

Our mission is to protect our globally important habitat by maintaining its ecological integrity, and educating our community in understanding and appreciating the value of nature.

Woodlest Dunes Solvential Solven

L to R: Kennedy Zittel, Max Kornetzke, Jessica Johnsrud, Nancy Nabak, and Jenifer Thompson.

financial support for Woodland Dunes means a lot of "bang for your buck" to the benefit of nature and our NE Wisconsin community."

Dr. Jon Henry

Woodland Dunes because we believe educating current and future generations in protecting our environment is critical to the health of the world and everyone in it.

- Tom & Betsy Kocourek

protecting our natural environment is the BEST gift we can give to our children and grandchildren."

Susan Knorr

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Access to nature & preserving the environment

Greetings Woodland Dunes Community,

Director's Message

In 2024, we celebrated a fabulous 50th anniversary, and it is because of people like you that we continue to provide nature experiences and education as well as preserve important wildlife habitat right here on the shores of Lake Michigan. I am grateful for all the ways you support us— as volunteers, as members, as participants in programs and events, and as businesses.

Throughout 2024, we experienced both a year of reflection on our humble beginnings as well as the anticipation of embarking on the next 50-year adventure. One of the most cherished programs was our

"50 Hikes for 50 Years" series. This series created hikes led by staff and other experts, companionship and new friendship among the hikers and leaders, and a sense of the importance of regular connection with the gifts of nature.

Our education programs excelled at crafting a tapestry of exploration, curiosity, and stewardship that help inspire both current and next generations of nature protectors. We introduced a new Wild Wanders program available once a month on Saturdays from fall to spring. We had a record number of programs offered for all ages.

We continued to make progress on our large habitat and trail projects. The beautiful new boardwalk portion on Cattail Trail is more accessible and safer. It's planned to be finished by late Fall of 2025. The Forget-Me-Not Creek re-meander and restoration project has not been without its stumbling blocks yet is moving forward. We continued to learn more about our preserve through survey work: plants, bees, birds, frogs, and salamanders. We strive to reduce the non-native plant population and enhance our preserve with native species.

We were proud to offer a member appreciation meeting.

We featured the Forget-Me-Not Creek project. I'm looking forward to another membership meeting in November of 2025.

Our board said goodbye to long-time members and contributors, who have resigned and we energized our development committee. Thank you to Lyn Brouchoud, Ellen Lewellen, Dr. Jon Henry, and Lucy Zeldenrust for your dedication and years of service!

As you review this annual report you will see several ways that Woodland Dunes seeks to be a gift to the community by providing access to nature and preserving the environment. **Thank you for your ongoing support and please visit the Nature Center and trails soon.**



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Assistant Director/

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5,099People engaged in programming

203 Programs offered

Educating to Connect

2024 was truly a celebration of our organization and its mission. We offered 203 education programs, which served 5,099 people through 312 program hours. This is the most programming we've ever offered, and it's pretty remarkable given our small staff size. People from ages two months to 90+ years learned about ferns, pollinators, animal signs, and fossils. They observed the solar eclipse, were captivated by the male timberdoodle as he performed an amazing courtship display, and watched as fireflies danced in the preserve. Our programs also connected people to each other, and we were touched to watch friendships blossom among people who regularly attended programs.

In celebration of our 50th, we offered the **"50 Hikes for 50 Years"** series, which proved to be quite popular. The hikes were led by staff and an occasional guest, and ranged in topics from nature's textures, squirrels, a sunset walk, and poetry and many others. The series was well attended with 590 people participating. Due to its popularity and positive feedback, we have continued to offer regular guided walks as part of our education program.

Field trips are an important part of our education mission, connecting students to nature from four counties through hands-on activities that directly relate to classroom learning. Staff and 15 volunteers taught 71 field trips for 2,327 students. We have **educated 175,000 students** since we started offering field trips!

Summer day camps were offered for children ages 4 -14 years and covered a variety of themes. We held 17 summer camps for 168 campers. Camps included: Little Wings Exploring Mud and Soil; Frogs, Toads and Salamanders; Sensational Senses, Nature Grossology, and others. Many of the campers who started in this program at the age of 4 or 5 are now tweens/teens and still want to experience summer camp. In response, we offered the first ever **Trail Trekkers camp for 11–14-year-olds.** These campers hiked 1-2.5 miles each day, learned about "leave no trace" principles, took part in team building activities, and enjoyed some of the classic summer camp activities like pond dipping.

50 Guided hikes

590 Hikers



71 Field trips

2,327 Students



17 Summer camps

168 Campers

New camp: Trail Trekkers, 11-14 years old



Environmental Education

5,099

People engaged in Dunes' programs

Programs offered
Wild Child

- ▶ Wild Wanderers
- ▶ Summer Camps
- ▶ School Field Trips
- ▶ Adult Hikes
- ▶ Adult Learning



Number of Visitors 15,000+



Outreach &

Awareness

represented

Volunteers

228

3,714

\$118,328

Volunteers

in value supporting Woodland Dunes



Habitat Restored

1,150 Native trees and shrubs planted

Acres of invasive plant species mitigated

650 Volunteer hours

State-threatened plant species actively managed

Accessibility Elevated

- ▶ Paved sidewalks and entrance near Cattail Trail
- ▶ Electronic doors at the Nature Center

Feet of Cattail Trail widened and leveled

Bird Monitoring 139

different species documented here

- classified as endangered in Wisconsin
- classified as threatened in Wisconsin



Membership individual annual

Endangered & Threatened **Species**

- State endangered birds
- State threatened birds
- Federally endangered bee
- Bee species listed as greatest conservation need
- mammal listed as special concern

State threatened plant species



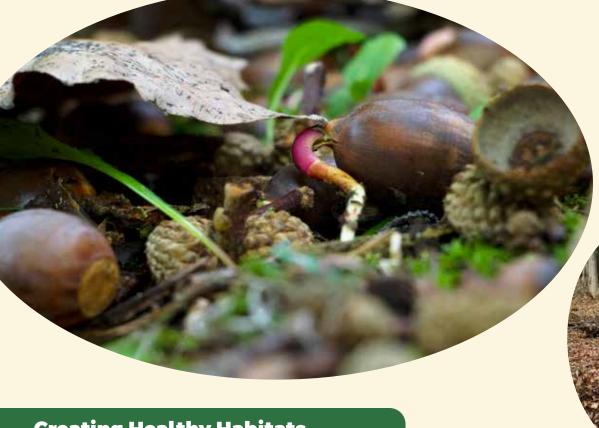
Nocturnal Nature

Programs offered to highlight nocturnal nature

- ▶ Star parties with volunteer astronomers
- ▶ Enchanted Forest family event
- ▶ Candlelight Night family event







Creating Healthy Habitats

Through its 50 years, Woodland Dunes has grown to include over 1,500 acres of permanently conserved habitat with seven miles of public trails for our community to enjoy. Protection and maintenance of this diverse habitat are primary values imbued within our mission.

Last spring, we initiated our Woodland Dunes *Riparian Forest Restoration* project through the US Forest Service's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant (GLRI), which focuses on mitigating the loss of our preserve's ash trees through diverse plantings of native trees and shrubs. We also finished up a large project through a grant provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Service's Sustain Our Great Lakes initiative (SOGL). These grants made it possible for us to offer valuable field experience to three Habitat Restoration interns. In addition to the work of interns and staff, we were also assisted by 80 individuals who collectively volunteered 650 hours helping us plant trees, clear invasives, and maintain our trails.

In June, through our GLRI Grant, interns **planted 850 native trees and shrubs** north of Goldenrod Loop. In July, they constructed a ¾ acre demonstration deer exclosure near the north entrance of Conifer Trail, where we will plant additional trees and shrubs in 2025, as well as provide educational signage.

In July, Woodland Dunes interns and staff (in collaboration with Stantec staff and Glacierland RCD interns) were able to **re-treat 64.2 acres of invasive species** along our Conifer Trail and IAT segment. With the help of 26 volunteers, we were also able to cut back and treat an additional 9 acres of habitat heavily infested with honeysuckle and buckthorn. In September, with the help of 16 volunteers, we planted 300 trees and shrubs in a 2- acre section along the IAT and Trillium Trails.

Moving forward, we will continue to monitor our plantings and treat areas where we have made noteworthy progress.

1, 150

native trees
and shrubs planted



acres of invasive plants mitigated

650 volunteer hours, value of \$20,709



2024 Wildlife Surveys

139 bird species documented

species of birds classified as State Endangered

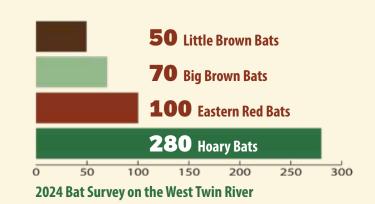
2 species of birds classified as State Threatened

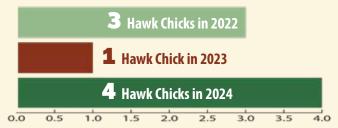
species of bumble bees documented

species of bees listed as Federally Endangered

species of bees listed as Species of Greatest Conservation Need

new mammal species documented: the Flying Squirrel, also listed as a Special Concern species





State Threatened Red-shouldered Hawk Hatchling Data



Monitoring to Protect Wildlife

2024 was a very exciting year for wildlife surveys as we documented a handful of endangered and threatened species as well as a few new ones.

The creation of Woodland Dunes was inspired by the large number of birds that founder Bernie Brouchoud saw here. During his yearly bird surveys, he would typically note around 110 species. Throughout the next 50 years, we continued to conduct **bird surveys** annually. In 2024, we documented a whopping 139 species. Of those 139 species, 3 are endangered and 2 are threatened in Wisconsin.

Bird banding numbers were low in 2024, with around 50 birds being banded. The low numbers were attributed to time and weather constraints. Woodland Dunes is still one of the few **banding stations for Northern Saw-whet**Owls in Wisconsin; we banded 19 during fall migration. While banding, we documented an unexpected and new species to our preserve, a flying squirrel. We are grateful for our Director Emeritus, Jim Knickelbine, for continuing to work with us.

During **bumble bee surveys** we documented 10 species, the highest number of species recorded during a single year here. One of those species (*Bombus affinis*) is listed as federally endangered, while three (*b. Sandersoni, b. Terricola, b. Fervidus*) are listed as species with greatest conservation needs (SGCN). This year was the first sighting of the Sanderson Bumble Bee on our preserve. Historically, 13 species have been documented at Woodland Dunes.

Our staff and volunteers conducted surveys throughout 2024, including trail camera monitoring, amphibian surveys, monarch tagging, sucker migration counts, Motus data collection, and chimney swift monitoring. We also led the Manitowoc County Crane Count and the Manitowoc County Bald Eagle Nest Watch (BENW) program.

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Growing Community Partnerships

The lifeblood of our organization comes from the relationships built within our local community and broad-reaching network of supporters. Together, we create hope for our children's future and a sustainable community for us all.

Throughout 2024, staff served on many community-based Board of Directors and organizations to support the needs and interests of our community, including increased awareness and preservation of our valuable natural resources and assets.

Organizations

Explore Two Rivers: Promoting tourism, natural assets, and economic growth in our Two Rivers area.

Ice Age Trail Alliance – Sharing and celebrating 2.5 miles of hiking trails with the Lakeshore Chapter of the IAT Alliance. We are an active Ice Age Trail community member and partner with the IATA, especially during the month-long Mammoth Hike Challenge in October.

Two Rivers Business Association: Keeping Two Rivers' businesses, profit and not-for-profit, in the forefront of growth and relevant issues of the day.

Two Rivers Main Street Board: Promoting businesses in the downtown area. preserving downtown's rich history, and creating partnerships to protect its natural assets.

Two Rivers Optimists: Supporting youth in our community through various events and services and using the Club's talents at our fundraising events.

Wisconsin Chimney Swift Working Group: Working towards solutions to the declining Chimney Swift population. Woodland Dunes Nature Center is a host to nesting Chimney Swifts, now designated as an Orange-Alert Tipping Point Species. We partner with statewide and region-wide conservation stakeholders, such as the Minnesota branch of the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Michigan DNR, Wisconsin DNR, and various bird clubs throughout the state of Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO): Partnering with this statewide organization to promote the enjoyment, study, and conservation of birds. In 2024, we partnered with the WSO to bring the Annual Convention here. We offered guided and unguided hikes, bird trivia, and secured professional speakers for the attendees. The four-day convention was an economic success for the community as well.

Corporations

Our important conservation goals could not be met without the support of our local business sponsors. We are grateful for your dedication to our preserve and our natural world.

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Thank you for all the ways you support the Dunes!

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Volunteers

Our many of volunteers are the backbone to the success of our organization. They serve in a variety of ways such as: Board Member, Committee Member, Event Committee Member, Butterfly Garden Assistance, Front Desk Support, Habitat Preservation, Deer Hunter, Teacher Naturalist, Education Helper, Species Monitor, Photographer, Astronomy Instructor, Bird Banding Assistant, Bird Hike Leader, and Educational Costume Designer.

We thank the many individuals who supported us in 2024, and also the groups that supported us through various projects:

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2024 Audited Financials

REVENUES	2024	2023	
Contributions	\$838,436	\$464,938	
Membership	\$144,805	\$152,029	
Special Events	\$79,857	\$79,851	
Education Programs	\$14,309	\$14,544	
Grants	\$418,470	\$295,262	
Other	\$242,929	\$149,623	
TOTAL REVENUE	\$1,738,806	\$1,156,247	
EXPENSES	2024	2023	
Program Services	\$628,922	\$459,276	
Administration	\$136,517	\$126,020	
Fundraising	\$102,442	\$109,744	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$867,881	\$695,040	

ASSETS	2024	2023
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$416,983	\$338,200
Investments	\$142,352	\$100,364
Accounts Receivable	\$79,591	\$29,075
Employee Retention Credit	\$102,190	0
Unconditional Promise to Give	\$758,000	\$19,500
Land and Fixed Assets, Net	\$4,284,022	\$4,177,472
Restricted Assets	\$19,086	\$160,000
Beneficial Interest in Endowment	\$742,438	\$647,583
Other Assets	\$9,085	\$17,199
TOTAL ASSETS	\$6,553,747	\$5,489,393
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	2024	2023
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$234,330	\$37,116
Net Assets		

Net Assets

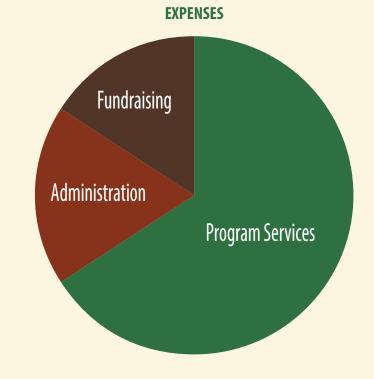
Without Donor Restrictions \$5,172,504 \$4,945,758 \$1,146,913 \$506,519 With Donor Restrictions

Total Net Assets \$6,319,417 \$5,452,277

REVENUES Other Contributions Grants Special Membership Events

Education

Programs



Woodland Dune's net revenue comes from grants and estate donations. These funds were restricted for increased programming, rebuilding the Cattail Trail Boardwalk, additional funding for our Forget-Me-Not Creek restoration project and raising significant funds for our Endowment Account. Through careful cost saving measures we were able to keep our administrative costs stable.

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