



Geneva Lake Conservancy **C**onnections

Fall 2021

Preserve and advocate for Walworth County waterways, natural areas, and working lands

CONSERVANCY PURCHASES 20 ADDITIONAL ACRES FOR BROMLEY PRESERVE

Geneva Lake Conservancy purchased 20 acres of oak woodlands adjacent to its existing 40-acre Bromley Woods Nature Preserve on October 27.

The land was purchased from the Bromley family with a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Knowles Nelson Stewardship Fund and private donations.

The additional property will allow the Conservancy to create a trail around the preserve's 8-acre kettle pond and to protect oak and hickory trees that serve as important habitat for declining forest interior bird species as well as other wildlife.

"Oak woodlands are very efficient in absorbing carbon and are one of the landscapes we are seeking to protect in Walworth County because of their important role in slowing climate change," said Kevin Brunner, Conservancy chair.

The purchase brings the size of the Conservancy's Bromley Woods preserve to 60 acres. Because it is adjacent to the 22,000-acre Kettle Moraine State Park, Bromley Woods helps support the type of landscape-scale protected areas that scientists say are essential to stop the decline of biodiversity and to create large carbon sinks that can absorb the carbon dioxide created by fossil fuels.

The Conservancy will manage the oak woodlands to make them more climate resilient by removing invasive species, including buckthorn and honeysuckle that steal nutrients from the soil needed by the oak trees. Removing these invasive species will also help restore a healthy understory of native plants that are essential to wildlife.

"As we move forward in our efforts to protect open lands, Bromley Woods serves a dual role of providing several miles of excellent recreational trails for hiking and wildlife viewing while also protecting important conservation features essential to the ecological health of our region," Brunner said.

The Conservancy also has a contract with the Bromley Family to purchase an additional 23 acres of Bromley Woods on the south side of Greening Road in 2022. This will further increase the preserve size to 83 acres and provide a whole new trail system for hikers. The Conservancy has already received a Knowles Nelson grant to cover half of the cost and will begin raising the remaining funds from private donations later this year.

"We are grateful to the Bromley family, our members and donors as well as the staff of the Knowles Nelson program for their support in completing this important land protection project," said Brunner. Brunner also recognized Rep. Amy Loudbeck who helped obtain the Knowles Nelson grant approval needed by the Wisconsin State Legislature's Joint Finance Committee.



The purchase of Bromley II ensures that all the shore of its kettle pond is protected and will allow the Conservancy to build a trail around it in 2022.

CONSERVANCY STEPS UP EFFORTS TO PROTECT GENEVA LAKE

With the Geneva Lake Environmental Agency (GLEA) looking for a new director to replace Ted Peters who retired in June, the Geneva Lake Conservancy stepped in this fall to apply for a Surface Water Grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to update the Geneva Lake Management Plan.

The Conservancy submitted a preliminary proposal to the DNR in September, which has been approved and will be part of the larger grant application, which is due November 1.

“One advantage of the Water Alliance is that we are all working together for the common goal of preserving the lake and when one agency is short staffed another can step in to assist,” said Tom Nickols, GLC Board Member and Co-Chair of the Water Alliance.

Throughout the summer of 2021, the GLEA and Water Alliance continued its efforts to remove the new invasive species Starry Stonewort, which can negatively impact aquatic species and boat traffic. In addition, the Alliance continued to test its new CD3 equipment at municipal boat launches to determine if it can reduce invasive species by encouraging boaters to clean their boats before they enter the lake. A meeting of municipal representatives and boat launch employees is planned for May 2022 to further educate them on operating the CD3.

In addition, the Conservancy, working through the DNR’s Healthy Lakes program, has completed almost 20 buffer strips and rain gardens on lakefront property to filter phosphorus and other pollutants before they enter the lake. The Conservancy also provided funding to test some of the 50 tributaries that feed Geneva Lake to determine those that have the highest phosphorus levels and develop recommendations on how to lower them.

The update to the Geneva Lake Management Plan, which will take two years, will allow the Alliance to survey property owners on their uses of and concerns for the lake and provide recommendations that will serve as a framework to improve lake management and address the invasive species, phosphorus, density and other issues facing the lake. The Management Plan will be completed by the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission (SEWRPC).

If the grant is approved, recommendations contained in the Management Plan will be eligible for further funding from the DNR and other sources.

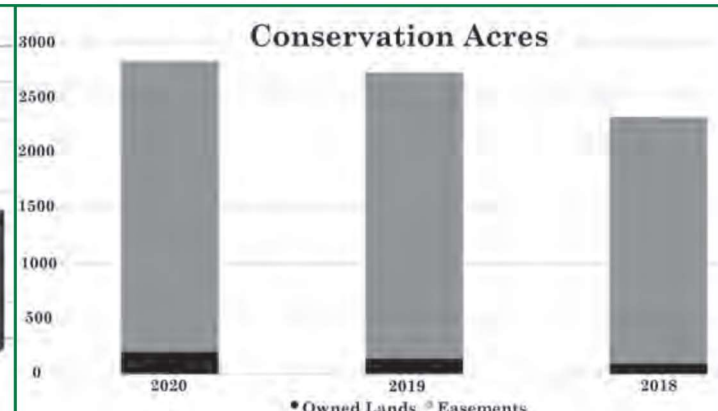
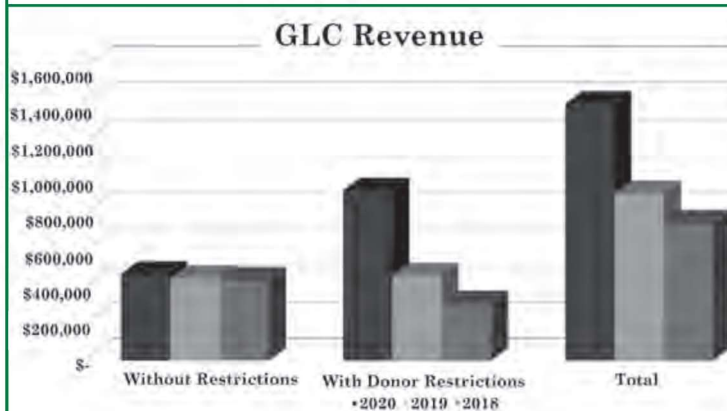
“We are pleased with the progress the Water Alliance has made in addressing lake issues but there is still much work to be completed if we are to ensure that Geneva Lake will remain healthy for future generations,” said Nickols. “We also hope to take the lessons we learn and work with other Walworth County lake representatives to improve their lakes’ water quality as well.”



Leaves floating from tributaries into the lake carry large amounts of phosphorus, which can cause algae blooms.

CONSERVANCY 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

	2020			2019		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Revenues						
Contributions	336,943.00	332,030.00	668,973.00	355,409.00	339,725.00	695,134.00
Paycheck Protection Program <i>(loan forgiven)</i>	44,233.00		44,233.00			
Special Events (Net of Expenses)	91,109.12		91,109.12	93,391.00		93,391.00
Donated Land		600,000.00	600,000.00		125,920.00	125,920.00
Other	1,951.00		1,951.00	2,376.00		2,376.00
	474,236.12	932,030.00	1,406,266.12	451,176.00	465,645.00	916,821.00
Expenses						
Land Protection & Advocacy	201,849.00	44,935.00	246,784.00	223,946.00	87,782.00	311,728.00
Management and General	114,945.00		114,945.00	125,759.00		125,759.00
Fundraising	90,240.31		90,240.31	82,279.00		82,279.00
	407,034.31	44,935.00	451,969.31	431,984.00	87,782.00	519,766.00



- Land Protection Accomplishments:**
- 2016: 28 acres Colman Woods Conservation easement
 - 2017: 82 acres purchased, Helen Rohner Children's Fishing Park (5) and Hansen Preserve (77)
 - 2018: 83 acres, Yggdrasil conservation easement (79) and Stevens Family Land Trust property (4)
 - 2019: 604 acres, Holzinger Memorial Preserve (556), Bromley Woods (41), 2 Geneva Lake easements (7)

2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Protected an additional 101 acres of land, including the donation of the 61-acre Wallace E. Zabler Nature Preserve and a conservation easement on the 40-acre Hart farm owned by the Yggdrasil Land Foundation.
- Completed 40 Conservation@Home visits educating private landowners on how they can improve the ecological health of their property.
- Lead the Water Alliance for Preserving Geneva Lake to begin reducing phosphorus levels and invasive species in the lake.
- Promoted the use of our five nature preserves and our Road Rally and Holly Ball@Home as safe, socially distanced activities during the pandemic.
- Received the Wisconsin Land Trust of the Year award from Gathering Waters for our land protection work and educational programs.

2021 GOALS

- Preserve additional land in Walworth County through purchases, donations and conservation easements.
- Complete 50 Conservation@Home visits to teach private landowners how they can make their land more ecologically healthy.
- Continue to lead the Water Alliance For Preserving Geneva Lake and, working with our partners, implement programs to reduce phosphorus pollution and remove invasive species.
- Complete Management Plans on our two largest nature preserves—Bromley Woods and the Holzinger Memorial Nature Preserve—that help ensure climate resiliency and carbon absorption.
- Host fundraising events that educate members and supporters about conservation and climate resilience to foster greater awareness of Walworth County's role in regional and national efforts to slow climate change.

GLC Membership by Categories

For January 1 to December 31, 2020 (new Members in green)

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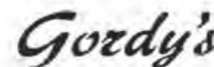
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Tribute Donations

Charles & Dianna Colman, Conservationists of the Year award by Mr. and Mrs. Allen C. Hermansen
Gwen Clausius by Mrs. James Maddock
Stuart Cornfeld by Mr. Tyler Maras
Jenny Ferarra & Family by Mr. David Watts
Geneva Lake Conservancy, for receiving the Land Trust of the Year award, by Mr. and Mrs. Allen C. Hermansen
Janet Happ by Ms. Mary Roth

We greatly appreciate each gift given in support of the Geneva Lake Conservancy, and we have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this listing.

Please notify Janet Happ, Assistant Executive Director, of any inaccuracies or omission by contacting her at (262) 275-5700 or janethapp@genevalakeconservancy.org.

We regret any errors.



You can leave a gift that will protect the environmental and ecological beauty of Walworth County for future generations to enjoy when you include the Conservancy in your estate planning. Your gift will support the continued stewardship of lands protected forever by the Conservancy—the breathtaking diverse landscape and natural, undeveloped habitat that is so important for wildlife to have to thrive. Land donations, which can also be a legacy gift, can directly protect the property you love forever.

If you would like further information on supporting the Conservancy through estate planning, contact Janet Happ at janethapp@genevalakeconservancy.org or (262) 275-5700. Please let us know if you have included the Conservancy in your estate planning—we would love to welcome you to the Legacy Circle.

Legacy Circle members

Dr. and Mrs. Mark Braden
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Colman
Mr. Chris Danou
Al Hermansen and Dorothy Hermansen Charitable Remainder Trust
Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Johnson
Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Jordan
Mr. James Kirchsclager
Ms. Lisa Luedtke
Mr. Jack Modzelewski and Ms. Susan Kiner
Dr. and Mrs. John Yancey

STEVE DIAMOND JOINS CONSERVANCY BOARD

Steve Diamond joined the Conservancy board in August and brings a broad range of work and life experiences.

Steve attended Harvard College, and then University of Michigan where he received his JD. Steve's law practice focuses on the representation of whistleblowers. In particular, Steve has won lawsuits to obtain the sales tax owed to states for purchases made on the Internet.

Steve was introduced to Geneva Lake by his wife, Peggy, who summered here with her family and has stayed involved with the Water Safety Patrol. Their connection to the area became permanent when they built their home in Chicago Club in 1999. They alternate time between Geneva Lake and River Forest, now spending more time in Wisconsin.

A longtime supporter of the Conservancy, Steve toured the White River County Park just after it was purchased by Walworth County with Kevin Brunner, Conservancy Chair. At that time Kevin was the Central Service Director for Walworth County, and was instrumental in the purchase of the park property. The tour, on a very rainy Halloween, was memorable for the slippery muddy paths and the breathtaking beauty of the park, and hooked Steve on pursuing an activist role in conservation.

Known for his love of the outdoors, Steve can be seen in the winter on the Geneva Lake ice with his golden retriever, and skiing out West with friends on the slopes.

The Conservancy is looking forward to working with Steve.



JOIN THE CONSERVATION@HOME FACEBOOK GROUP

The Conservancy is thrilled to announce that it will be launching a Conservation@Home Facebook group this year, with the help of its volunteers. "A number of our volunteers approached me with the idea," said Maddie Olivieri, Community Outreach Manager. "I thought it was the perfect way to keep people thinking about native plants during the off-season. We're thankful to work with such passionate and creative people who want to see this program grow."



Volunteers Amanda Granger (left), Kathleen Renowden (right) and staff member Maddie Olivieri (center) pose during a site visit.

Check the Conservancy's website and Facebook page starting in November for our first postings on the importance of native plants. This will be a place for Conservation@Home participants (certified or not) to exchange advice, ask questions, and share information on native plantings. As the program grows, it is important to the Conservancy that we continue to build a community around native and environmentally friendly gardening.



Conservation@Home volunteers Carol Elkins (left) and Joan Rost (center) talk with Roy Diblik (right).

The group will be open only to Conservation@Home participants; if you would like to join, please reach out to Maddie Olivieri at outreach@genevalakeconservancy.org or 262-275-5700. If you're not currently a participant but would like to join the group, you can also reach out to Maddie to get involved with Conservation@Home.

DOUG TALLAMY SPEAKS AT DINNER ON THE PRAIRIE

This summer, the Conservancy hosted Dinner on the Prairie at North Breakenridge Farms, owned by Jeff and Molly Keller. Doug Tallamy, a renowned entomologist, spoke at the event about the importance of native plants in protecting our local ecosystems and food web. Tallamy is the author of three books: *Bringing Nature Home*, *Nature's Best Hope*, and *The Nature of Oaks*. Each book discusses his research on native insects and their relationship with native flora, and each offers a great introduction into the world of native plantings.

The Conservancy selected Tallamy to speak because his research and perspective are well-aligned with our mission and programs.

Conservation@Home, for example, is a program that allows staff and volunteers to engage with homeowners so they can better understand how to care for their property in an eco-friendly way. The primary focus of this program shares the same focus as Tallamy's research: that planting more native plants is one of the best actions we can take right now to improve our local ecosystems.



Left to right: Mary Constable, Jeff Keller, GLC Chair Kevin Brunner, and Glen Aldinger catch up during cocktail hour. Photo by Fred Noer.



Doug Tallamy signs books as attendees wait to purchase their own copies. Photo by Fred Noer.

According to Paula Kosin, a Lake Geneva Regional News writer that attended the event, “[Tallamy] is rallying homeowners – rural, suburban, and urban – and all private landowners to establish biological corridors that connect fragments of restored habitat with one another... According to Tallamy, there are over 599 million acres of private land to tap into for this ambitious effort, far more than the total acreage of 13 of our largest national parks.”

The Conservancy would like to thank the Keller's, all event attendees, sponsors, and volunteers that made the night a success.

GLC ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, December 11th

10 am to 11:30 am.

Coffee and holiday treats provided.

Come learn about the Conservancy's 2021 successes and plans for 2022.

Please visit our website for location details.

RSVP: 262-275-5700 or outreach@genevalakeconservancy.org

2021 HERITAGE OAK TREE CONTEST WINNERS

Every year, the Conservancy holds a Heritage Oak Tree Contest to celebrate the majestic oaks of Walworth County. Oaks are one of the most ecologically important trees in the Midwest: they provide superior benefits to wildlife and help sequester carbon in our Earth's atmosphere. With only seventeen percent of our old-growth oak trees remaining, it is vastly important to conserve these trees and the natural lands they live on.

We want to recognize those landowners who care for their beloved oaks. We have three categories of winners: Oak Tree Associated with the Best Story, Most Beautiful Oak Tree, and Oldest Oak Tree. This year, winners will receive a plaque that they can stake into the ground next to their tree, recognizing it as a Heritage Oak.

OAK TREE ASSOCIATED WITH THE BEST STORY

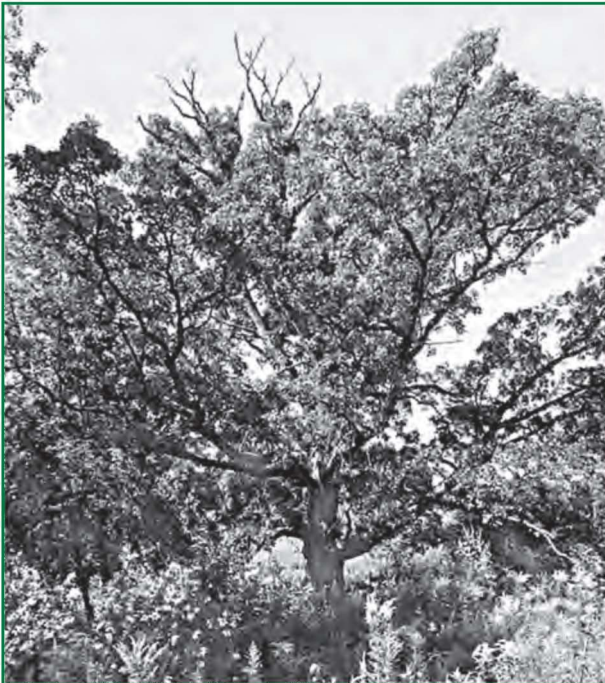
The award for Oak Tree associated with the Best Story goes to Bill and Laurie Buss. According to Bill, "this large White Oak was a witness to the disastrous November 1963 fire that burned seven cottages to the ground in the Harvard Geneva Lake Club. Its calculated age of approximately 213 years means that it was here on the shores of Geneva Lake prior to the arrival of the Kinzie Party in 1831, thought to be the first sighting of the Lake by non-natives."



The photo on the left is of the tree present day, and the photo above is estimated to have been taken circa 1894. Pictured are Harvard Club members (presumably) at a gate in the stone wall which still lies about 25 feet east of the tree. East of the wall is a property that used to belong to Edward E. Ayers, who was from Harvard, Illinois, and who owned the Harvard Club property before its formation in 1875. The Ayers property is now Abbey Springs.

According to Bill, "The Harvard Club was originally a tent campground around and under the legacy white oak, which over the years would have witnessed many happy gatherings of Harvardians and their guests." The tree can be seen from the Lake Geneva Shore Path in front of the Harvard Club.

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

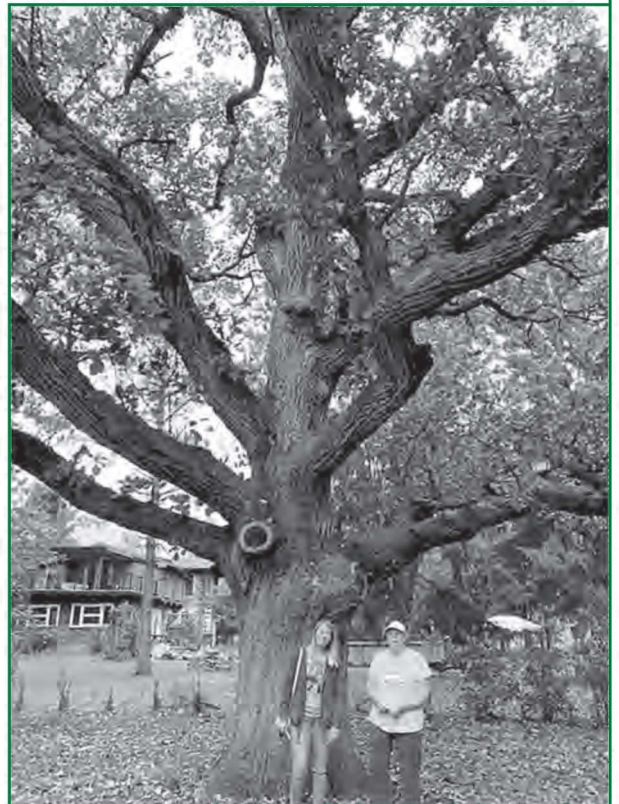


The tree is located off of the trail system, set back in an old oak savanna within the park property.

MOST BEAUTIFUL OAK TREE

The award for Most Beautiful Oak Tree goes to the Town of Linn Nature Park, submitted by Town Supervisor Kathy Leith. Linn Nature Park is a 160-acre natural area located off of South Lake Shore Drive and Maple Ridge Road in Lake Geneva. It has more than two miles of hiking trails and is open to the public.

The park features vast prairie landscapes, an oak savanna, and various wetland areas. The Conservancy has had a conservation easement on this ecologically diverse property since 2000, protecting it in perpetuity. Enjoy a scenic hike along the trails in the preserve and look for this Heritage Oak.



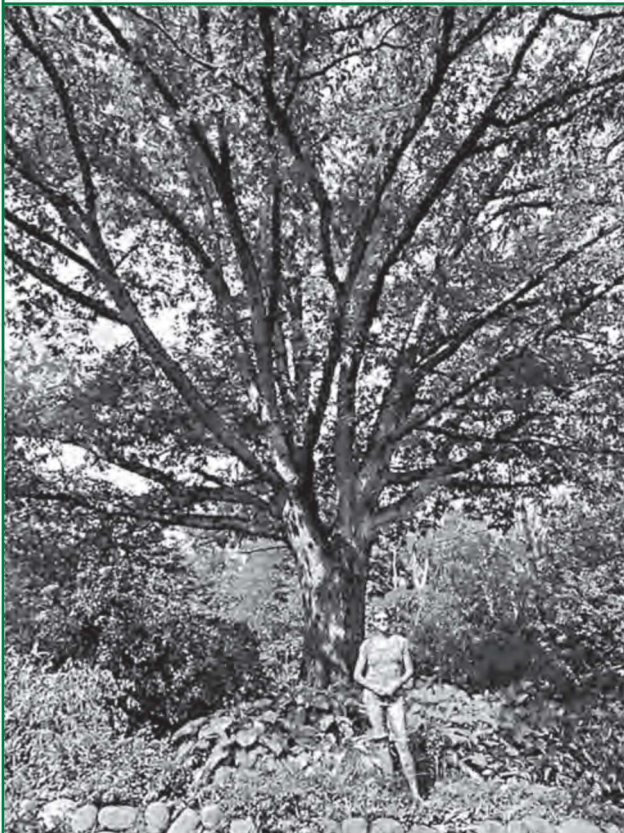
Kiera Theys, left, and Wendy Moon, right, pose under Wendy's bur oak.

OLDEST OAK TREE

The award for Oldest Oak Tree is a tie, awarded to both Marina Konz in Williams Bay and Wendy Moon in Delavan. The Conservancy awarded two winners in this category this year because of the extraordinary size and beauty of both trees that were entered. The trees entered

were also two different species of oak. The winners' ages were determined/estimated using a comparison of

two growth factor equations, with both trees possibly being as old as 370 years old.



Marina Konz poses with her white oak in front of her garden.

The only true way to determine a tree's age is either by taking a tree core sample or by cutting down the tree to count its rings. This is because trees' growth rates vary due to differing conditions, such as weather and canopy cover. There is risk in doing a tree core sample in that it potentially exposes the tree to the risks of disease and pests, which is why many resort to getting an estimate with equations. Marina Konz's white oak can be viewed off of Laurel St. just down the road from Bells store in Williams Bay, while Wendy's bur oak is on private land and will not be open to the public for viewing.



Geneva Lake Conservancy

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4-12 AGE GROUP

1st place: Zara Pankau
2nd place: Kristina Emerson
3rd place: Oliver Thompson



Small Nature
PHOTO CONTEST

13-21 AGE GROUP

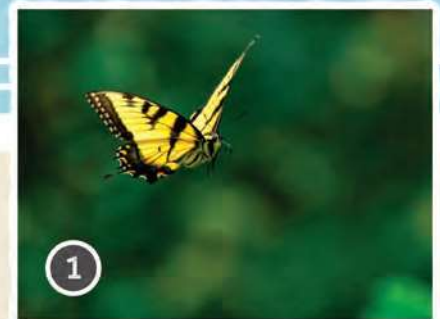
1st place: Faith Loback
2nd place: Kara Rees
3rd place: Ben Hutchinson



CONGRATS
2021
WINNERS!

22+ AGE GROUP

1st place: Michael Jeske
2nd place: Joyce McBriarty
3rd place: Tim Kohman





Visit

THE PARK THIS FALL AND WINTER...

to begin taking your five photos for entry in the 2022 Small Nature Photo Contest! Next year, all-season photos will be accepted. Fall and winter are a great time to visit the park to see deer, owls, and other wildlife. You can hike a short distance down our boardwalk, warm up by playing on the natural playground, and draw snowflakes on our outdoor art easels. And don't forget about Southwick Creek – the best fishing happens in fall when the brown trout are spawning! Thank you to the Rohner family for their continued support of our mission and for making our work at Helen Rohner Children's Fishing Park a joy for so many people!

(top) Mr. Rohner poses with Oliver Thompson, one of the winners of our 4-12 age group, at the Small Nature Photo Contest exhibit held August 26 at Green Grocer in Williams Bay.

(bottom, left to right) Kiera Theys, Mr. Rohner, Karen Yancey and Mikayla Kucia pose for a photo outside the Helen Rohner Children's Fishing Park nature center at 159 Elkhorn Road in Williams Bay, Wisconsin.

