

Autumn 2023

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The road into Fall.

Green-Rock Audubon Society

G-RAS



Protecting Wildlife for Tomorrow

Serving Lafayette, Green,
& Rock Counties

THE NATURALIST

President's Article

Joni Denker
President

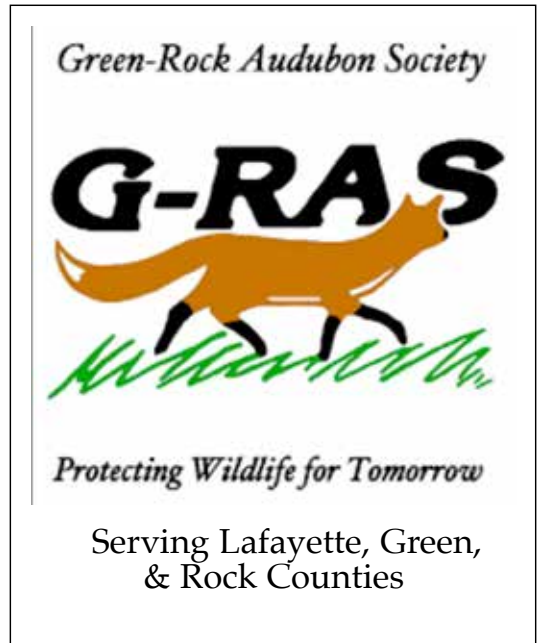
GRAS' mission to protect wildlife for tomorrow through education, conservation, and advocacy could not be completed without its dedicated volunteers! Several opportunities are available for you to assist us in carrying out this mission while serving on our Board of Directors.

Board members attend monthly first-Wednesday virtual board meetings to vote on actions and discuss business such as budgeting, programing, board development, land management, and advocacy. We also use local coffee shops as a meeting place to not only discuss the latest committee activities, but to catch up with and encourage each other in a casual setting.

If you're interested in serving with our dedicated crew, we have an immediate need to fill our Treasurer position. The Treasurer is responsible for providing the board with monthly financial reports, paying invoices, signing official board documents as needed, and leading the creation of an annual budget.

Other positions available soon include President, Vice President, as well as 2 open board positions.

If you would like to help us lead GRAS into the future, or know someone that would be interested, please reach out! We would love to hear from you! Inquiries about our open positions can be sent to Joni Denker, board President, at jonidenker@gmail.com; or Neil Deupree, interim Treasurer, at deupreen@charter.net.



2023 Annual Meeting

When: Sunday October 22, 2023, 1 PM

Where: Three Waters Reserve, N3941 Golf Course Rd. Brodhead, WI 53520

What: Lunch, business meeting, member engagement, and guest presentation

Join GRAS board, chapter members, and volunteers for a presentation from the International Crane Foundation and learn more about the 2 cranes in Wisconsin and conservation efforts underway to preserve these species. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to Neil Deupree at deupreen@charter.net by October 8th.



Wisconsin's wetlands are home to Sandhill Cranes and endangered Whooping Cranes. In the not so-distant past, both Sandhill Cranes and Whooping Cranes faced near extinction throughout North America as they battled with increasing threats of unregulated hunting and habitat loss. Thanks to widespread conservation efforts, Sandhill Cranes are now one of the most populous crane species in the world and Whooping Crane populations, while still endangered, are slowly growing. Today Wisconsin residents see around 20,000 Sandhill Cranes and 76 Whooping Cranes each year! Unfortunately, Whooping Cranes and Sandhill Cranes continue to face threats in Wisconsin and across their flyway. Join the International Crane Foundation to learn the history of the

cranes of Wisconsin and how you can help safeguard their future. Following this presentation, you will be able to identify Sandhill Cranes and Whooping Cranes, know the history of both crane species, understand the current work crane conservation partners are doing to protect cranes in Wisconsin and throughout their flyways, and find out how you can be an ambassador for cranes in Wisconsin as a volunteer and citizen scientist.



Fred Faessler
Dustin Wire using this machine to herbiciding willows with a “Marshmaster” at Spring Creek. We can kill brush this way and save most of the other vegetation.

G-RAS Lands Autumn 2023

Prepared by **Victor Illichmann**
Land Manager

Androne Woods – We have been maintaining trails here with John West's help.

Cleophas Reserve – We have gotten the parsnip here. There is a lot of color in spite of the draught. A lot of the prairie plants have not been producing seed due to the drought. Brain Daughtery has been mowing firebreaks here.

Gabower-Reilly Reserve – We got the parsnip here. There is some good color in spite of the drought. The yellow coneflower did not get as showy as it usually does. Brain Daughtery has been mowing firebreaks here.

Gabower-Reilly East – We have removed stumps near the road.

Spring Creek Reserve – We have cleared along the creek in preparation for a fall burn and planting a pollinator mix. There is a fair amount of color in spite of the drought. Matt Carr has been mowing firebreaks here.



The Currents That Connect Us

By Susan Amber Johnson,
Advocacy Chair

The 2023 Wisconsin State League of Women Voters Convention was held this year June 9 and 10 on the Mississippi River in La Crosse, Wisconsin. The theme of this year's conference was: "The Currents That Connect Us." Dorothy Skye, President of the State League Board of Directors, introduced this year's meetings by discussing why convention organizers chose the metaphor of currents as this year's theme. Water flows from one area to another ignoring artificial human boundaries. It just flows the way it needs to flow, forging its own path. In so doing, it connects various biomes and ecosystems with one another, in effect, joining together all life forms around the world. All life forms and their habitats are connected to all others. Humans have much to learn from water and its flows to better connect ourselves socially and politically, as well as, physically in the environments in which we live.

The Keynote Address on Saturday, June 10 was entitled, "Bridging the Urban-Rural Divide." The urban-rural/rural-urban differences we see currently in Wisconsin are nothing new to our state. However, some politicians are using our differences to cut a deeper wedge among us, and thereby, hurt us. This deeper division prevents us from working together to solve our mutual problems. What kind of progress, if any, can be made toward bridging this divide?

The two speakers for this Keynote were Cabeatrice Hart, and Philip Matthews, who work with Rural Urban FLOW, <https://ruralurbanflow.org>. This organization describes itself as, "a growing network of cultural and agricultural producers across Wisconsin's rural-urban continuum." Its members and supporters "look beyond neighborhoods and news feeds to cultivate common ground." It is a cross-cultural exchange among food producers, artists, and activists from Milwaukee, and Sauk County, Wisconsin. This 2019 video helps illustrate the meaning and purpose of Rural Urban FLOW: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTW3GOk0TEg>.

Cabeatrice Hart is part of the Rural Urban FLOW as an artist who works with Alice's Garden Urban Farm located at 2136 N. 21st Street in Milwaukee. Alice's Garden was named for Alice Meade-Taylor, a former Executive Director of Milwaukee County Extension. This urban garden uses regenerative farming practices, which focus on soil health and biodiversity to grow food in harmony with nature, according to Indigenous knowledge, and principles. Its website further states, "we recognize the cultivating, preparing, and preserving of food, and food traditions, as cultural arts to be reclaimed and celebrated fully in urban agriculture." Alice's Garden offers several regularly-scheduled weekly educational activities for people of all ages, such as "Teach Me How to Garden," "Herbal Apprentices," and "Playtime in the Garden." It also offers some unique and special activities like "Yoga for Black Men and their Children," "Magic in Wonderland" talent showcase, and "Star-gazing in the Garden," among many other events.

Philip Matthews, is the Director of Programs for the Wormfarm Institute in Sauk County. This Institute "cultivates connections between our rural and urban neighbors through art, food, and the



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* Current

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land,” according to its website. WormFarm uses the metaphor of a watershed, a geographical area of land that drains water flowing from rivers and streams into a larger body of water, like a lake, bay, or ocean, to illustrate how its individual artists, farmers, chefs, writers and performers form a “cultureshed” of rural and urban cultural knowledge and food that enriches, nourishes, and nurtures them all. To accomplish this rich cultural exchange, Milwaukee and Sauk County residents travel to one another’s regions to work together on food production, art installations, music, and theater. Perhaps these examples of

cultural sharing and cooperative production can be reproduced in other geographical areas of Wisconsin creating new Rural Urban FLOWS.

Group encourages residents to enjoy chimney swifts

by **Ann Marie Ames**

The Janesville Bird City Committee once again invited Janesville residents to enjoy a unique late-summer sight: Hundreds of small, acrobatic birds seeking overnight accommodations in downtown Janesville. Volunteers counted nearly 2,000 chimney swifts at seven sites in Janesville on Sunday, August 27 and Sunday, September 3, as part of Swift Night Out, a continent-wide effort to raise awareness of chimney swift habitat loss.

Good locations to view the annual spectacle in Janesville were Washington Elementary School, 811 N. Pine St.; United Church of Christ, 54 S. Jackson St. and VFW Kienow-Hilt Post 1621, 1015 Center Ave. The birds also roost in other uncapped chimneys on homes and businesses in the downtown Janesville area. They were seen gathering above the roosting locations for about 30 to 60 minutes before sunset.

Chimney swifts are small, insect-eating birds that are vulnerable to habitat loss. Each summer, chimney swifts build nests and raise chicks in Janesville and other cities with suitable chimneys in North America east of the Rocky Mountains. They can be seen and heard in the downtown Janesville area daily starting in May.

In late August, once nesting season is over, chimney swifts gather in large flocks and begin migrating to Peru, Ecuador, Chile and Brazil. Along the way, the flocks choose communal roosting sites in uncapped chimneys. The birds tend to use the same chimneys year after year, although the “popularity” of some chimneys changes during a season or between years. The birds circle in loose spirals until sunset when they begin entering the chimney, which allows for relatively easy counting.

People interested in volunteering may contact Bird City Committee organizer Neil Deupree at deupreen@charter.net, (608) 752-8342. Learn more about supporting beneficial birds in the city at <https://www.janesvillewi.gov/departments-services/public-works/parks-division/bird-city>. Homeowners and business owners can learn more about protecting chimney swift habitat in Wisconsin at wiswifts.org.

Note: On Sunday, September 10, a few swifts were seen at the VFW, but none at Washington School or other places. They likely have moved farther south. ND



Scholarships Awarded

A highlight of this summer's activities for G-RAS was the distribution of ten scholarships.

Three were awarded to high school seniors for their first year of college studies related to ecological work. Seven were given to recent graduates of the Master Naturalist class at Welty Environmental Center.

Receiving the three \$2000 grants were: Grace Zhang, Milton High School, UW Madison; Katherine (Kate) Bucklin, Milton High School, UW Milwaukee; and Emma Middleton, Beloit Memorial High School, UW Whitewater.

The Master Naturalists who received \$200 awards are: Andrea Short, Art Burns, Connie Gregg, Jane Anderson, Susan Johnson, Tai Thompson, and Todd Stephanus. We wish them well in their continuing conservation work.

Here is an introduction to the university students.

Grace Zhang: I am focusing on engineering and research related to the environment and sustainability. My current intended major is Environmental Engineering, though I am still exploring possible career paths through Mechanical and Chemical Engineering. Through my career, I hope to create environmental change through innovation, and I believe my higher education would allow me to learn the skills necessary to do so in engineering and that it would help me become both better informed on the problems we face and how to contribute to a better future, through courses, potential research opportunities and/or internships, and environmental extracurriculars.

Kate Bucklin: In the wide world of environmental studies, I wish to become an environmental engineer. Ever since I was young, I have watched an ever-growing climate crisis and fear-mongering in the news practically every day, and I can't help but be terrified of what the future looks like and if the ways of the world will ever change before a breaking point is hit. Now, as a senior in high school, nothing has changed. As an environmental engineer, I aspire to work to fix this climate crisis by designing more sustainable packaging materials to replace harmful materials such as styrofoam and plastic and give back to the only planet we have. During my school trip to Perú, I was immersed in a different and sustainable way of life throughout my stay in the Amazon rainforest and also in Lima. The manner in which the people lived off of the land in the Amazon, with many of the public places being energy-independent with implemented methods to conserve energy, was incredibly inspirational and had me thinking about why it's not this sustainable way of life isn't as common in first-world countries and what I could do to create that change.

I believe that my higher education, my studying of environmental engineering at UW-Milwaukee, will positively impact the future by providing me with the necessary tools possible to become an engineer and to work towards a more sustainable way of life. At UW-Milwaukee, I not only plan to learn the skill set of an environmental engineer and how to design in a way that contributes to positive environmental change, but to also seek internships with companies to help them evaluate statistics such as the emissions or the sustainability of their designs. In the future, I see myself on my way to becoming a senior engineer after having created a series of renewable materials and methods with my environmental engineering degree, and also with years of experience under my belt. I also envision an increase in the number of initiatives taken to increase environmental sustainability, both in my own life and in others as a result of my work as a result of my higher education.

Emma Middleton: My entire life I have always loved being outside, whether it was participating in sports or playing with my dog. Today I still love being outdoors. I can always find something to do no matter what season of the year it is.

After I graduate from high school, I will be attending the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater to study environmental science. My passion for environmental science started when I decided to join the environmental club last year. In the spring we took part in the Beloit city wide clean up. This opportunity was a great learning experience and made me realize how important giving back to our community is. This year we have so many great things planned that will help both our school and our community. We have already built bluebird houses for the community and we plan to study the

*See SCHOLARSHIPS, Page 7

* Scholarships

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food waste from the cafeteria, grow a native species garden, and participate in the city wide clean up again. While at college, I hope to join clubs and organizations that promote and encourage eco-friendly practices.

I know that earning a degree in STEM is going to be challenging. An academic goal of mine is to find success through any challenge that I may face while pursuing my degree. I am proud of myself for deciding to pursue an education and career in a STEM field as a female. It may be a challenge, but in the end it's going to be worth it. Going into a STEM field as a female is important for many reasons. There is not enough representation of women in STEM careers. Increasing the amount of women in these fields is important because it allows for new perspectives and ideas.

For the environmental science major at UW-Whitewater you must select an emphasis as well. I plan to choose the natural sciences emphasis. I don't know exactly what career within environmental science I am going to pursue but as of now I would really love to become an environmental scientist. After some research, environmental scientists deal a lot with chemistry and biology so the natural sciences emphasis would be the right fit for me. Looking at the list of courses offered at UW-Whitewater, I have found many that really interest me. I will have to take some geosciences classes and some environmental resource management classes, but most will be the natural science classes. Being able to take courses from all three different areas will allow me to learn about every aspect of environmental science, which will be useful for my future after college.

After graduating college, I will use the education that I have received to research issues and challenges that the environment faces and then come up with solutions to help them. This could be climate change, pollution, food waste, or any other environmental issue that is hurting our planet. Although I don't know exactly where I may end up after college, I do know that pursuing a career in environmental science will take me someplace where I can give back to my community and the planet as a whole.

Pelicans and more hang out at Monterey and Marlings

by Neil Deupree

In late July there were still a few dozen pelicans loafing on the sand bars in the Rock River. By August their number had dwindled, but as of September 10 there were still at least a couple laying claim to their spot. There have been hundreds of gulls and swallows. On one day in July there was a flock of vultures – looking for dead fish, I guess. In late August and September, we have often seen a great blue heron or two and a snowy egret.

The eagles are still coming back to the area of their previous nests. One was observed catching a fish there. We are hopeful that they will choose to stay at the river bend.



GOP-led Funding Bill Includes Drastic Cuts to Programs Important to Birds and People

Statement from National Audubon Society

WASHINGTON – This week, the US House Appropriations Committee advanced a bill that would slash the budget of critically important programs and agencies, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, and the Bureau of Land Management. The spending bill also includes anti-environmental and anti-wildlife riders, including one that would prohibit listing species like the Greater Sage-Grouse as endangered, even if science indicates the need.



Common Loon. Photo: Jelieta Walinski/Audubon Photography Awards

“These proposals are beyond extreme and ignore the reality of what Americans need and value,” said Felice Stadler, vice president of government affairs. “Policy riders that ignore science for political purposes, and draconian cuts to key environmental agencies are harmful to birds, people, and the natural resources we all depend on. Many of the cuts in this budget proposal would further decimate programs that are already woefully understaffed and underfunded. We cannot begin to address the climate, public health, and biodiversity threats we are facing with the budget passed by the House Appropriations Committee. We strongly urge Congress to reject this package as it moves forward.”

Louisiana Breaks Ground on Single-largest Ecosystem Restoration Project in U.S. History

The Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion will protect people and birds from storms and erosion.

(August 10, 2023) — Today, state and federal officials in Louisiana broke ground on the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion, a large-scale restoration project that will reconnect the Mississippi River with its wetlands. Cut off from the river by levees for a century, Louisiana’s Barataria Basin has experienced some of the highest rates of land loss on the planet.

The Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion will deliver much-needed sediment to restore the wetlands in Barataria Basin, strengthening tens of thousands of acres of wetlands, which will buffer nearby communities from storms and provide habitat for iconic birds like Roseate Spoonbills and Bald Eagles.

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* Restoration

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To mark the occasion, Dr. Elizabeth Gray, CEO of the National Audubon Society, issued the following statement:

“Today we celebrate 15 years of advocacy, science, and public engagement as we reconnect the river with its historic wetlands — This is a big win for people and birds on Louisiana’s coast,” said Gray. “With increasingly damaging storms, we need our wetlands more than ever to soak up huge quantities of water, ease flooding, and protect our communities, birds, and wildlife.”



Bald Eagle. Photo: Jeff Smith/Audubon Photography Awards

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About Audubon

The National Audubon Society protects birds and the places they need today and tomorrow. Audubon works throughout the Americas using science, advocacy, education, and on-the-ground conservation. State programs, nature centers, chapters, and partners give Audubon an unparalleled wingspan that reaches millions of people each year to inform, inspire, and unite diverse communities in conservation action. A nonprofit conservation organization since 1905, Audubon believes in a world in which people and wildlife thrive. Learn more at www.audubon.org and on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @audubonsociety.



Victor Illichmann photo

Beautiful Sunflowers

Thank You!

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Donors

- Connie Gregg
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- Andrea Short
- Todd Stephanus





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 of \$35 per year which includes the Audubon Magazine. (Please visit <http://audubon.org/> 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

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

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

Times I can usually volunteer:

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

Volunteer Coordinator:

Victor Illichmann
 viccarol@sbcglobal.net
 608.752.8342

(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



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Your Articles are needed!

Your articles for the Winter issue will be needed soon. If you could, please, get them to me as soon as possible, I would appreciate it.

Thank you very much.
Carol Herzig, Editor
caherzig@gmail.com