



President's Message

Summer/Fall 2021

Indeed 2020 was a challenging year for the Rushes Wilderness Foundation, but 2021 has allowed us to complete our April and May volunteer work weeks. During that time volunteers were able to construct our rustic ravine walking bridge, update our bench inventory, perform routine trail and tree maintenance, expand the bluebird trail, and continue ongoing invasive species control.

During our final workweek in October, volunteers will be faced with a huge task of preparing 60 acres for our Management Forest Salvage cut. To protect the many sponsored benches from potential damage, volunteers will move them to a safe location and replace them in April 2022. Trail signage will be removed from all trees that are scheduled to be cut and will be reestablish in the spring. Check out the article in this newsletter written by John Rolefson, Forester Consultant describing the rationale for this cut. Preliminary plans indicate that this salvage cut will probably be conducted in November, 2021 and take approximately 2 weeks to complete. The safety of our owners is priority, therefore portions of the Wilderness Preserve may be closed during this project.

Our expanded bluebird trail has been faithfully monitored weekly this spring and summer by two RWF volunteers, Darcy and Carl Wallace. Their report is included in this issue of the newsletter. Carl Wallace continues to develop our new trail guide and plans to have it completed and ready for distribution in early 2022.

Our RWF board meeting will be held during our October workweek. We will be welcoming two new RWF board members to replace outgoing members Dave Albrecht and Larry Erickson. Dave and Larry will surely be missed. We hope they will continue to volunteer and we thank them for their dedicated service and commitment.

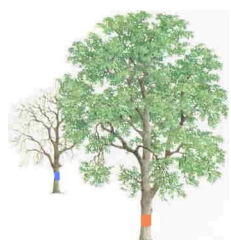
Since our trails are open to the public, we have initiated an opportunity for visitors and guests to voluntarily donate to assist with the maintenance of the trails. A donation box with envelopes is located at the trail head.



This past year has been an eventful one filled with the spirit of volunteers that brought smiles and laughter to all. We also welcomed our youngest volunteer, my 8 year old granddaughter, Stella Goettelman. As covid is still with us, we do our best to maintain, improve, and provide access to the RWF Wilderness Area while preserving its natural beauty throughout the challenging year of 2021.

Nature's Peace,
Ray Osinski
President/ RWF

So what's going on in the Wilderness Area?



If you've walked the trails recently, you may have wondered why there is blue paint on some trees and orange paint on others.

A little history lesson will help to explain.

In 2002, the Rushes Condominium Association entered into a forest management agreement with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The agreement, known as the Managed Forest Law (MFL), is available to forestland owners statewide.

The MFL was enacted to do several things. One was to get forestland owners to keep their woods healthy through periodic harvests. Another was to provide a steady supply of wood for the wood-using industries. And another was to protect endangered species and protect water quality when harvesting trees.

Under the MFL program, a management plan is drawn up and, if followed, the landowner gets a significant reduction in property taxes. In the Rushes case, the management plan calls for thinning the woods every ten years. We are now at the ten-year mark.

Under the plan, the trees to be removed are those that are dying, damaged, diseased, or stunted. The healthy trees are to be left to grow larger. The plan also takes into account wildlife needs. Hollow trees are to be left as den trees. The timing of the harvest is to be done when it is least disruptive to any endangered species that may be present. Harvesting is to be done when the ground is dry or frozen to prevent rutting.

But unfortunately, the plan has changed. What was intended to be an improvement harvest has turned into a salvage operation. The reason is two-fold. An insect and a disease.



The Emerald ash borer, a non-native beetle from Asia, is killing the ash trees. You may have noticed trees that have had chunks of outer bark removed by woodpeckers. These birds are after the bugs in the trees, and are a sign of the bug's presence. In a forest setting, all of the ash trees are expected to die. The DNR guidelines for MFL properties is to harvest all of the ash trees.

The other culprit is beech bark disease. This disease is caused by a fungus entering the tree through a hole caused by another non-native insect. The insect, called a beech scale, came from Europe. It feeds on the beech like a mosquito on a person. The hole it creates is how the fungus enters and infects the tree. You can spot the presence of the beech scale by a white powdery substance on the tree similar to the flocking sprayed on Christmas trees. The good news is that not all beech is susceptible to the disease. Just beech showing signs of infection are being harvested. The bad news is about 90% of beech are susceptible.



Under normal circumstances, harvesting a woods on ten-year intervals causes minor visual disturbance. The woods along Logerquist Rd south of the butterfly area was harvested in 2007. But these are not normal circumstances. Some areas will be heavily harvested due to all of the beech and ash present. But nature is resilient. A new generation of trees will begin in these areas, starting the process of forest growth all over again.

The larger trees harvested will be sawn into boards. Boards for cabinets, flooring, pallets. Some for railroad ties. The smaller trees, along with the tree tops, that normally would be used to make paper will instead be used by The Rushes for firewood.

So the paint on the trees, both blue and orange, are marking the trees which will be harvested. The purpose for marking some trees in orange is for the loggers benefit and overall job safety. It shows the logger from a distance where the trails are.

John Rolefson, Forester

Rustic Walking Bridge Sponsorship



Our new rustic walking bridge was completed this past spring by our volunteers. The bridge is located near the north trail entrance to the south field. You now have an opportunity to be a Plank or Beam Sponsor and have your name engraved in a special group plaque. We have a limited number of wooden Plank (30) and Beam (4) slots available for individuals or families to sponsor. The donations amounts are **\$100 / Plank** and **\$500 / Beam** and are tax deductible. Make checks payable to the **Rushes Wilderness Foundation** and send to Ray Osinski at The Rushes. Please indicate on your check if you are a Plank or Beam sponsor. Thank you in advance for your continued support to the RWF.

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 Walking Bridge Project** – See featured article
- **Rustic White Cedar Bench** (\$950) w/3x5 stainless steel plaque w/name & message (2 remaining)
- **Aldo Leopold Bench** (\$825) w/3x5 stainless steel plaque w/name & message (1 remaining)
- **Gazebo Plaque** (\$250) 3x5 plaque with name & message
- **Observation Deck/Board Walk Project** – Phase 3 - (\$100 min. donation)
- **Routine Trail Maintenance & Signage Project** – Donations of any amount welcomed
- **Trail Guide Project** - Donations of any amount welcomed
- **Bluebird Trail Sponsor** (15 houses) \$100/house/year
- **Wood Duck House Sponsor** (12 houses) \$100/house/year
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If you wish to contribute to one or more of the above projects, simply send your check payable to "The Rushes Wilderness Foundation" to:

The Rushes Wilderness Foundation, Attn: Ray Osinski
3014 Rushes 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 Rushes Wilderness Foundation are tax deductible.

Bluebird Nesting Report - 2021



The bluebird nesting season has come to an end and the following reflects our attempts to help bluebirds nest in our area. Special thanks go out to Darcy and Carl Wallace, RWF volunteers, monitoring our 15 bluebird houses on a weekly schedule. The following are their findings:

Boxes in trail = 15 Boxes used by bluebirds = 3 Bluebird eggs laid = 23 Bluebird eggs hatched = 21 Bluebirds fledged = 21 Tree swallows fledged = 8 House wrens fledged = 4

Chickadees fledged = 12

NOTE: The Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW) has seen a drop of about 65% less bluebirds nesting attempts due to climate change and the pandemic.

Youngest Volunteer

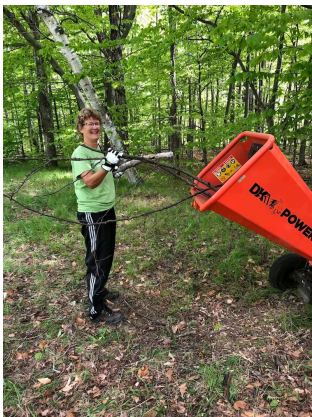
Knowing how much she enjoyed helping me with my small vegetable garden, I asked Stella, our youngest granddaughter if she might be interested in volunteering during the Rushes Wilderness work days. She jumped on the opportunity, especially when we discovered that one of the April days was scheduled on a teacher inservice day. After helping to disperse milkweed seeds over the butterfly field and trim lower branches on evergreen trees, she was super charged and eager for more challenges. There was no question, she was going to help again during the May work days. Her favorite job? Pulling barberry! She found great pleasure in spotting this invasive species and yanking it out. When asked what prompted her to volunteer she replied, "I like the feeling of knowing that I helped and I love spending time outside in nature."



Carol Ann Osinski



April Work Week



May Work Week

