



Winter/Spring, 2021



President's Message

It is without question that 2020 has been the most challenging year for the RWF and the volunteers alike. All three volunteer workweeks had been cancelled due to Covid 19 but with the help of eighteen unscheduled volunteers and several RWF Board Members we were able to donate over 450 hours throughout the year. Projects included the planting and maintenance of trees, trail maintenance, invasive species control, wood duck & bluebird house monitoring, Rustic Aldo Leopold Bench sales and other RWF administrative duties.



Major projects for 2021 include replacing the boardwalk of the observation deck (Phase 3), construct rustic ravine walking bridge, painting & repairing Outpost building and deck, and design & publish our new trail guide. Other routine projects include trail & tree maintenance, invasive species control, updated bench inventory, maintaining and updating existing trail signage, boardwalk maintenance, blue bird trail expansion, and butterfly field maintenance.

We are hopeful that we will be able to resume our three scheduled volunteer workweeks for 2021 to catch up with the many projects that we were not able to accomplish in 2020. Volunteers will be needed and can call the front desk to register for one or more workweeks. Check the schedule in this newsletter for specific dates and lodging accommodations.

It goes without saying that this past year has been filled with "Silver Linings". For the most part our volunteers have been healthy and have helped in many special ways. We've been active discovering hiking trails we never knew existed with the solitude it provides. Thanks to Zoom the RWF Board has been able to keep in touch with its Annual Board meeting. In closing, the RWF has done its best to maintain, improve, and provide access to The Rushes Wilderness Area while preserving its natural beauty throughout the challenging year of 2020.

JC Pfeiffer: Planting a Seed



For JC Pfeiffer, a simple phrase such as “planting a seed” has many meanings. On October 6, 2020, JC was honored for all the seeds he planted in Winona. The Winona Community Foundation presented him with its 2020 Founders Award. This award is given to an individual in the community who has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to improving life in the Winona area through the use of time, talent and treasure. JC started as a volunteer for the Winona Community Foundation and helped the foundation earn the National Standards for U.S. Community Foundation accreditation. He even started three funds himself: the JC and Arlene Pfeiffer Fund, Connect People to Nature Fund and the Ruses Wilderness Fund.

We are proud to have JC as a Ruses Wilderness Foundation volunteer and board member. He continues to plant seeds within the RWF and connects people closer to nature. Daisy May, JC’s mother would be very proud of her son’s accomplishments. Keep up the good work JC and continue planting seeds.



We extend special thanks to Linda Boss and the directors of the Ruth and William Merkey Foundation. They have been very generous supporters of the Ruses Wilderness Foundation for many years. Thanks to their financial support the **Ruth and William Merkey Fund** has been established at the Door County Community Foundation. The Door County Community Foundation is the means through which generous people, charities, and businesses come together to make our community stronger. This long-term fund will support the operation of the Ruses Wilderness Foundation in the years to come.

Gift Giving Opportunities

Since 100% of our operational funds are generated by donors and not through annual maintenance fees, please consider one or more of the following gift giving opportunities.



- **Rustic Aldo Leopold Bench** (\$825) w/3x5 stainless steel plaque w/name & message
- **Gazebo Plaque** (\$250) 3x5 plaque with name & message
- **Observation Deck/Board Walk Project** – Phase 3 - (\$100 min. donation)
- **Rustic Walking Bridge Project** – Donations of any amount welcomed
- **Routine Trail Maintenance & Signage Project** – Donations of any amount welcomed
- **Bluebird Trail Builder Project** (15 houses) \$100/house/year

If you wish to contribute to one or more of the above projects, simply send your check (payable to "The Ruses Wilderness Foundation") to:

The Ruses Wilderness Foundation
3014 Ruses Road
Baileys Harbor, WI 54202

Please indicate the project of your choice on your check. If purchasing a plaque, include your brief message on a 3X5 card.

All donations to The Ruses Wilderness Foundation are tax deductible.

Aldo Leopold Bench Buy Back Program



We still have a few used Aldo Leopold benches for your deck or garden. Consider donating \$50 to the RWF and select a used/refurbished bench from the supply while they last. These benches no longer have a sponsor and will be removed from the trails and replaced with a new Rustic Aldo Leopold Bench. Contact Ray Osinski and he will show you which benches are available.

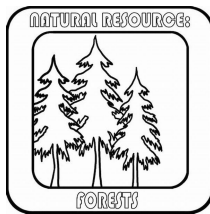
Bluebird Trail Builder Program

In September of 2020 the RWF became a new member of the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin. (BRAW) The mission of BRAW is to increase the production of the Eastern Bluebird and other cavity-nesting songbirds. As a new member we received not only a subscription to their quarterly newsletter, but received 5 FREE nest boxes with a predator guard. We will be expanding our existing 10-box bluebird trail to 15 in the South field of the Wilderness Preserve. Volunteers will be needed to locate the new boxes and update all nest box poles during the April 27, 28, 29 , 2021 volunteer workweek.



Photo by Carrol Fibich

Management Forest Law Plan Update



In early March of 2020 the Ruses Condo Association approved a contract with Rolefson Forestry Services. For the past 6-8 months trees have been marked with blue paint for desired cutting within a 61 acre area. The Forester will then prepare a DNR cutting notice for a variety of tree species to include Ash, Beech, Black Cherry, Hemlock, Iron Wood, and Maple to name a few. Once approved a logger will be hired to harvest the selected trees and negotiate a sale of timber. It is estimated that logging won't occur until the Fall of 2021.

Mission

"To maintain, improve, and provide access to The Ruses Wilderness Area while preserving its natural beauty"

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JC Pfeiffer, *Second Vice President*
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