

RENEW!

Don't Become Extinct!

Your mailing label is date coded with your membership renewal. **Member dues are \$40 per household per year.**

Please renew on-line at: wildones.org/membership.

Thank you and we'll look forward to seeing you at the meetings!

— Dan and Dawn Barker, Membership Co-Chairs

NATURE LANDSCAPES FOR TOMORROW GRANT

2026 Grant Program

By Ron Jones, Grant Chair

The Chapter's Natural Landscapes for Tomorrow grant program supports schools, houses of worship, and other public and nonprofit organizations in the Fox Valley Area for projects involving the creation of natural landscapes and/or outdoor classrooms using native plants. This year we awarded a \$500 matching grant to the Green Lake School District who is creating an outdoor classroom in a school courtyard that will be filled with native plants. Students will be encouraged to explore, discover, connect, and spark curiosity about the natural world in this outdoor classroom. It's not too early to start thinking about a grant project for 2026.



Illustration courtesy of Pat Dannerow



APPLY TODAY: Grant Applications will be due by February 1, 2026. To download a grant application form or learn more about Natural Landscapes for Tomorrow grants, go to <http://foxvalleyarea.wildones.org/resources> or contact Ron Jones to request a mailed copy at wildonesfoxvalley@gmail.com.

Become a Wild Ones Member

Join on-line at the Wild Ones national website, wildones.org/membership. Household membership is \$40 per year and is tax deductible. You may also mail new and renewal memberships to the WILD Center at the address on Page 1.

Business and student memberships are also available through the same national web site, wildones.org/membership.

wildones.org

Photo courtesy of Catherine McKenzie.

Welcome New Members

- Mike Fennel, Neenah
- Kathy Jankowski, Omro
- Rick Kitchen, Kimberly
- Alexander Kwan, Appleton
- Patricia Lehan, Appleton
- George Dearborn, Appleton
- Jane Kostecke, Oshkosh
- Britt Nielsen, Menasha
- David Fenske, Menasha
- Jennifer Rottier, Appleton
- Cedar Luckow, Oshkosh
- Angie Schuh, Reedsville
- Jacob Nance, Oshkosh
- Mary Starzak, Greenville
- Kirsta Hoffman, Appleton

as of 10/01/25

Wild Ones promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization.

WILD Center

Wild Ones National Headquarters
2285 Butte des Morts Beach Rd.
Neenah, WI 54956

920-730-3986
support@wildones.org

Directions: From Hwy 41, take Exit 136, drive east on BB (Prospect Ave) to right on Northern Rd, then left onto Stroebe Rd. From Stroebe, turn right onto Butte des Morts Beach Rd.

Grounds Accessible & Always Open



Photo courtesy of Catherine McKenzie.

**29TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Toward Harmony with Nature**

Saturday | January 24, 2026 | 8 am–4:15 pm

UW Oshkosh Culver Family Welcome Center | 625 Pearl Ave. | Oshkosh



JOIN US for the Toward Harmony with Nature Conference! Explore a diverse array of natural landscaping and native plant-related topics. Don't miss out on our silent auction—a perfect opportunity to discover unique treasures while enjoying a celebration of nature.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: NEIL DIBOLL

“Genetic Diversity and Plant Preservation”

We joyfully welcome one of our favorite speakers, Neil Diboll, to be our keynote presenter. He is a pioneer in the native plant industry and recognized internationally as an expert in native plant ecology. He has dedicated his life to the propagation of native plants, promoting their benefits and furthering their use in gardens, landscapes and restoration projects. He is a Lifetime Honorary Director of National Wild Ones. He co-authored “The Gardener’s Guide to Prairie Plants” and is the owner of Prairie Nursery.

For this conference Neil will describe some of the strategies that plants have developed for reproduction and adaptation to their environments. He will highlight the ramifications for the structure of plant gene pools, their genetic diversity, and adaptability to a rapidly changing world. Ecological gardeners tend to be more concerned with creating low-maintenance, sustainable, native gardens that provide not only enjoyment for the gardener but also preserve native plant gene pools while creating habitat for birds, butterflies, pollinators, and other creatures.

This thought-provoking talk will provide an insider perspective on plant reproduction and its implications for preserving and maintaining a diverse genetic bank for native species. Neil embraces a technical topic and makes it understandable and interesting to both native plant enthusiasts and the average gardener.

See page 3 for additional speaker information.

DONATION REQUEST: SILENT AUCTION

Please start thinking about donating a new/nearly new item or a gift basket to the THWN Conference Silent Auction: anything related to native plants, landscaping, gardening, ecology, nature artwork or crafts. **Questions or donations?** Contact Kathleen at kmahallett@gmail.com.

Upcoming Event

Members and Friends Holiday Gathering

Sun | Dec 7 | 1-3 pm | WILD Center | 2285 Butte des Morts Beach Rd. | Neenah

Take a break from holiday planning and join us for an afternoon of native seed and cookie exchange. We'll welcome “People Powered Postcards,” an advocacy campaign to protect our pollinators. And, if you care to, feel free to bring a small plate of cookies to share with others. Beverages will be provided. This event is the perfect opportunity to connect with fellow members and enthusiasts to share ideas, knowledge, and recipes. **We can't wait to see you there!**

**COMING SOON!
2026 PROGRAMS
& TOURS**

Watch for updates on foxvalleyarea.wildones.org and in the January Members mailing.

Photo courtesy of Catherine McKenzie.

**Cheers to
Manoomin!**

By Shannon Davis-Foust



Photo courtesy of Shannon Davis-Foust.

You could use some good news, I bet! Well, Brothertown Indian Nation Wild Rice Revitalization Project has been expanding the wild rice beds in the Upper River Pool Lakes for about three years now. They don't have measured results just yet, but they have the process down and are bringing many partners together to assist. They are looking at reseeding many areas throughout the Winnebago system and will need more volunteers. The plant has great cultural significance, wild rice, called manoomin in some indigenous languages, is an important plant for many native animals.

I had the privilege of helping with the project a couple times this fall. The process is to obtain rice from different areas, mix the rice up, then mix lake muck with clay in the right proportions, and then mix the muck and seeds together to make rice balls for throwing.

The second day began with a smudging ceremony, we boarded a pontoon and ventured into the fog on a calm lake. When we arrived at the seeding site, the sun suddenly came out and we could hear sora rails singing. This beauty was magical. Sora are highly dependent on wild rice while they are migrating.

The actual deploying of the rice seed was ceremonial. We took many photos as we broadcast handfuls of seeds from the bow of the boat. Lastly, we threw the seed balls from the boat. They took many groups of people to different areas of the lake system, including young Native Americans to be strong future leaders.

During our return ride, we talked about rice worms, and someone asked if they were considered good or bad. I loved their response — "they just are." Rice worms reduce rice yields, but their perspective is to have tolerance to share abundance.

To top it off they served a wonderful meal that included wild rice lemonade and a wild rice salad made of maple syrup, blueberries and strawberries. Oh gosh it was good. They also gave a gift of mullein cream for healing because wild rice can cause skin irritation while working with it. There are ugly things happening in the world, but for the sake of your sanity, don't forget the good!

Cheers to manoomin!

Photo courtesy of Catherine McKenzie.

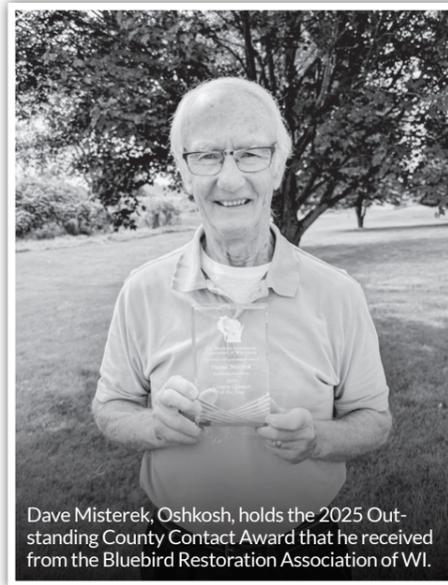
Dave Misterek Receives 2025 County Contact of the Year Award

by Gene Kroupa, BRAW Secretary

Dave Misterek, Oshkosh, has received the 2025 County Contact of the Year Award from the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW). BRAW's statewide network of county contacts plays a key role in educating the public and helping folks set up bluebird nest box trails. According to President Steve Sample, "Misterek sets a high bar for his field work in Winnebago County, as well as for putting on public presentations."

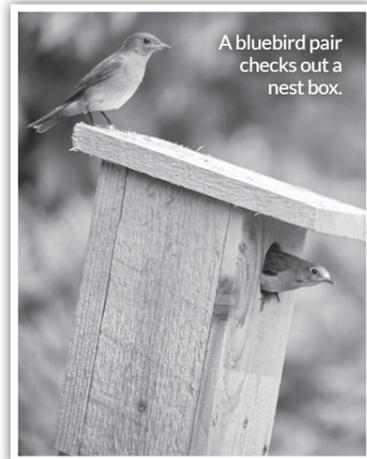
The retired DNR employee came by his love of birds from outings with his father. He went on to earn BS and MS degrees in biology from UW-Oshkosh. "There I learned respect for the environment which guided my 37-year career protecting it," said Misterek.

A long-time member of BRAW, Misterek is also active with the Winnebago Audubon Society, as well as the Fox Valley Wild Ones Chapter that focuses on native prairie restoration. He suggests that "if we enjoy and preserve the environment now, all birds and wildlife will prosper in the future."



Dave Misterek, Oshkosh, holds the 2025 Outstanding County Contact Award that he received from the Bluebird Restoration Association of WI.

Photo courtesy of Dave Misterek.



A bluebird pair checks out a nest box.

Photos courtesy of Pat Sandy.



An Eastern Bluebird feeds its young.

In accepting the award, Misterek thanked all who made possible the recognition. His BRAW state convention presentation about experiences starting a bluebird trail is posted at braw.org.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Established in 1986, BRAW's 900 members manage and monitor nearly 7,000 nest boxes statewide which annually produce thousands of bluebird fledglings and a like number of other native cavity nesters. More information about bluebirds, starting and monitoring nest box trails, and BRAW is available at: braw.org.

29th Annual Conference
Toward Harmony with Nature
UW Oskosh Culver Family Welcome Center • Jan 24 • 8 am - 4:15 pm

PLENARY ADDRESS (10:45 am – 11:45 am)

"Rights of Nature in Indian Country" ANAHKWET (GUY REITER)



Explore the powerful intersection of Indigenous sovereignty and environmental justice in our session on the Rights of Nature in Indian Country. This presentation will highlight how Native nations are recognizing legal rights for ecosystems, grounded in traditional ecological knowledge and cultural values. Learn how these efforts are reshaping environmental law and protecting sacred lands for future generations.

SESSION 1 (1:00 pm – 1:45 pm)

"Neonic Pesticide Use in Wisconsin and Implications for Our Health and Our Environment" SARA WALLING



Attend an informational session about a specific class of pesticides called Neonicotinoids, or "Neonics", which are the most widely used insecticides in Wisconsin, the US, and globally. Their popularity has negatively impacted pollinators, aquatic ecosystems, and the food chains they support. During this session, you will learn about the use of neonics in horticultural, landscape, and agricultural settings and the implications for Wisconsin's waterways, pollinators, aquatic insects, and people. Additionally, we will talk about ways you can learn more about and address this important issue!

"Native Plant Propagation at Johnson's Nursery" BEN FRENCH



Learn how Johnson's Nursery propagates plants. The fun and challenging task of propagating the native species of Wisconsin can be highly rewarding. Ben will explain how the business is changing and how consumer trends are making a big difference in the nursery.

SESSION 2 (2:10 pm – 2:55 pm)

"Butterflies and Botany: Cultivating Connections in Native Gardens" DR. SKYE BRUCE



We'll explore the intricate relationships between butterflies and native plants, highlighting how gardening with regional species supports both beauty and biodiversity. Attendees will learn which plants serve as critical host species for at-risk butterfly larvae, which provide nectar for adult butterflies, and how thoughtful garden design can foster these connections.

"From Turf to Habitat" DANIELLE BELL



Too often, native plants in the home landscape get the image of being unruly and messy. The truth is, there are 5 simple steps you can take to incorporate native plants into your landscape to provide resources for a diversity of pollinators and wildlife on your property. We will discuss which native species are best suited for the home landscape and how to incorporate them to bring your landscape to life!

SESSION 3 (3:25 pm – 4:10 pm)

"Identifying and Caring for Oak Woodlands" DAN CARTER, PHD



Between more open savannas and dark forests, oak woodlands are often underappreciated and misunderstood. I will discuss how to recognize, restore, and care for oak woodlands.

"Prairie Plants' Responses to Winter Climate Change" LAURA LADWIG



Climate change during winter can influence many ecosystems, including prairies across Wisconsin. This talk will share the results from several experiments testing the impacts of winter climate change on prairie plant success.



Scan QR Code to Register and for more information: or visit FoxValleyArea.WildOnes.org/THWN

See page 3 for additional speaker information.



Email wildonesfoxvalley@gmail.com

Website foxvalleyarea.wildones.org

Mailing Address
PO Box 385, Appleton, WI 54912

November 1, 1994:
Fox Valley Area became chartered as a Wild Ones chapter

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- President**
Shannon Davis-Foust
- Vice President**
Stephanie Losse
- Secretary**
Deb Benada
- Treasurer**
Ron Jones
- Display**
Dana Hartel
- Plant Rescues**
David Langner
- Membership**
Dan and Dawn Barker
- Mentoring**
Everett Grosskopf
- Natural Landscapes for Tomorrow**
Ron Jones
- Newsletter Editor**
Robert Benada
- Programs**
Nancy Benkoske
- Publicity**
Janet Carlson
- Speaker's Bureau**
Vacant
- Web**
Mel Mohr
- Social Media**
Theresa Granados
- Conference**
Susan Pichotta-Berard
- Native Plant Sale**
Grace Elonen
- Newsletter Contributors**
Nancy Benkoske
Shannon Davis-Foust
Kathleen Hallett
Ron Jones
Gene Kroupa
Catherine McKenzie
Luka Ursa

Photo courtesy of Catherine McKenzie.