



PO BOX 580, Williams Bay, WI 53191

(262) 581-5304

Dedicated July 1990
to the
children of tomorrow

One word! TORNADO!!

The tornado that swept through Williams Bay last summer went right through Kishwauktoe and did extensive damage, especially around our main entrance on highway 67. We lost close to thirty mature trees that were knocked over or severely damaged. In addition, the bridge over Southwick Creek was broken beyond repair. The picture below tells the story quite well.

The Friends of KNC are initiating a capital fundraising campaign, "**Bridge to Nature**", to raise the \$60,000 needed to replace the bridge. The bridge is a focal point of our entrance and is a popular setting for photos. The new steel bridge should last for many, many decades.

The Johnson family funded the original bridge in 2010 in memory of their father/husband, Tom Johnson. In a wonderful gesture, they have made a substantial donation to kick off this campaign for the new bridge!

We need your help! Any donation amount is welcome as we replace this "bridge to nature"! Coming in the fall of 2025!

- Peg Pollitt, President & Treasurer, Friends of KNC Board

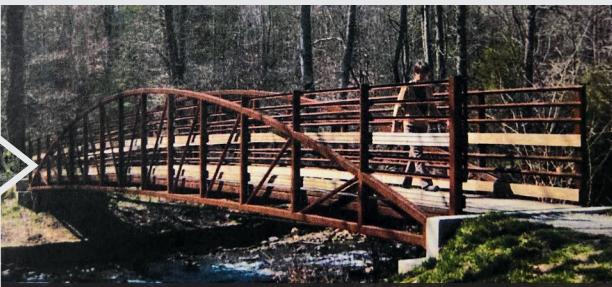
Kishwauktoe Nature Conservancy was the "happy place" for our dad, Tom Johnson, and he enjoyed everything from clearing buckthorn on volunteer Saturdays to serving on the board for 3 years. When he passed away in 2008, our family directed memorial donations to Kishwauktoe for the purpose of building a bridge over Southwick Creek, as this project aligned with his passion for conservation and his love for this special land. While it's unfortunate that the original bridge was destroyed in last summer's tornado, we are honored to kickstart the campaign to rebuild a stronger and more sustainable bridge that will allow future generations to enjoy the local gem that is KNC.

- Don Johnson & CJ Sultz

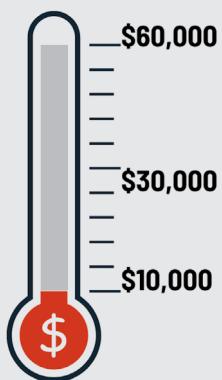
Bridge to Nature



Damaged bridge



New bridge coming this fall



On June 22, 2024, our bridge over Southwick Creek was damaged beyond repair by the EF1 tornado that came through Williams Bay.

Please help us replace our bridge in KNC with your donations.

For more information visit: www.friendsofknc.org





Welcome Everyone!

Please come and enjoy the coming of summer, the awakening of nature!

Soon, when the frost is out of the soil, the frogs and toads in Kish's wetland areas will be in full, amorous chorus, restlessly looking for mates after a cold, lonely winter. Turtles and toads will awaken. Red-winged blackbirds will suddenly appear, defiant and brave, fearful of nothing.

In the woods, migrating birds, like the Eastern Bluebird, will be spotted if not heard screeching first. Bloodroot, Trillium and Cut-Root Spiderwort (I love that name!), along with other spring ephemeral wildflowers will show their fleeting face. And the hardwood buds will slowly swell, in no hurry to unfold.

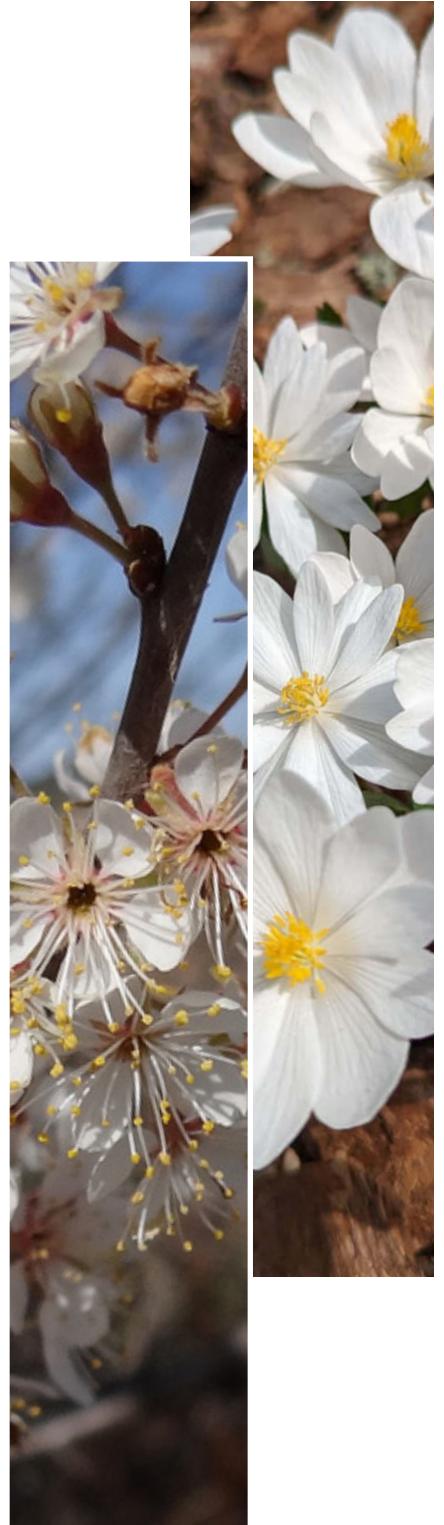
And along the woods and prairie edges, the delicate blossoms of wild plum, serviceberry and wild crabapples, with their distinctive, sweet smells, will fill our senses.

So here we go again. A new season. A powerful reminder of why so many of us are committed to making Kishwauketo a special place. A shared community of people dedicated to supporting Kishwauketo. A community that supports this special place both financially and by volunteering with their labor and special skills.

We should be proud.

Don Skalla

Kishwauketo Commission Chairman





Winter Work, Lasting Impact: Restoration Efforts Across Kishwauketo

Every winter, Kishwauketo staff and volunteers work to make Kish an even better piece of nature, and this usually means clearing out invasive plants. This year we moved around and worked in three different locations.

When the ground froze this winter, we worked along the lakefront, finishing up past projects. The lakefront has been looking great except for a few small buckthorn thickets near the boardwalk. We had two volunteer workdays cleaning up the south side of the boardwalk, and then a few more workdays as we worked north, opening the space around the poplars. We are optimistic that more poplars will come up this summer as they spread through rhizomes. We plan to scatter native seeds in the more degraded areas before the freeze and thaw is over. This freezing and thawing is an important process that seeds go through, called stratification, that allows them to better germinate.

Another project this winter has been along the west side of Southwick Creek, which runs parallel to HWY 67. As you walk along the trail, you will now be able to see the creek more clearly, and on quiet days you will be able to hear the water trickling. We spent some time cutting out the buckthorn, as well as thinning out the black walnuts, to allow for more sunlight. This encourages grasses and sedges to grow more vigorously, which will help stabilize the creek bank. We also plan to seed this area to jump-start the native diversity.

The third project we worked on was the restoration of an “oak opening” remnant on the west side of Harris Road and south of the Arboretum. To restore the opening, we needed to remove both buckthorn and box elder trees that had crept into the area, two species that, historically, don’t belong in that landscape. Time was spent cleaning-up and raking the area to get it ready for seeding and future mowing. We seeded three different seed mixes to accommodate the wet areas and dry areas. These seed mixes were mostly made up of native grasses and sedges--- they create fuel for future controlled fires and compete with buckthorn sprouts. We will plant a few oak trees as well as one or two shrub thickets to keep the opening growing.

With limited staff and a host of volunteers, we have managed, I think, to accomplish a lot this winter!

Jenn Yunker
Field Manager





New KNC Tractor!

A longtime wish-list piece of equipment was finally acquired this past Fall: **a Kubota tractor with a bucket, mowing deck and grapple attachment!**

For so long we have dreamed of having a tractor with a three point hitch - something that is tough and rugged and able to accomplish so many tasks at Kishwauketoé.

The generous support of the Friends allowed for the purchase of this beautiful tractor.

It is a cute fella, just the right size for the work at Kishwauketoé. Considerable time was spent determining what would be the best choice. We didn't want one too big or too small, and we wanted to select the appropriate attachments.

We had the help of Rob Sorensen, who volunteered his knowledge of equipment, in choosing the right tractor for our applications. When the tractor arrived, Rob helped Jenn Yunker become familiar with its operation and maintenance.

Jenn has now begun to make good use of it, and will not only take some physical burden off of her and the volunteers, but will also make so many tasks easier and accomplished so much more efficiently.

This is exciting!

Don Skalla
Kishwauketoé Commission Chairman





An Ode to an Old Oak

Our Heritage Oak, awarded “Oldest Oak Tree” winner in the Black Oak category in 2022 by the Geneva Lake Conservancy, has succumbed to the inevitability of Nature’s life cycle.

While taking a quiet, late afternoon walk through Kishwauketo, it was surprising and unexpected when I saw our Great Oak... there she was, silent, broken, her great canopy lying quiet and still upon the ground in the white satin of a fresh, light snow.

She looked tired, peaceful and content, a long life lived well.

So, this ode is to her:

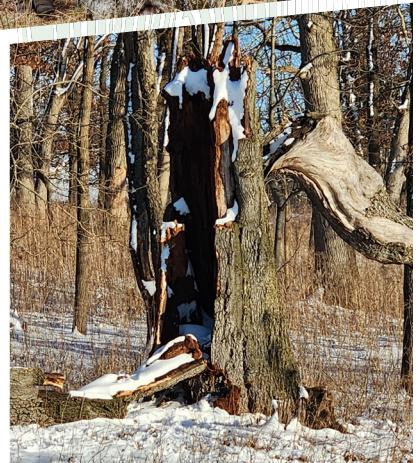
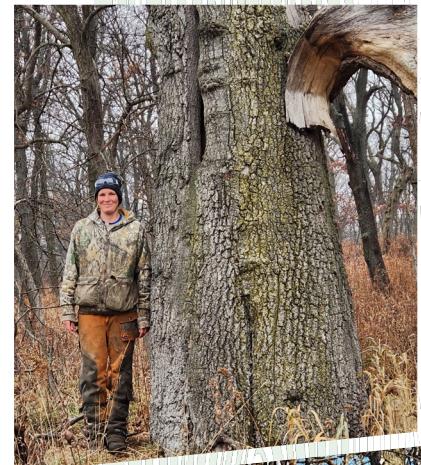
**Old tree, you heard the whispers of Potawatomi and French
Then the cry of Yankees
When Revolution flared, 100 years you already stood**

**Over 300 years you watched over this land
Proud and courageous, stouthearted and brave
And nourished our animal friends
Shaded our tired souls
And gave us awe as we gazed at your strength and majesty.**

~ Don Skalla

Kishwauketo Commission Chairman

The last measurement of the circumference of the tree on November 20, 2019 was 17 feet, or a diameter of 65 inches. For a black oak tree, this would equate to an age of about 325 years.





Extensive Tree Work Completed at KNC Following Destructive 2024 Tornado

After the destructive impact on numerous trees throughout Kishwauketo Nature Conservancy (KNC) as a result of the June 22, 2024 tornado, KNC volunteers applied for and received a special Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources grant to assist with professional tree removal and trimming services.

Immediately following the storm damage, numerous KNC volunteers jumped into action to clear as much of the storm debris as possible. Two neighboring community members even donated the use of their small tractors to assist with the clean-up effort. During the period from January 22-28, 2025, as the result of this special grant funding, KNC contracted with B&J Tree & Landscape Service to perform the tree trimming and removal work that was beyond the capability of KNC staff and volunteers. This remediation work was deferred to winter in order to limit damage to the trails and property from the use of heavy equipment. While much of the tree work was concentrated in the vicinity of the main KNC entrance on Highway 67, a significant amount of work was also completed in KNC along both sides of Harris Road.

A very special thank you is extended to everyone who volunteered and had a hand in this clean-up and restoration work!

Jim Killian

Vice Chair KNC Commission Board





KNC CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

KNC ANNUAL 5K
RUN/WALK
Saturday, July 5th
See website for details

FULL MOON HIKES w/
BONFIRE & TREATS
See website calendar for
dates and times

SPRING PLANT SALE
Order online
Pick-up:
Saturday, June 14th,
9:00am to 1:00pm

GUIDED WALKS WITH
KNC NATURALISTS
See website calendar for
dates and times

VOLUNTEER WORKDAYS
Most Fridays or Saturdays
8:30 to 11:00am
See website calendar &
join our volunteer list for
location and updates

WINE WALK
Saturday, September 27th
See website for details

Join our mailing list & follow
us on Facebook for added
events and updates

A Message from Harold Friestad

Spring is here and you can already see the number of Hikers and Nature Lovers coming out on a daily basis to enjoy our wonderful trails, streams, wetlands, woodlands and the list goes on. These Springlike Days add so much to everyone's enthusiasm for hiking in KNC.

We have a lot of volunteer opportunities in the spring when things are a little cooler for working and this allows us to cut back as we head into mid-June so everyone can then have an opportunity to enjoy wonderful Geneva Lake, one of the top spring-fed lakes in the country.

It's always a great time to TAKE A HIKE in KNC and ENJOY a wonderful DAY IN THE BAY!

Harold Friestad, Chairman Emeritus

This and That...

- Learn more about KNC by reading our recently published book, *Kishwauketo, A Nature Conservancy for the Children of Tomorrow*, available for purchase on our website.
- Students (high school/college) - apply for paid summer internships at KNC at events@kishwauketo.org.
- Check out the KNC merchandise on sale on our website shop!
- Would you be interested in joining the Friends of KNC board? We're looking to add members to our board. The Friends is the fundraising arm of KNC and it is a low commitment. Great way to meet new people! Inquire at events@kishwauketo.org.
- Watch for our new KNC website launching this summer!
- Did you know KNC offers an annual scholarship to students in the environmental sciences or related field of study?



Staff & Boards

Kishwauketoé is administered and cared for by its board of directors, officers, staff, interns and a wonderful group of volunteers.

KNC Commission Board

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Staff

Project Manager – Jennifer Yunker
Part time Botanist – Joshua Skolnick
Rick Pinell, Accountant
Lauren Benkendorf

Interns

Conservation has made KNC the ecologic gem it is today. A thriving program is in place to offer high school and college students the opportunity to intern by helping to maintain the expansive property and learn as they go.

Volunteers

Kishwauketoé would not be possible without the work of hundreds of volunteers. All are welcome and no special skills are needed. Our primary work is clearing invasive species, such as Buckthorn, Honeysuckle, Boxelder trees and a significant number of non-native grasses, forms, sedges, etc. We also welcome those with chainsaw skills.

Volunteer Workdays:

Join us on most Saturdays from November – May from 8:30-11:00 at sites as noted on the weekly notice on our website and Kiosks, for a rewarding experience. Help Kishwauketoé grow and develop while gaining hands-on experience and first-hand knowledge about the conservancy.



A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR DONORS

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Judith Johnson

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In honor of Ellora's birthday

Mary Herwig

In Honor of Nancy Powers

M Lenore Cameron

In Honor of Ray & Susanne Manthe

Michele Lack

In Honor of Susan Franzen & The Bailey House

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For Dave Deis Birthday

Emily Deis

Jessica Deis

Nicholas Deis

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William Black

Thomas F. Cashman

Michael Hobbs

Gary & Mary Vonck

KNC 5K In-kind donations:

Daniels Foods - Walworth

Frosty Moose - Williams Bay

Hansen's IGA - Elkhorn

Heyer True Value - Walworth

Lake Geneva Piggly Wiggly

Stinebrink's Piggly Wiggly - Delavan

Williams Bay Subway

We apologize for any errors in
this list despite our attempt to be
as precise as possible.



CALLING ALL PLANT LOVERS!

Native Plant Sale 2025

Assorted trees and shrubs
All grown from local native seed

ALL ORDERS ONLINE: @ FRIENDSOKNC.ORG
BY JUNE 13TH
PICK UP: JUNE 14TH 9AM–1PM
KNC ENTRANCE
251 ELKHORN RD. WILLIAMS BAY, WI



To become a FRIENDS supporter,
complete this form and return to:

KNC
PO BOX 580
Williams Bay, WI 53191

Please make checks payable to:
FRIENDS OF KISHWAUKETO, LTD.

All contributions are tax deductible.

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I wish to volunteer at Kishwauketo Nature Conservancy
Kishwauketo is a not for Profit organization with a 501 (c)(3) status.