

1000 Islands Environmental Center

June 2025 Naturalist Report

Brad Garrity – Naturalist

Terri Vosters – Director, Community Enrichment

1000 Islands Update

Admin/Finance

Admin/Finance Committee met prior to our last meeting. We discussed that content at the full committee meeting, but the minutes are now complete and available in this packet.

The Nature Center was closed July 4th and 5th for the weekend of the holiday. Brad was in each day to feed animals and reported that usage was sparse on the property, supporting the decision to close on Sat 7/5 which allowed staff to enjoy the full weekend. This is a rare occurrence only when the holiday falls on a Friday, but something we'll consider when other moving holidays such as Christmas or New Year's Day fall on a Friday, as will happen in 2026.

Education / Programming

After a successful and very busy Spring school field trip season, staff had a little break to catch their breath and transition to the summer daycare/camp groups.

We have had some pavilion rentals this summer already, including the group IndUs who held their annual party on our grounds. Overall, group rentals of the pavilion are down this summer but use of the pavilion by families and individuals for lunches, art, and other general enjoyment continues to be strong.

Ann Rosenberg brought Fran the Great Horned Owl in for a program which was well attended and very informative. We hope to have them back again very soon as it is a treat to see Fran up close and learn cool new stuff about owls.

Our public Crayfish and Critter Hunt continues to be one of our most popular programs, and we offer one morning and one afternoon session per month during the summer. Our June afternoon hunt brought in around and estimated 200 people! Lots of people are taking advantage of using our nest and buckets on their own during business hours as well!

We had one of our most well attended Service Saturdays in June as scout troops have started to use the day to bring their troops to allow scouts to complete their Conservation

hours requirements. The group in June worked on follow up work removing invasives from the gardens and the old goat browsing areas.

Local TV stations had high interest in stories about snapping turtles being active laying eggs and interviewed both Brad and Kat for their news stories. We are seeing an increase in local reporters contacting us for our expertise on relevant nature stories.

Building and Grounds

The Kaukauna Goats were on site from Mulberry Lane Farms from June 8 – 23rd.

- Maddie served as the staff liaison for the Goat Team, helping with goat moving, mucking the pen, talking to visitors and volunteers.
- Mayor Penterman declared June to be Invasive Species Control Month in the City of Kaukauna. The Mayor also came to our informal open house for Council and helped run the goats to their night enclosure.
- Media coverage was excellent. We had 3 stations show up unannounced on Day 1, as well as scheduled on-site interviews with WFRV 5 and WLUK 11. WFRV also featured our public Crayfish and Critter Hunt.
- The goats cleared the leaves off approximately 80-90% of the buckthorn in the large area behind the kiosk.
- Many visitors came to the property because of the goats and the Nature Center was very busy for those two weeks. The Goat Team hosted 5 groups from local assisted living/senior citizen communities (6 scheduled, 1 canceled due to rain.)

Based on updated information on the localized effects to other plants and near-water usage, we have discontinued use of the herbicide Tordon for stump treating buckthorn and other woody invasive plants. We have gone back to using Triclopyr 4.

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We continue to have new volunteers and volunteer groups working on the property doing work with building maintenance, trail work, weeding in the butterfly and memorial gardens (LOTS of thistle this year!)

Scarlett Aull is a youth volunteer working in the center weekly, helping with general duties as well as with some programming.

In collaboration with Kaukauna Public Library, a Three Sisters Garden has been planted on our property by the garage. KPL will be installing some educational signage and bringing their summer program participants over to work on weeding. 1000 Isl staff will help with watering and involved with the harvest.