

1000 Islands Environmental Center

October 2025 Naturalist Report

Brad Garrity – Naturalist, 1000 Islands

Terri Vosters – Director, Community Enrichment

1000 Islands Update

Admin/Finance

- Kaukauna High School Job Exploration Student Jaden Strasberg is working with us on Tuesday - Friday until November 21st, helping with tasks around the Nature Center.
- Scout Randee Mooney achieved her Eagle Scout rank and Brad was invited to speak at her Court of Honor (held at 1000 Islands) about her service project revamping the Mooney Butterfly Gardens (a legacy project of her great-grandparents,) and the 6 Leopold benches that she built and donated. She was thanked and congratulated on behalf of the Center and City of Kaukauna.
- Deborah Searfoss has been helping as an education volunteer, helping to lead hikes and assist with programming. She is a former Naturalist from Bubolz Nature Center. She is also starting to volunteer with the Friends board.
- Staff was treated to an off-site day of teambuilding and exploration with a trip to Maribel Caves and lunch afterwards. Special thanks to Terri for working the window and watching the building so we could take this much deserved day to bond as a staff outside of the Center.
- Brad was a guest on the podcast "In the Know 920" which is produced by the Kelly Davies Home team and features local businesses and organizations to highlight what they do, current topics, and just have a little fun. Link to the podcast on You Tube: <https://youtu.be/W7znvadDoys>
- Our website has now been fully integrated into the City of Kaukauna website. Cassie and Brad worked with Andrea Fencel to revamp the content of and condense the information to fewer pages. Andrea did a marvelous job getting the pages done and updated with the small changes needed as we went live, and we are now monitoring how some of the new functionality is working. People will be able to complete fillable forms for our Field Trip requests and public program registration, link to our social media as well as that of the Friends, donate to 1000 Islands financially, and get information that they need on events and programs. We have ended our contract with Digi Sage but will maintain the old 1000 Islands domain name, which will link to the new page.

Education / Programming

- Our final Focus on the Fox event, Papermaking, was held on the first Saturday of the month and was very successful with over 40 people attending to learn about papermaking and make their own recycled paper. Special thanks to KHS Key Club Students for volunteering to run the stations.
- Kat facilitated another successful installment of 1000 Little Wonders, and the program is consistently full so we have added a few more available spots in hopes of allowing some that have not been able to join us before to attend.
- Brad led our Geocaching for Treats Treasure Hunt program and it was very successful with over 60 participants. Participants learned about geocaching and were able to find caches of treats and stamps to reveal a secret code to get candy and other treats afterwards.
- We had a very busy month of Field Trips with 15 different classrooms from different schools and grades coming in for a variety of programs, but in particular Plant and Animal Adaptations, which was recently changed to a Fall lesson under new state curriculum standards. We were able to adapt and enhance existing programs to suit the needs of the teachers and students, and feedback was very positive for the experience that we provided. We will continue to incorporate our observations and other feedback into improving our program offerings and strengthen our partnerships with area schools.
- Brad facilitated our first Junior Girl Scouts badge in Geocaching. 25 scouts earned their badge in Geocaching by learning all about what geocaching is, how it works, and how to do it. They completed the course to find different caches using GPS units, and made their own "trinkets" out of Shrinky Dinks that they can leave in a cache or to keep as a reminder of what they experienced.
- 1000 Islands hosted a Haunted Trail and Community Campfire (Trail of Terror) with Kaukauna Public Library. The haunted trail was geared towards those ages 12 and older, while the campfire was for all ages. Casey Woodward from KPL did a fantastic job coordinating the haunted trail which included scare actors and assistance from Burial Chamber of Neenah. Motomart was the sponsor and provided free drink tokens for participants. Attendees of the campfire enjoyed writing and sharing ghost stories, as well as S'mores provided by 1000 Islands. The weather was perfect and over 450 people attended.

Building and Grounds

- The Fall goat browsing was a great success! The goats ate most of the buckthorn in our established browsing areas, and we are seeing results with the continued use of the goats on the property. Thanks to the Goat Team for another successful season – we could not do this without their dedication, knowledge and time given to making this work. We will explore ways that we might be able to get the goats out to other areas of

the property next year, and we have started to discuss the future of continuing this program and how that might look.

- A lot of late season planting has happened on the property, along the river and around the fishing pier. Thanks to Ross Schuh for his generous donations of plants, time and expertise.
- Clear Approach Optometry rented the building to hold their annual Giving Sight Chili Fundraiser. They were granted a waiver of the building rental fee.
- Riverview Middle School rented the building for their English Language Learning Fall Festival for students and their families, as well as immigrant and refugee families throughout the community.
- Eric completed a new interactive "Plinko" game and refurbished the Stormwater display, adding siding (recycled from our old building siding,) lights and a fresh coat of paint. New educational signage will be installed soon.