

# Spring 2025

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*Green-Rock Audubon Society*



*Protecting Wildlife for Tomorrow*

Serving Lafayette, Green,  
& Rock Counties

Photo by Fred Faessler

**Wild Geraniums**

## THE NATURALIST

# President's Article

By **Joshua Erdman**  
President

Birding offers a wealth of positive mental benefits, providing a calming and mindful escape from the stresses of everyday life. The practice of observing birds encourages patience, focus, and a deeper connection with nature, which can significantly reduce anxiety and improve mood. Engaging the senses while listening for calls or scanning treetops fosters mindfulness, drawing attention away from negative thoughts and into the present moment. For many, birding becomes not just a hobby but a meditative and restorative ritual that supports overall well-being.

Our organization was one of several that shrank away from providing field trips opportunities during the COVID pandemic and that unfortunately continued for several years afterward, while some other organizations took on the challenge of the time and increased their offerings as demand for things to do increased. Last year, we made an effort to get birding trips up and running again in our area with mixed results. This spring we have offered multiple trips in conjunction with some of our fellow organizations in the area, with increasingly better results.

In May, we featured two trips along the Ice Age Trail in conjunction with the Rock County chapter of the Ice Age Trail Alliance. The first one, at Storrs Lake, caught the tail end of warbler migration and featured 46 species in total, including nice views of Chestnut-sided Warbler, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and a Barred Owl. The second one, at Cook Arboretum/JSOL, was similarly prolific, with 11 participants getting exposed to 42 species. Red-headed Woodpeckers put on a show, a Wood Thrush revealed her trailside nest to us, and one of the area's specialties, Cerulean Warbler, was kind enough to pop out in the open so we could match the face with the call (albeit from a distance). Finally, a field trip to Rock County's newest park, Rock River Heritage Park, featured 41 species detected by 7 participants, including hen Wood Duck and Hooded Mergansers with their broods of ducklings, and cooperative views of Eastern Bluebird, Cedar Waxwing, and Eastern Phoebe for some of the newer birders, along with many other resident breeders singing.

While birding can be an enjoyable solo activity, it is nice to have a large group of eyes and ears present to detect whatever birds might be near (something I appreciate more and more as I get older). It is even better to experience camaraderie with a fellow group of people enjoying the birds and the outdoors.

EVERYONE is welcome at our birding field trips. Binoculars are available for those that do not have them and beginners are encouraged to come and learn. Our trips feature a combination of identification by sight and by ear. The last two years we have also included several accessible trips on flat surfaces over shorter distances to accommodate a variety of abilities to come and enjoy the birds. We always looking for more people to participate and more people to lead trips. Please join us later this year as we continue to feature trips in Green, Rock, AND Lafayette counties this summer and fall and experience the many benefits of birding

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## Memorial for Victor Illichmann

At the June meeting, the G-RAS board of directors voted to name the property at 6400 W Cleophas Rd the Victor Illichmann Reserve.

They also are making plans to erect a Kiosk and plant a pollinator garden at that site in Victor's memory. There will also be memorial benches at various places on G-RAS properties.

Once the cost estimates are finalized there will be a formal appeal for donations.



# Summer 2025 Management Report

Late this winter we had a contractor finish cleaning up the down trees and mowing brush in the southern part of Androne woods. They also conducted a prescribed fire throughout the woods. In May there was a great show of wild geranium and other wildflowers.

In Gabower-Reilly East, remaining trees were removed as part of restoring it to grassland and sedge meadow. We're also mowing brush in several areas.

Several prescribed fires were conducted this spring. Volunteers were able to burn parts of Gabower-Reilly, Raccoon Creek and Cleophas. Contractors were hired to burn Spring Creek, Androne Woods and the main part of Cleophas.

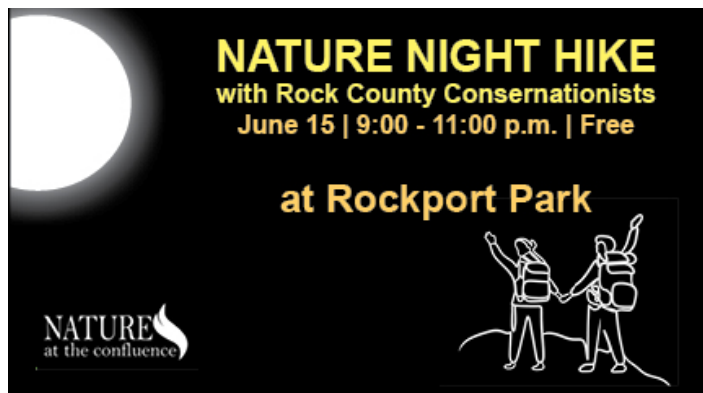


## Summer Events/Activities for Our Partners

**June 3, 2025:** "Naturalists in the Gardens: Roaming Presentation," 10 – 11 AM at the Rotary Botanical Gardens, 1455 Palmer Drive, Janesville, WI. This event is free and open to the public.

**June 7, 2025:** "National Trail Days Hike" in the Southern Kettle Moraine, 8 AM – 5 PM, sponsored by the Walworth/Jefferson Chapter of Ice Age Trail Alliance. This event is free and open to the public. Meet at the Rice Lake Boat Launch in Whitewater, WI.

**June 13, 2025:** "Night Nature Hike at Rockport Park," sponsored by the Rock County Conservationists, 9-11 PM. Meet at the west end of the parking lot near the Rockport Park Swimming Pool. This is an excellent program for families, scout groups, and church groups. The event is free and open to the public.



**June 15, 2025:** "Night Nature Hike at Big Hill Park," sponsored by the Rock County Conservationists and the Welty Environmental Center, 9 – 11 PM, Location is: Welty Environmental Center, 1201 Big Hill Court, Beloit, WI. Bats, fireflies, glowworms, owls and an astounding chorus of tree frogs await! This event is free and open to the public.

**June 20, 2025:** "Night Hike at Fair Meadows," Fair Meadows Prairie, 11305 N. Vogel Road, Milton, WI, sponsored by the Rock County Conservationists, 9-11 PM. Fair Meadows is a 300-acre site with wide, easily hiked trails that wind through native and restored prairies, oak woodlands, ponds and wetlands adjacent to Lake Koshkonong. This event is free and open to the public.

**June 22, 2025:** "Night Nature Hike at Nature at the Confluence, South Beloit, IL, sponsored by the Rock County Conservationists, 9-10:30 PM. We saw the most bats at this location. This event is free and open to the public.

## Save the Date!

**September 27 - 11:00 a.m.** G-RAS Annual Picnic at Androne Woods  
**October 26 - G-RAS Annual Meeting** at the Three Waters Reserve in Brodhead at 2:00 p.m., featuring Dianne Moller from Hoo's Woods

## Annual Pelican Fest at Rockton, IL

G-RAS was a sponsor this year. Susan Johnson arrived early to table for us and was limited by the wind and lack of a table.

Neil Deupree got there about twelve thirty. He said "I took in two of the programs - one on bugs and one on Sand Bluff Bird Banding Station. I talked with the people at the Sinnissippi Audubon table. Then went out to the viewing platform at Nygren wetlands. Lee Johnson, founder of the banding station, was there. They told me he's 93 years old now. I think it would be good to support the event again next year."



## Early morning hike yields amazing bird photos

These lovely bird photos were from the early morning bird hike in the Janesville Arboretum co-sponsored by the Green-Rock Audubon Society, and the Rock County Ice Age Trail Alliance, led by G-RAS President, Josh Erdman.

Upper Left is a red-headed woodpecker.  
Middle Left is a scarlet tanager.  
Lower Left is a red-eyed vireo.  
Upper Right is an eastern phoebe.  
Lower Right is a cerulean warbler.



## G-RAS hosts birding field trip from Chicago at JSOL

On Friday, May 30, Kerry Swift and a delegation of five others from Lake Cook Audubon stopped by to visit an Important Birding Area in Rock County. They were on their way to Wyalusing State Park to look for birds, and Janesville was a halfway point.

Janesville Schools Outdoor Lab (JSOL), aka Robert O Cook Memorial Arboretum, was listed as a great place to see birds, so they asked if someone could show them around. Tom Klubertanz, biology professor at UWW Rock County, has been involved in scientific studies of birds at JSOL, and graciously made time to be the host.

They saw and heard 35 different species in their 90-minute walk through the woods. Here is what Kerry wrote after the trip:

Dear Neil, thank you very much for your message. We enjoyed our walk with you and Tom very much. I hope that you can keep the arboretum intact and continue to enjoy its beautiful nature. Please keep in mind that I would love to reciprocate and show you, Josh, Tom, or your chapter anything I can in the Chicago or Lake County area. Kerry



Kerry Swift photo

The picture above is one Kerry took at Wyalusing, but they saw and heard Acadian Flycatchers while they were here as well.



## Sustainable Janesville Fair

Here are Neil and Andrea at the Sustainable Janesville Fair on April 25, 2025 tabling with the Green-Rock Audubon Society, and Bird City. G-RAS had two fun games for kids and adults alike. Fun and learning was definitely had by all! Thank you, Neil and Andrea!



## Pelicans Ride the Rock River and Rest Easy on the Sandbars

by Neil Deupree

Seven years ago, the Monterey Dam on the Rock River in Janesville was removed.

The next spring the pelicans came.

It was a surprise for many people who have grown up in the midwest and think of pelicans as part of ocean scenery. But American White Pelicans have long been summer residents of midwestern lakes. I first saw them in Spirit Lake, Iowa, just south of the Minnesota border. Twenty years ago, a friend pointed them out to me on Lake Koshkonong.

It's been a thrill to have these beautiful and graceful birds, whose wingspan is wider than an eagle's, as visitors just a few blocks from my house.

The first year they showed up, we had a pelican party by the Marling river access on Palm Sunday. As I remember, there were between 100 and 200 birds by the river bend.

I haven't kept sufficient records to discern a pattern for their presence, except that they usually appear in April. One winter a pair stayed all through the below zero winter. I assume one was too weak or injured to make the migration trip, and the other stayed to provide help and warmth and to keep them company.

Pelican presence in Janesville during the summer seems to be spotty, sort of like the tanagers who eat our grape jelly in the spring and then disappear to parts unknown.

This year, thanks to the ebird app on my cellphone, I can report observations in real time, sometimes twice a day. Two scouts arrived on April 12, and 20-40 for the next two days. The following two weeks saw 5-10, but beginning on April 27 my count has ranged from 40-80 up through May 28.

Why have White Pelicans become regular summer visitors? I think that since the dam is gone, the fishing is better. Fish can swim up as far as the Centerway dam now, opening up new areas for those who like to fish, both birds and humans. I also know that the river is shallower near the Monterey Rock, so the pelicans have more sand bars to loaf on. They like to pack close together. Why do you think they're here?

### Swift Census is Coming

In less than three months, the swifts will be roosting here on their way south.

Janesville Tally: 2024 – 1479, 2023 – 1983, 2022 – 2620

You can see from the count that either there are fewer swifts, or they are going to chimneys we don't know about or climate change has altered their schedule.



\*See PELICANS, Page 8

# Pelicans

Continued from page 7

How can you help answer these questions? 1) Let me know if you see swifts using a chimney in Janesville. 2) Expand our knowledge: a) Who in Beloit or Monroe is willing to lead the census? b) If you live in a smaller community in Green, Rock or Lafayette County and know of a roosting site, please contact me.

Our plan is to do the count in Janesville on Sunday, August 24 and Sunday, September 7.

A great resource is: Wisconsin Chimney Swift Working Group, [www.wisswifts.org](http://www.wisswifts.org)

My contact info is: [deupreeneil@gmail.com](mailto:deupreeneil@gmail.com) or 608-752-8342. Thanks. Neil

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## Birding Calendar

**June 15, 2025:** 8 – 10 AM, G-RAS Birding field trip to check out resident breeding birds along the Ice Age Trail at the Brooklyn Wildlife Area in Green County. Meet in the parking lot at N9116 Hughes Rd near Belleville. All levels of birder welcome, some binoculars will be available to borrow for those who need them. Leader: Josh Erdman



County. Meet in the parking lot on NN just past the entrance station and flagpole. A DNR state park admission sticker or daily payment is required for parking. All levels of birder welcome, some binoculars will be available to borrow for those that do not have them.

Leader: Josh Erdman

**Saturday, July 12, 2025 7am-9am**

Birding field trip to check out resident breeding birds at Erickson Conservation Area in Lafayette County. Meet in the parking lot at the Argyle Legion Community Park, 14567 WI-78, in Argyle. All levels of birder welcome, some binoculars will be available to borrow for those that do not have them.

Leader: Josh Erdman

**Sunday, September 7, 2025 8am-10am**

Birding field trip to check out fall migrants, especially drab warblers, along the Ice Age Trail on the Devil's Staircase/Janesville segment. Meet at the North Pavilion at Riverside Park at 2200 Parkside Dr in Janesville. All levels of birder welcome, some binoculars will be available to borrow for those that do not have them. Trail includes some narrow, uneven trails and stairs.

Leader: Josh Erdman

**Sunday, September 14, 2025 8am-10am**

Birding field trip to check out fall migrants at Rock River Heritage County Park. Meet in the parking lot near Heritage Hall, 5801 N River Rd, north of Janesville. All levels of birder welcome, some binoculars will be available to borrow for those that do not have them.

Leader: Josh Erdman

**Friday, June 27, 2025 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm**

Birding by bike field trip to check out resident breeding birds along the Peace Trail south of Janesville. Meet in the parking lot at the Fisher's Creek trailhead, at the intersection of Afton Rd (Co Rd D) and Rockport Park Dr, just south of Janesville. All levels of birder welcome, some binoculars will be available to borrow for those that do not have them. Bikes not provided. Pace will be slow to moderate on paved or aggregate trail with occasional stops to explore on foot. Total distance pedaled will be between 7 and 8 miles.

Leader: Josh Erdman

**Sunday, July 6, 2025 8am-10am**

Birding field trip to check out resident breeding birds at New Glarus Wood State Park in Green





## The Serviceberry Book Club

Hosted by Healing Roots Collaborative

Meets **Monthly on Zoom**

**Sundays** from **10 am – 11:15 am CDT**

Join us for any or all of the meetings. **Free** to attend.

**May 25**

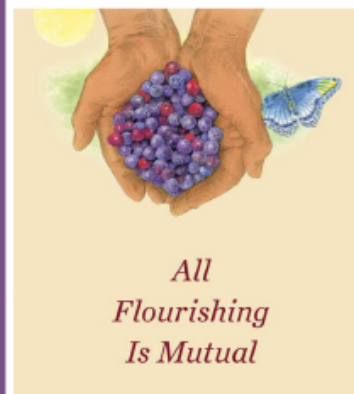
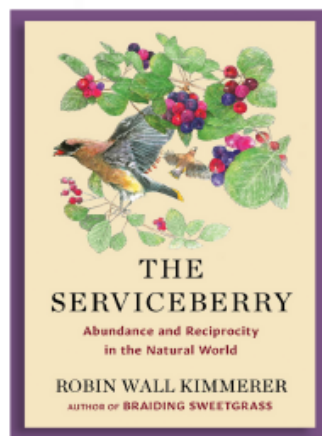
**June 22**

**July 20**

**August 24**

We'll divide the reading into four sections.

All are welcome to join the discussion, even if you have not read the book.

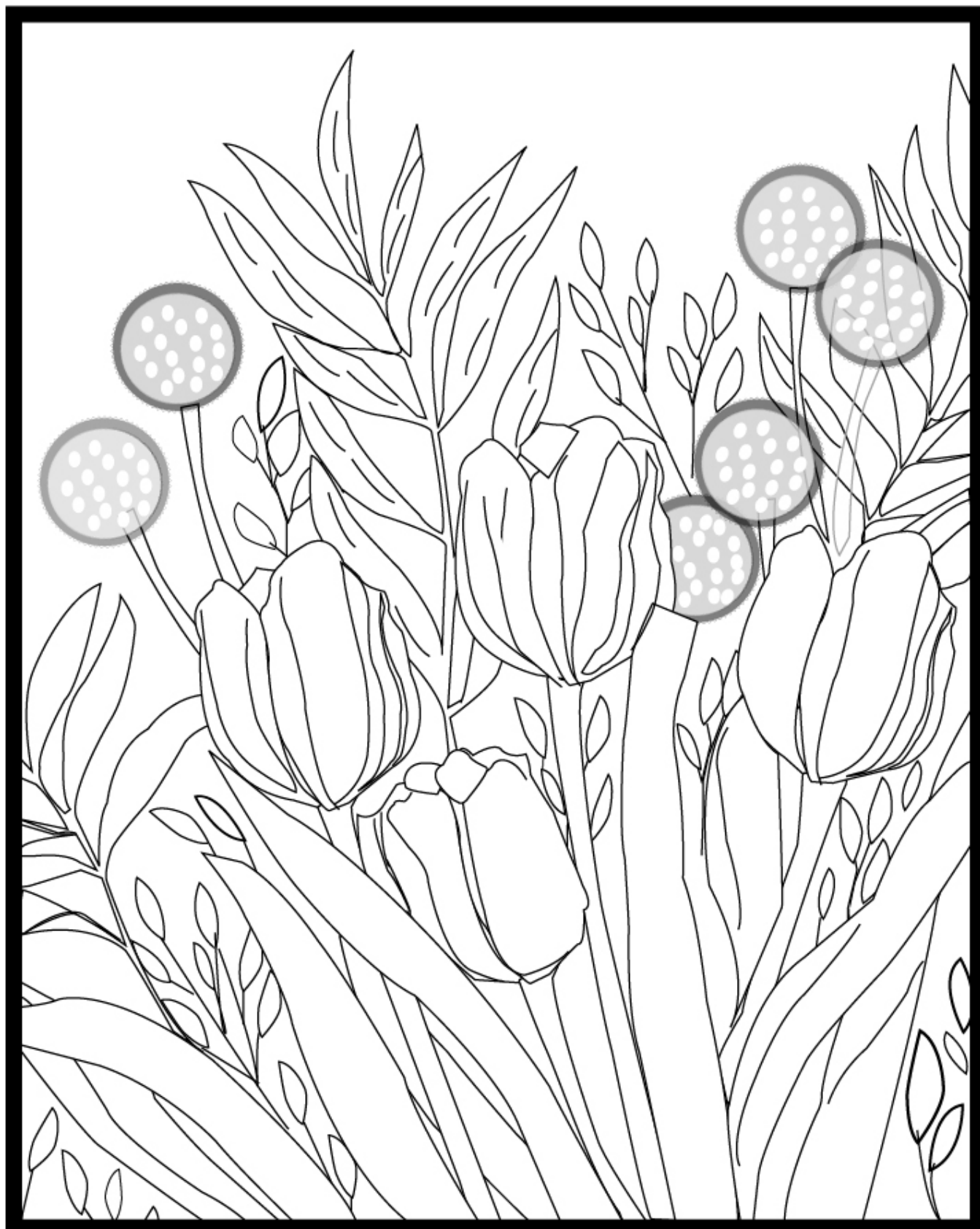


INFO &  
REGISTRATION



[Info@healingrootscollaborative.org](mailto:Info@healingrootscollaborative.org)

Please support your local public library, purchase the book from an independent bookstore, or buy online at [bookshop.org](https://bookshop.org).







# Join Green-Rock Audubon Society

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Would you prefer to receive the newsletter electronically? \_\_\_\_

## Two Ways to Join

\_\_\_\_ I wish to join Green-Rock Audubon Society, I understand that I will not receive the Audubon Magazine, but all dues will go to G-RAS.

Dues: ☐ \$10 Senior or Student, ☐ \$15 Single Membership, ☐ \$20 Couple

• To pay by mail, make checks payable to G-RAS, and mail this form along with the check to this address:

Green-Rock Audubon  
 Attn: Treasurer  
 P.O. Box 1986  
 Janesville, WI 53547-1986

• To pay online visit <https://www.greenrockaudubon.org/donate>

\_\_\_\_ I wish to join the National Audubon Society's normal membership.  
 (Please <http://action.audubon.org/donate/chapter-membership?chapter=Z18> to complete this membership.)

\_\_\_\_ I wish to donate an additional \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to support GRAS's conservation efforts.

## Volunteering Interests I would like to volunteer for...

- ☐ Whatever is Needed
- ☐ Burning
- ☐ Brushing
- ☐ Spraying
- ☐ Seed Collecting
- ☐ Planting

## I can volunteer at:

- ☐ Whenever is Needed
- ☐ Androne Woods
- ☐ Cleophas Reserve
- ☐ Spring Creek Reserve
- ☐ Gabower-Reilly Reserve
- ☐ The Pond (Janesville)

## Donate Beyond Membership I would like to donate to...

- ☐ Whatever is Needed
- ☐ Purchasing
- ☐ Herbicides
- ☐ Purchasing Spray Equipment

## Volunteer Coordinator:

Fred Faessler  
[fred.faessler53@gmail.com](mailto:fred.faessler53@gmail.com)

## Times I can usually volunteer:

- ☐ Monday
- ☐ Tuesday
- ☐ Wednesday
- ☐ Thursday
- ☐ Friday
- ☐ Saturday
- ☐ Sunday

## I want my donation to support G-RAS's efforts to manage or maintain...

- ☐ Androne Woods
- ☐ Cleophas Reserve
- ☐ Spring Creek Reserve
- ☐ Gabower-Reilly Reserve

(Please mail checks according to the directions above or visit our website.)

# Membership Form Inside

Green-Rock Audubon Society (G-RAS) membership for one year with quarterly newsletter Green-Rock Naturalist from Green-Rock Audubon Society (all dues go to G-RAS).

- Senior or Student membership \$10
- Single person membership \$15
- Couples membership \$20



@GRAudubon, #GreenRockAudubon  
[www.facebook.com/greenrockaudubon](http://www.facebook.com/greenrockaudubon)  
[www.greenrockaudubon.org](http://www.greenrockaudubon.org)

## Board of Directors

To contact the directors e-mail  
[greenrockaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:greenrockaudubon@gmail.com)

Past President: Joni Rousseau Denker

President: Joshua Erdman

Vice President: NA (We don't have one)

Secretary: NA (We don't have one)

Treasurer: Neil Deupree

Land Manager: Fred Faessler

Advocacy/Engagement: Susan Johnson

Director: Andrea Short

Director: Linn Duesterbeck

Director: Dela Ends

Membership: Steve Reischel

We need members to become more active with us. All members are invited to join us our occasional gatherings at Havana Coffee in Janesville. Check our website and Facebook Page for the dates.

# Thank You!

The Green-Rock Audubon Society is grateful for the generous support we received from these people since March 2025.

Shirley May  
Pat & Robert McNeely  
Tom & Theresa Klubertanz  
David & Vicki Dieter  
Cindy Vaughn  
John Ochsner  
Tony & Dela Ends  
John Sorce

We also received the annual payment from National Audubon Society of \$1,289.50.