

# 1000 Islands Environmental Center

## February 2025 Naturalist Report

Brad Garrity – Naturalist

Terri Vosters – Director, Community Enrichment

### **Community Enrichment Update**

- David and Allison are progressing in their roles and taking on the heavy lifting of their duties.
- Hiring for Pool and Program personnel is under way. Interviews are happening in early March.
- Summer programming information has been collected and is being compiled into RecTrac and the Summer Rec Guide.
- Bands for Electric City River Jam have been announced and planning for the event continues.

### **1000 Islands Update**

#### Education / Programming

- Not many field trip groups in February, but we did have most of the trips that were canceled due to the deep freeze in January reschedule and attend in February.
- Brad worked at an off-site program at Park School teaching and doing experiments about weather with the 5k classes.
- Kat attended the first NEWNA meeting of 2025 at NEW Zoo in Green Bay. The meeting included sessions on conservation, empathy in programming and staff training, nature play with a tour of the zoo's Discovery Zone. The roundtable discussion of current topics included memberships, capital campaigns, reaching new audiences for programming (Kat explained our new Jr Naturalist program built to target middle schoolers,) K-12 public school standards and communication with educators, land management for education, and potential benefits of NAAEE. Kat also got to hang out with a penguin!
- We have added an Earth Day Celebration Wellness Day on Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup>. We are offering adult and family yoga in the morning, healthy snacks all day, a reading of "The Lorax" by Dr. Seuss, a special self-guided scavenger hunt hike, and also the opening gala of the Riverview Student Art Show at 1000 Islands!

- Summer public programming has been finalized. We have a very busy, full, and fun summer planned! Highlights include:
  - Fox-Wolf Watershed Clean Up
  - 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Friends of 1000 Islands Natures Images Art Fair
  - Birdhouse Building Clinics
  - Return of the Kaukauna Goats
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Garlic and Dame Games and Service Saturdays
  - 1000 Little Wonders EXPLORERS! And special Saturday Edition
  - Brownie and Daisy Scout Clinics
  - Plein Air Painting Clinic
  - New Pollinator Week events and Trivia Pizza Party
  - Hike with a Naturalist – Konkapot Creek (with dogs), Island #3
  - The Great Kaukauna “Campout” – Community Campfire
  - Planet Defender Camp / Basic Survival Camp
  - Owl Fun with Ann and Fran
  - World Snake Day Celebration w/ Steve Keller Travelling Snake Show
- Our Moonlight Hike scheduled for February 14<sup>th</sup> was postponed due to the weather. The event was rescheduled for March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025.
- We had our first snowshoe season since 2019, and the first since replacing the old wooden snowshoes! Past years did not have enough snow for us to offer rentals. Unfortunately, it lasted all of one week, but we were happy to be able to get some use from our new snowshoes for the first time. Brad contacted the Principal at Quinney Elem to offer to bring the snowshoes to the school for a day in thanks of their donation contribution towards the snowshoes a few years ago but got no response. Will try again next year.

## Building and Grounds

- Radtke continues work on the boardwalk and is nearing completion and should be finished in March. Finishing work on the railings will occur once the ground has adequately thawed and settling had happened.
- The Street Department crew started work re-siding the building at the end of February. Work continues into March and should be complete by the end of the month. We have updated a few of the exterior lighting fixtures and some sections of soffit. We will be purchasing a new 1000 Islands sign for the exterior of the building to replace the old wooden letters.
- Outagamie County approved our proposed “Trail Xing” signage for the crossings to the Upper Woods at the stairs and at the Valley Trail. Eric will work with Street Dept to have them made and installed.

- We have decided to go back to using triclopyr herbicide for treating cut buckthorn and other invasive woody shrubs. We were recently using Tordon (Picloram) but upon receiving new information and assessing our property and invasive control needs, have determined that it is not the best option for our conservancy zone.

#### Admin/Finance

- Cassie Kohls celebrated her 1-year anniversary with 1000 Islands/City of Kaukauna in February.
- Eric Gonnering and Kat Berge both passed their 6-month marks in February.
- Terri completed our 2025 Bird City application. Mayor Penterman will be issuing a proclamation marking World Migratory Bird Day and we will offer a birdhouse building public program in May to complete the necessary requirements for the Bird City designation.
- Upon reviewing the test pages of the new City website and getting more information about the functionality, we have decided to shut down our independent site and build our pages within the City's website once our hosting contract is up. This will be a money saver for us to better use money donated by Friends for other needs and be a time saver by eliminating the need to update information on both the 1000 Islands site/calendar as well as the City's page and calendar. We recently renewed our hosting, so this will be a project we work on over the course of the next 6+ months. We will be making updates to our current site this Spring to remain current and make changes to enhance the user experience until we are ready to integrate with the City.
- The 2025 Seedling Sale is underway. Order forms have gone out with the February KU utility bills and orders are coming in.