



Geneva Lake
Conservancy

Connections

Preserving and protecting the lands
and waterways of Walworth County

Fall 2022

MILL HOUSE GROUNDS OPEN AS PUBLIC NATIVE PLANT EDUCATIONAL PRESERVE

The Geneva Lake Conservancy has been transforming its approximately one acre of grounds at its Fontana headquarters into an educational Native Plant Preserve that opens to the public on September 1.

The main trail will wind through a variety of native landscapes on the Mill House grounds and wander along a stream and through several properties owned by the Village of Fontana before connecting with the main trail at the Hildebrand Nature Conservancy.

“The goal is to showcase a variety of native gardens that people can incorporate into their own yards and demonstrate not only how beautiful native trees, shrubs and plants can be but also how they provide important habitat for butterflies, birds and other wildlife,” said Kiera Theys, Land Protection Manager.

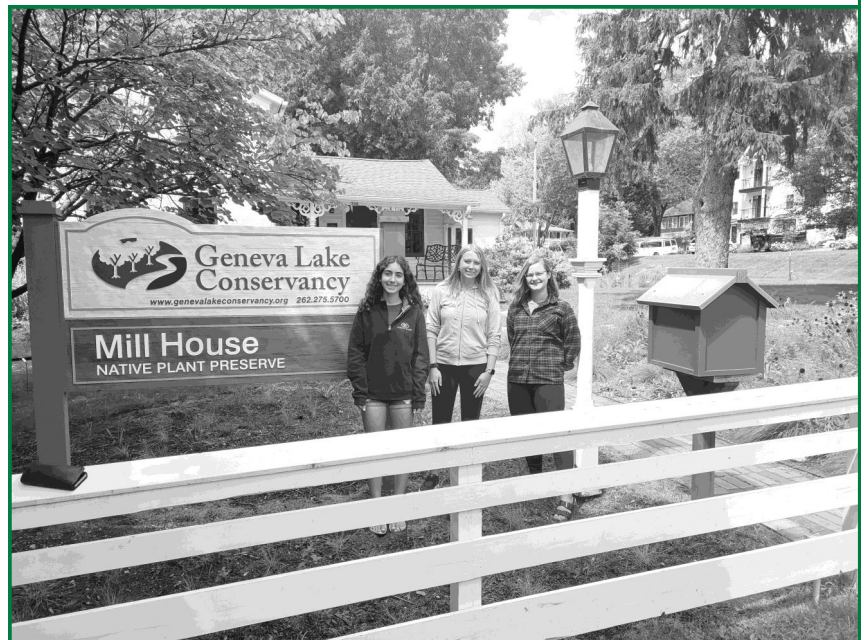
Along the main trail will be a pollinator garden, rain garden, fern garden, sloped garden, oak grove with a variety of oak species, as well as a bird sanctuary. By next year, each garden will have an educational sign and the majority of plants used in each garden will be identified.

“This educational plant preserve will be especially helpful to those who have participated or want to participate in our Conservation@Home program and need to learn about additional native plants and trees they can incorporate into their yard,” said Maddie Olivieri, Community Outreach Manager.

The granite trail with steel edges will begin at the Mill House entrance where an existing pollinator garden is being enlarged. It will then pass a rain garden and prairie area before it reaches an oak grove where red, white, swampy white, black and bur oak trees have been planted.

The steep bank along Main Road will be planted next spring with native plants that help hold the slope in place, a common problem for residents along the lake shore.

“Along the Geneva Lake shore path we see so many non-native hostas and evergreen species that are shallow rooted, meaning that they don’t help stabilize the bank or provide habitat to wildlife,” said



(Left to right) GLC volunteer Mia Kirovski and GLC staff Kiera Theys and Maddie Olivieri pose next to the new Mill House Native Plant Preserve sign and gardens.

Olivieri. “We want to show people that native plants, like yellow and purple coneflowers, are just as attractive as non-native ornamentals, and are also deep rooted and will help stabilize the shoreline.”

The trail will then wander through a native ostrich fern garden and past a 150-year-old native Silver Maple before entering the bird sanctuary, which will feature Juneberry, Hop Tree, Ninebark and Blackhaw Viburnum, which are all native shrubs.

“People are puzzled about what shrubs they can plant in their yard that will be attractive and provide habitat for wildlife unlike most evergreen bushes,” said Theys. “This sanctuary will give them native choices.”

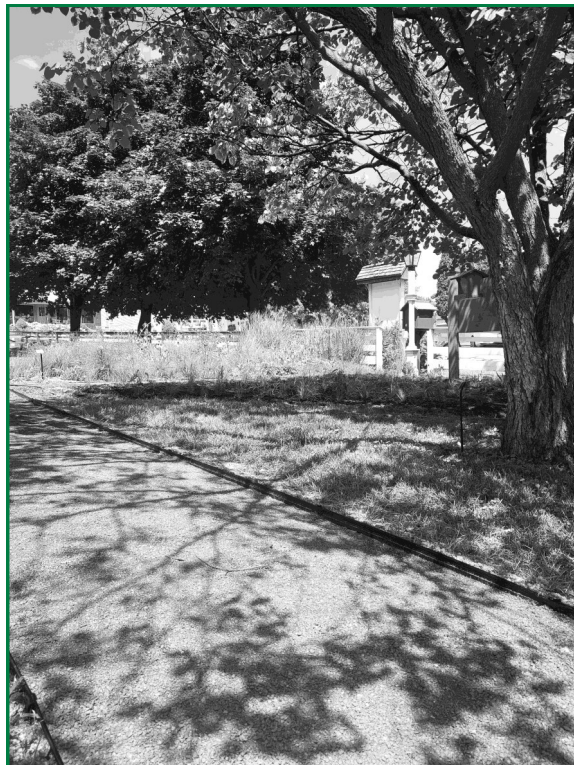
The trail then leads through the Hildebrand Nature Conservancy, an 11.5-acre nature preserve owned by the Village of Fontana and protected by a conservation easement held by the Geneva Lake Conservancy. Along the trail is a trout stream known as Van Slyke Creek that feeds Geneva Lake and exemplifies the cold, clear rocky bottom stream that support brown and brook trout.

“By adding many of the native plants that were originally on the Mill House property, we are helping to further improve the water quality of the stream and lake,” said Janet Happ, Assistant Executive Director. “The ecological health of the streams that feed Geneva Lake is dependent on the health of the surrounding land in its watershed.”

The design for the project was provided by Landscapes of Place owned by Nancy Aten, a landscape architect, and Dan Collins, program manager, who work with many land trusts and conservation organizations in Wisconsin to restore native landscapes. The landscape design was funded by a generous grant from former Conservancy Board Member John Notz.

The Conservancy staff and many volunteers have been involved in planting the initial gardens and we especially want to thank Roy Diblik, Kathleen Renowden, Alex Krebs, Kevin Williams, Frank Gentile, Mary King, Terry and Pat Clarke, Brian Cook, Cindy Rabe, Chris, Mary, and Will Bass, and Peggy Jensen for their work and advice.

To help fund the project, we are inviting our members and friends to sponsor a garden or educational sign in honor or in memory of of a family member or friend. See below for details.



The Mill House path, installed in mid-June, guides people throughout various gardens of the Native Plant Preserve.

SPONSOR A GARDEN

Are you looking for a way to recognize someone’s special birthday, anniversary, achievement, or remember someone who has passed away? Consider sponsoring a garden at the Mill House Preserve.

Gardens (slope, prairie, rain, full-sun or fern garden) \$2,000.00

Educational sign (oak, slope, pollinator, rain, fern or bird sanctuary) \$1,200.00

A small plaque will be placed in the garden or featured on the sign to recognize the donor or whomever they designate.

KRISTEN FREYTAG AND PATRICK GALLAGHER JOIN CONSERVANCY BOARD

Kristen Tenney Freytag, a lifelong resident of the Lake Geneva area, joins the Geneva Lake Conservancy board. She comes to the Conservancy with a passion for promoting respect for our natural resources and encouraging environmental stewardship.

Kristen recently earned her Wisconsin Master Naturalist Certificate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison extension program in 2021, committed to exploring, teaching, and conserving.

Kristen has been the Conservation Chair for the Lake Geneva Garden Club since 2019. As well as having the opportunity to hear from some of the top environmentalists in the country through this role, she has also met with Wisconsin legislators advocating for current conservation issues. For Kristen, being a part of the movement to protect our earth by advocating for federal legislation, such as The Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA), Build Back Better Act, Growing Climate Solutions Act, and the Great American Outdoors Act, has been most rewarding.



Kristen also serves on the Environmental Education Foundation, Inc (EEF) board. The EEF promotes environmental awareness in the Geneva Lakes area to all ages, awarding young high school students scholarships for those seeking to further their environmentally focused education.

After spending much of her childhood on the lake and discovering all the different little ecosystems in her own back yard, Kristen's passion for the local environment grew and her love of all flora and fauna flourished.

She is very much looking forward to joining the board and helping to support land protection in Walworth County, supporting the Water Alliance, and all the GLC climate change initiatives.

Born and raised in the South Suburb of Flossmoor and from a family of seven, Patrick attended Purdue University for his undergraduate degree in Organizational Communication. After graduating college, he worked in Hungary doing a marketing internship for a Hungarian entrepreneur. He then returned to Evanston to get a Masters of Science in Integrated Marketing Communications from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University.

Upon completing his studies at Northwestern University, he worked in advertising in Chicago for a year and then Dubai, UAE, for three years in the mid/late '90s. He then returned to Chicago to work full time, and eventually joined his family's third generation asphalt paving company, Gallagher Asphalt Corporation. After 20 years of co-ownership with his brother and cousin, he decided to sell out to them at the end of 2020. He was yearning to pursue a whole new frontier on his own.

Not too long after making the decision to sell, he came to the realization that he wanted to acquire one of the existing wooden powerboat builders. Months later, in February 2021, Patrick and his wife bought Grand Craft Boats, a 42-year old mahogany boatbuilder based in Holland, Michigan.

He wanted to buy a company that not only truly excited him, but also had real growth potential - and needed sales and marketing more than anything else in order to grow. Grand Craft fit the bill to a tee. Patrick and his wife recently relocated their business to Genoa City. Patrick and his wife have three kids: Brendan, Ian, and Cara.



GLC CELEBRATES OAKTOBER

The majestic oak savannas and woodlands of Walworth County are disappearing. Only 17 percent of oak trees that were here prior to European settlement remain. You can help preserve and replace these oak trees by participating in the Conservancy's Oak Tree Sale, and/or Heritage Oak Contest.



Last year, the Conservancy awarded two trees for the Oldest Oak Tree category of the Heritage Oak Contest. One of the winners is pictured on the right, located in Williams Bay.

HERITAGE OAK CONTEST ENTRY FORM

Enter one of three categories: Oldest Oak Tree, Most Beautiful Oak Tree, and Tree associated with Best Story. Winners will be announced at the Conservancy's December Annual Meeting and will receive a plaque and one hour free consultation from a tree expert on their oak tree.

_____ Oldest Oak Tree—please provide age and circumference of the tree 3 feet from the ground

_____ Most Beautiful Oak Tree—please provide a digital photo of your tree

_____ Tree Associated with the best story— please share your tree's story in 500 hundred words or less

Address of Tree's Location: _____

Person submitting entry must be owner of property on which tree is located or be entering a tree located on municipal or other public land.

Deadline for both the Oak Contest and Oak Sale is September 30th.

Please fill this out if entering the oak tree contest or purchasing a tree through the oak sale.

Name: _____ Email: _____

Cell phone: _____

GLC Oak Tree Order Form

All proceeds from this year's Oak Tree Sale will benefit GLC's restoration efforts.

(Trees will come with planting instructions and oak tree care tips.)

All trees in 1 gallon pots are \$30.00. Trees grown in 3 gallon pots are \$50.00.

Both swamp white and bur oaks are available. Please note the quantity you would like to purchase.

You may also note which tree you prefer, although this is subject to nursery availability.

_____ 1 Gal (please indicate if you prefer either swamp or bur: this is subject to availability) _____

_____ 3 Gal (please indicate if you prefer either swamp or bur: this is subject to availability) _____

Swamp White Oaks prefer acidic, medium-wet/medium, well-drained soils. Height at maturity: 50-60'.

Bur Oaks prefer medium/medium-dry/dry soils that are well drained. Height at maturity: 70-80'.

Both species provide superior benefits to wildlife, require at least 6 hours of direct sunlight per day, and are tolerant of both drought and poor drainage.

Tree pick-up will be on 10/13 and 10/14 at the Conservancy, located at 398 Mill Street, Fontana.

You may send your check (and the above form) made out to the Geneva Lake Conservancy, PO BOX 588, Fontana, WI 53125, or call us to place an order at (262) 275-5700.

The Conservancy would like to thank the Griffith Family Foundation, Keefe Kares and an anonymous donor for sponsoring the Heritage Oak Program.

CONSERVANCY OPENS NEW OAK EXHIBIT AT GENEVA LAKE MUSEUM

The Rotary Club of Lake Geneva and Geneva Lake Conservancy opened a new exhibit on oak trees in June. The exhibit focuses on the importance of oak trees, one of our most important native trees.

“Oaks are incredibly important for our ecosystems,” said Karen Yancey, GLC Executive Director. “With 83% of our oaks in Walworth County having disappeared since European settlement, we’re very happy to celebrate and educate families on the importance of oaks.”

Featured in the exhibit is a ring from an old oak tree. The exhibit encourages viewers to learn about the importance of oaks in Walworth County, and to count the rings to determine how old the oak would have been when it was cut down.



Rotary Club of Lake Geneva members, Geneva Lake Museum volunteers, and Geneva Lake Conservancy staff (from left to right: Tom Yoder, Karen Yancey, Jane Ipsen, Janet Happ, Kevin Goggin, and Dale Buelter) pose next to the oak exhibit after completing installation of the first educational panel.

Oak trees can live up to around 1,000 years. It is said that they grow taller and wider for the first 300; stand tall for the next 300; and can take up to 300 years to die. Some of the oldest oak trees in Walworth County have been dated back to around 350 years ago.

Oak trees are what’s known as a keystone species, which means that they provide habitat and nutrients for over 500 native wildlife and insects. They are a “key” player in the food chains that support both ecological and human health. They support many types of caterpillars, birds, and other wildlife. They also store a lot of carbon dioxide in their trunks and branches — more carbon, in fact, than any other native tree in North America—thus helping reduce the effects of climate change.

A reception to commemorate the exhibit opening was held on Wednesday, June 29th, and saw attendance from GLC supporters and community members alike. The Conservancy would like to thank the Rotary Club of Lake Geneva, as well as the Griffith Family Foundation, for supporting the exhibit installation and funding. The Conservancy would also like to thank Geneva Lake Museum for their help with the exhibit.

The exhibit will be on permanent display, and the Conservancy encourages all community members to stop by the Geneva Lake Museum to visit it and learn about the importance of oaks.



One of the three panels of the oak exhibit, featuring a core from an old oak tree.

STORYBOARDS TO BE INSTALLED AT HERMANSEN WOODS

The Conservancy, with the help of Boy Scout Troop 239, will be installing eight story boards in Hermansen Woods this fall. The story boards will lead children and families through the woods as they read about the importance of forests from the children's book "Forest Magic" by Sarah Grindler. The Conservancy hopes that these story boards will inspire children and their families to explore Hermansen Woods, learning about the unique importance of this mixed hardwood forest.

Along the trail, families can read about maple tree seeds (called keys), nurse logs and how they break organic matter down among the forest floor, the different kinds of fungi that grow in woodlands like Hermansen Woods, and the variety of wetland wildflowers (like skunk cabbage) you might find by the bog.

The Conservancy encourages all children and their families to visit Hermansen Woods, located a half mile north of Pesche's Nursery on the west side South Como Rd, to learn all about the forest magic that takes place in the woods. They would also like to thank Bennett Doebler, his family, and Scout Troop 239, as well as Ron Adams and the Lake Geneva Garden Club for their help with installing, creating, and funding the story boards.



"Forest Magic" is the featured story on display at Hermansen Woods.

A NOTE FROM GENEVA LAKE'S BIRD LADY

Who is that hanging out at the fishing pond? He is about three feet tall and really interested in finding crayfish. That might describe any child enjoying the Helen Rohner Children's Fishing Park, but as the children who attended the Beauty of Birds program learned, this visitor might be a Sandhill Crane!

At the presentation during the Geneva Lake Conservancy's family day in August, children and families learned about the wide and wonderful variety of birds. For example, that Sandhill Crane may be as tall as the average seven-year-old, but other visitors, like the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, are small enough to fit in a child's hand.

We humans are thankful for all the work the Conservancy does to protect the water, land, native plants, and trees at special places like Rohner park. We should also be thankful that the work that GLC does makes it possible for birds to find the food, shelter, and water that they need to make a living and build homes for their families. We hope that the children attending the presentation learned that while all birds need these three key things, different birds need different kinds of environments to thrive. On their "Birds are Treasures" hunt, children found environments like the butterfly garden that provide

nectar for hummingbirds and a lovely old oak tree that will provide a bountiful bug-buffet for a hungry Downy Woodpecker, as well as looking for the new Bluebird house that is already home to a growing family.

Watching for, and enjoying birds at Rohner Park should remind us all that these lovely, funny, and joyful animals are a measure of our success protecting and saving our wild places. If birds at the fishing park are healthy and happy and want to visit or make a home there, that tells us that it is also a pretty good place for us people!

Here's to our beautiful birds and their guardians at the GLC,

Carol Zimmermann



Ruby-throated hummingbirds are one of only four hummingbirds that are native to Wisconsin.

SECOND ANNUAL SMALL NATURE PHOTO CONTEST EXHIBIT



Photo contest participants mingle at last year's exhibit.

Geneva Lake Conservancy hosted its second annual Small Nature Photo Contest exhibit on Thursday, August 25th, from 5 - 6:30 pm at Steamers Coffee, adjacent to Green Grocer Deli in Williams Bay. The winning photographs from all four age groups (featuring child and adult categories) will be

on display through September. The Conservancy encourages all participants of the 2022 Small Nature Photo Contest, as well as community members, to celebrate and view the winning photographs.



Mikayla Kucia, the 2021 summer intern, views last year's winning photographs.

CONSERVANCY FALL AND WINTER EVENTS

SEP 9 (Friday) – Guided Nature Hike at Wallace E. Zabler Nature Preserve, 9 am.

SEP 23 (Friday) – Guided Nature Hike at Bromley Woods, 9 am.

SEP 24 (Saturday) – Join GLC and Kettle Moraine Land Trust volunteers to pick seeds at Wisconsin's Hackmatack Turner Tract preserve near Genoa City.

SEP 30 (Friday) – Work Day at White River County Park.

OCT 1 (Saturday) – **GLC 3rd Annual Road Rally featuring Cimeley Woods Preserve and other protected properties.**

NOV 5 – Work Day at Hansen Preserve along Sugar Creek in Elkhorn to remove invasive species; Bring water and work gloves, 9 am - noon.

DEC 3 (Saturday) – **Holly Ball.**

DEC 10 (Saturday) – GLC Annual Meeting.

DEC 21 (Wednesday) – Winter Solstice Celebration at White River County Park.

Find event registration and details on our website

GLC SAYS GOODBYE TO SUMMER INTERN

Ava Beyers is a rising sophomore at Carthage College, where she is double majoring in Geoscience and Environmental Science with a concentration in Conservation and Ecology, and minoring in Climatology and Meteorology. She has a deep love for the outdoors, which is what leads her towards a career in helping the environment.

This summer, Ava led the weekly fishing lessons, story time, and nature classes at Helen Rohner Children's Fishing Park.

Ava is very excited to have served as the 2022 summer intern at Helen Rohner Children's Fishing Park. She grew up in the Geneva Lake area, so the lake and the surrounding areas hold a very special place in her heart. She is thrilled to have learned more about conservation and to have put her efforts into helping the environment and her community.





Geneva Lake Conservancy

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Our mission is to preserve and advocate for Walworth County waterways, natural areas and working lands.



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Drive your car – classic or family favorite

through the Geneva Lakes area to tour GLC properties. Enjoy cocktails and lakeside dinner at the final destination, Covenant Harbor on Geneva Lake.

SAT • OCT 01 • 3 - 7 PM

Historical portrayal by Leslie Goddard as Rachel Carson in "Silent Spring And The Birth Of The Ecological Movement".



DETAILS AND REGISTRATION ONLINE
at www.GenevaLakeConservancy.org
or CALL 262-275-5700.

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