

ECOEDGES

*A Publication of the Ellwood H. May
Environmental Park Association of Sheboygan County, Inc.*

A renewed interest in outdoor exploration



Families have experienced a renewed kinship with the natural world and each other. Now that families have been turning to outdoor spaces to socially distance, we've seen a significant number of people exploring our trails, photographing nature and themselves in nature, seeking quiet solitude, and finding a natural form of entertainment for their children. Kids especially have a natural sense of curiosity enabling them to quickly zero-in on caterpillars, tadpoles, turtles, dragonflies, and much more. Even though kids might quickly ask the "what is it?" question, parents merely need to show some interest to keep their child engaged in his or her investigations. The questions asked by their kids can be further examined later, thereby making their Maywood experience a fact finding mission.

Some of the kids I've encountered have been fascinated by mud and water. Not whose track is in the mud, or who is swimming in the water, but simply the cause and effect of stepping in either one. Nature lessons don't always need to be in-depth and scientific. Sometimes a parent and child can find great entertainment in seeing what happens upon leaping into a puddle.

Despite all of the activity planning for our summer camp programs, there seems to be very few things that kids enjoy more than tree climbing at Maywood. My office window provides an excellent vantage point to see the total fascination kids have for being in trees. I have witnessed at least a dozen kids sitting in a tree eating their lunches. While practicing their arboreal skills they are usually talking,

laughing, and socializing all without any sort of electronic device.

There are a few families that visit Maywood where one or both parents are hypnotized by their phone. However, I am certain the disease of natural discovery is contagious and sooner or later their child will find something so incredible the adults will become captivated. That mutual aha moment strengthens the parent/child bond and forms the connection with the natural world. Nothing could come closer to meeting our mission than that.

To make Maywood memories and natural discoveries, see the article inside on self-guided adventures. Then bring your loved ones to Maywood for some quality time with nature.

Dave Kuckuk



Effect of COVID-19 on Maywood operations

Needless to say, I don't know if any of us have ever experienced anything like we're going through right now. Maywood is certainly not exempt from the business impact that the world is facing. In mid-March as coronavirus was beginning its out of control spread like a raging wildfire, we were faced with our first major decisions regarding the school programs and Flapjack Day, both of which have been a mainstay at Maywood since the early 1980s. Little did we know that they would be the first in a string of Maywood dominoes to tumble.

Immediately following the cancellation of our March school programs and Flapjack Day, we closed our doors to the public for the safety of our volunteers and staff. Maywood



Photo provided

Masks, limited hours and access to the Ecology Center, cancelled programs, reduced group sizes for summer day camps, and a move to virtual fund-raising are just a few of the changes brought on by the Covid-19 crisis.

staff quickly adapted to work from home, learning new ways to conduct business. The word zoom went from being an intransitive verb to a style of digital meeting, and we began to explore methods for conducting programs virtually. In April, plans for the largest Maywood celebration to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day quickly dwindled to a tree planting project, which had to be restructured to prevent a large group gathering.

May is Maywood's busiest month of programs for the public and schools. It also is when our bicycle training rides begin, setting the stage for the annual Earth Ride in September. All of these programs were cancelled, making this May the quietest this property has experienced since the late 1970s. Although June was no different, it gave us time to develop a plan for summer camp programs. Greatly reducing the number of campers was the first step. Next was to minimize available indoor space, and even insisting that campers come prepared to be outdoors in rain. At this writing, new mask wearing mandates were issued to all City facilities, which may once again require last minute procedural adjustments.

In looking at the global trends of coronavirus and how most industrial countries have mitigated the virus compared to the U.S., it appears we will be combating this virus for some time to come. So far, we have not scheduled any public programs in order to do our part in slowing the virus. Our Ecology Center lobby is the only part of the building open to



Photo provided

With planning, a reduced number of campers were able to enjoy Maywood this summer.

the public, with hours of operation reduced to Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The Reception Desk has been protected with plexi-glass shields and all of our staff and volunteers will be wearing masks.

Although our current situation and the financial repercussions can be a bit daunting and discouraging, please know that we are doing our part to help keep Maywood visitors safe. The good news is still that there are infinite natural wonders at Maywood to discover and that our trails and 135 acres are one of the safest places to be. We hope to see you visiting Maywood, albeit at a social distance of six feet.

By Dave Kuckuk



Great Wisconsin Birdathon has been extended



Birds are valuable and need our help. The Natural Resources Foundation's Great Wisconsin Birdathon is the largest fundraiser for bird conservation in the state, uniting hundreds of bird enthusiasts each spring with the goal of finding as many species possible in one day while raising funds to support priority bird conservation projects.

This year will be birdier than ever, as the Birdathon will be extended to run from April 15 – October 15. While funds raised will continue to support bird conservation in

Wisconsin, this year we are refocusing on a more important goal: connection. This year we encourage you to use the Birdathon as a tool - an inspiration - to connect with birds, connect with local spaces, and most importantly connect (safely) with family and friends while raising awareness for the importance of Wisconsin birds. With your support, the Great Wisconsin Birdathon has raised over half a million dollars since 2012, and has engaged thousands of individuals in conserving Wisconsin's birds.

Jennifer Rutten

Kakaw! Calling all birders to help with bird count Oct. 4

Are you a birder? Like feeding and observing your backyard birds? Find yourself walking the Maywood trails with bins and checklist in tow? Inspired to make a difference in state and local bird conservation? Love the fun and education of birding in a group? Maywood is excited to announce our first time participating in The Great Wisconsin Birdathon! Maywood volunteer and birder,

Jennifer Rutten will be leading our team, named Magnificent Maywood Merlins, in identifying bird species at Maywood. The team will spend a few hours in the morning Sunday, October 4 birding Maywood's property during Fall migration. This event is a fundraiser and both teams and individuals can raise donations. The best part? Total funds raised for the October 4 Maywood Birdathon

will be split between The Natural Resources Foundation and Maywood to increase bird conservation, monitoring efforts and launch new bird initiatives for 2021.

To join the team, visit WIBirdathon.org, click on "birdathon teams" at the top, then scroll down and click on Magnificent Maywood Merlins. For more information, email Jennifer Rutten at: jen_born2000@yahoo.com.

Meet Barb Sorcic, Maywood's new volunteer coordinator



Join us in welcoming Maywood's new volunteer coordinator, Barb Sorcic. Since starting June 8, Barb has been learning the ropes of the reception desk, ecology store, and volunteer coordination, and has taken an active role in preparing the Ecology Center lobby for reopening. Barb has been a Maywood volunteer for several years and participates in our OWLS program.

Barb spent 30 years in healthcare

administration retiring last year from Fort HealthCare in Fort Atkinson. Barb enjoys hiking and has visited many of the national parks in the western United States. She worked in Estes Park, Colorado for 12 years, which gave her the opportunity to hike many of the trails in Rocky Mountain National Park as well. When not hiking with her dog Mazi, Barb enjoys quilting and gardening.

Welcome, Barb!



Check the GoMaywood.org for self-guided adventures through Maywood

Throughout the summer I've attempted to engage our OWLS (Older, Wiser, Livelier, Scholars) in outdoor exploration of Maywood through weekly email posts. The prairie has simply been magical this summer with a vibrant crop of colorful and unusual plants, which has served as a weekly source of investigation and intrigue. Given the many positive comments I've received from our OWLS, I will now be expanding our weekly self-guided nature hikes to all ages. Posted on our webpage and social media sources, the public will be able to follow mapped locations to specific items in nature that may provide a wonderful nature lesson, or simply answer the question, "What is it?"

With a reduction in programming due to coronavirus, I've been able to commit more time to the exploration of Maywood's 135 acres. This has been beneficial for the purposes of developing a new master site plan, planning management projects, and discovering the fruits of all the work invested in restoring the plant

communities of Maywood. Parts of the prairie are now about 35 years old. Even though there are still some areas where invasive species continue their rivalry with the natives, these well-established native plants are winning the battle.

Since families have been forced from crowded public spaces and into the outdoors, we hope to provide self-guided hikes as a safe fun, family alternative. So, the plan is to prepare a hike route with "must see" items for adults and kids to check out. These hikes will be posted about mid-week so families will have another weekend outing at Maywood to look forward to. Just as with the OWLS, some on-site or internet investigation of clues provided may be required to get the full benefit of the hike.

So, this fall is your opportunity to be a nature detective, and discover the many natural wonders right on our property. The best part is that it is free, however your donations are very much appreciated now, more than ever.

Dave Kuckuk



The Leading Edge

Newsworthy Comments

Charlie Conrardy

Charlie is the first Maywood Advisory Board Member to receive our new Emeritus Award, there will, no doubt, be others. This honor celebrates retired board members allowing them to retain their titles.

Charlie joined the Maywood Board as the representative of the Sheboygan County Board. That experience brought the knowledge of how local government works along with the associated networking opportunities. Charlie's involvement with other organizations in the community also brought knowledge of other foundations and nonprofits. Because of his broad experience and people skills, he helped connect us with board members who could fit specific roles. Giving Maywood a board with a diverse representation of our community. Charlie, like so many of our volunteers, made an effort to attend meetings whenever he could and always contributed to them in effective ways. From the Maywood Staff, the Maywood Advisory Board, and all our volunteers, I wish to thank Charlie for his active participation in helping make Maywood a gem in our community.

Maywood Annual Meeting

Like all the other social gatherings these days, our annual meeting has been canceled. The when and the how of getting us together again must wait until we can congregate and feel safe. Unfortunately, none of us know when that will be.

Other Maywood Meetings

I can tell you our committee meetings and Advisory Board meetings have continued using Zoom. We have had two Advisory Board meetings with 25 to 30 participants, which is a fine turnout. My laptop looks like the old TV show, Hollywood Squares, with all those faces. All the Maywood officers are staying in their positions through 2020. Donna Wendlandt, Pete Pittner, Paul Pickhardt, Joe Kerlin and I make up the search committee for Maywood's new director, and have begun reviewing the job description with the goal of posting the position in early November.

Earth Miles 4 Maywood

As a reminder, please support our virtual fundraiser in any way you can. Because of this virus business, we are putting all our efforts into this one event. Dave, Barb and especially Angie have had to learn how to plan and execute a virtual event. They have done an outstanding job in organizing this, but we need our Maywood community to participate.

All of us at Maywood hope that you and yours are safe and healthy,

Ed



Ed Abell, President
Ellwood H. May
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Our Mission

To foster environmental stewardship through educational and outdoor experiences that connect our community with the natural world.



Design your own Earth ride, run, walk or paddle

It's time to get outdoors, enjoy your favorite activities, and support Maywood! This September, we're hosting a virtual fundraiser – Earth Miles 4 Maywood. With current social distancing requirements and safety concerns, hosting our traditional Earth Ride wasn't an option. But it was an opportunity to expand our fall fundraiser. This year you can run, walk, hike, pedal, paddle or enjoy any other self-propelled activity while you support Maywood.

As a participant you will choose the distance, route, days, and times to participate. You can even do a combination of activities to reach your goal. There are a variety of mileage options from 10 miles to 500 miles. Our popular Iron Raccoon route from the Earth Ride is now the 140.6 mile Iron Raccoon Challenge. There's also a set your own goal option if you have a distance with special meaning to you.

This year your \$30 registration fee

includes a dry-fit t-shirt. You can pick-up your shirt at Maywood or opt to have it mailed to you. There's also the option to raise pledges to help support



EARTH MILES 4 MAYWOOD

Maywood even more Those who register through RunSignUp can create an online fundraising page to collect pledges. If you raise \$100 or more in pledges through the online fundraising option, your registration fee will be refunded. It's easy to share your pledge link with family and friends through

email and social media. We also have pledge forms available on our website and in the Ecology Center.

Kids 12 and younger can participate in the event for free. This makes Earth Miles 4 Maywood a great option for families who want to participate together.

The Maywood Earth Ride was the biggest fundraiser for our park. It provided valuable funds for our programs and park projects. While we haven't been offering as many in-person programs this year, our staff has been working to create self-guided hikes and digital content. We hope many of you will consider joining our virtual event to help us meet our funding needs for 2020.

Whether you opt for 10 miles or 500 miles, you will help Maywood provide more nature connections in our community.

Angie Doell