City Christmas Parade on December 2nd. Special thanks to Diane W., Kathy B., Julie C., and Deb J. for their volunteer service decorating, and Kathy for helping shuttle staff to and from the parade route.
- The Eagle Cam project team continues to meet and gather information and ideas for the proposed Eagle Camera near and on the nest to the North of the Nature Center.

We plan to officially share the project with the public at Eagle Days and have already received some generous donations of time and money.

- 1000 Islands participated in the Mayor's annual gingerbread house building contest. Kat did most of the building and design work for our entry. Congrats to our colleagues in Community Enrichment for their winning entry.
- Our annual Silent Night Hike was held on December 16th. The cold snap broke and the weather cooperated beautifully, and we estimated well over 300 attendees. Special thanks to staff for their work preparing the luminaries, popcorn and hot chocolate, and to Wilson G. for volunteering at the event to help keep the refreshments stocked and with the cleanup of the luminaries. We collected over \$400 in donations from refreshments and general donations.
- We were able to offer snowshoeing for a very short time. Due to the extreme cold when there was snow and then the quick thaw, we did not have any rentals, but our Junior Naturalists were able to enjoy using the equipment for an evening walk.
- November was a very busy month for programming as changes to State Standards and classroom lessons shifted some topics and field trips from later in the school year to Fall. Brad and Kat were very busy with school groups through the end of November.
- Volunteers Penni Pautz and Nancy Hayes led a program at the Nature Center for the St. Paul Memory Care group.

Building and Grounds

- Brad and Eric G met with Outagamie County Land Conservation, Public Works Director Neumeier, and Associate City Engineer Taylor Conger regarding the proposed project to rehabilitate some of the severe gully erosion on the property on the east end of the property (Hoersch Property and the Big Bend (Blacktop) Trail areas.) We are pleased that OCLC and the City were awarded a \$300,000 grant from the Great Lakes Commission to fund the project in conjunction with \$100,000 of capital funds and in-kind work pledged by the City of Kaukauna. Survey work will begin, and public meetings held later in 2026, and the project is projected to run through 2029 and will also feature trail updates and improvements as a part of this project. A press release on the grant and project will go public in January.
- Eric spent a lot of time in December clearing snow around the building. We were able to see how ice and snow collected on the new boardwalk and kept that trail partially cleared as best we could.
- With the cold and snowy weather, attention has shifted to building related projects and some display upgrades. As the weather allows, work continues on buckthorn and tree removal on the property.
- With the late December thaw, we had roof leaking. Flash Roofing came and did an assessment and provided a reasonable quote for repair. The culprit is a line of shingling that was not properly nailed when the roof was originally put on and

caused the slow degradation of the nails, leaving holes. Repair will happen in January/February as weather and scheduling allow.