



Dedicated July 1990
to the
children of tomorrow

PO BOX 580, Williams Bay, WI 53191

(262) 581-5304

A Treasure in Our Backyard: Why Kishwauketoe Matters More Than Ever

Step onto a trail at 251 Elkhorn Road and the world goes quiet almost immediately. Within a hundred yards, the road and the noise of daily life fall away. What replaces them is the whisper of wind through tall grasses — and the realization that you may not see another person for the entirety of your walk.

What you *will* see is something better. A white-tailed deer frozen at the tree line, watching you before slipping into the brush. Wild bergamot and black-eyed Susans pushing through the restored prairie. Skunk cabbage unfurling along the creek banks in early spring. And always, in every season, Southwick Creek threading quietly through the landscape, clear and unhurried. This is Kishwauketoe — not a park designed for human activity, but a living ecosystem that generously allows us to pass through it.



Thirty-five years ago, these 231 acres nearly became hotels, a boat lagoon, and a golf community. It took years of community advocacy before the Village Board purchased the land in 1990, dedicating it with four words that still guide everything we do: *Dedicated to the Children of Tomorrow*. Since that day, Kishwauketoe has never asked for a single tax dollar to operate.

What's at stake goes beyond a beautiful walk. Kishwauketoe is the largest intact wetland remaining in the entire Geneva Lake watershed. Each year, 565 million gallons of water flow through this land, filtered and cleansed before reaching the lake. It moderates flooding, recharges groundwater, and provides irreplaceable habitat for native plants, pollinators, and migratory birds. The health of Geneva Lake and the Kishwauketoe wetland are inseparable.

Every trail, every restored prairie, every native tree planted here is funded entirely by donors and volunteers — people who believe this land is worth protecting. When you give to the Friends of Kishwauketoe, every dollar goes directly to the land. No tax support. No platform fees. Just generosity, converted into restoration.

And come walk the trails. They're open dawn to dusk, every day of the year, free of charge. Let the land do what it has always done — quietly and without expectation — reminding us of what we stand to lose, and why it's worth fighting to keep.

The children of tomorrow are counting on us.

Susan Franzen

Storm update — see page 7



The White Trillium

Each year our staff and volunteers perform a number of controlled burns. There is an area in Kishwaukee, called the Oak Opening, that we have been burning regularly in order to better provide the right environment for a more aggressive establishment of the traditional native landscape.

I can talk about why or how and wherefore, but I'm writing this time about a special, what I call, phenomenon — the return each year, all alone, of a stunning, beautiful White Trillium.

Jim Killian, Dave Deis and I keep asking each other, “Did you see the White Trillium?” It's one of those things that, no matter how many times we have seen it return, we are dumbfounded. It manages to return each year after we burn when everything around us looks like the aftermath of a World War 1 trench battlefield.

We did not plant that Trillium. It's what we call a “volunteer” — it showed up on its own. Chances are, it has somehow survived in spite of years of badly overgrown invasives surrounding it.

So, my ode to this “Lone Maiden” —

LONE WOODLAND MAIDEN

Why you?

**In all this burned and barren land
of rotted logs and spent shells
Why you, only you, why now?**

**Do you return each year to your woodland nave
'lone waiting again a fallen Brave?**

**Your patience, lone Maiden, 'tis sad melancholy
Or is this faith and longing just folly?**

**Your form so graceful in dress green and white
A princess at ready for a carriage tonight
To whisk her away in rush and splendor
To music and dancing
and proud brave to defend her.**

**Do you return each year awaiting this Brave
betrothed to you before the fight?
Or is it faded memory denied
to have this evening again tonight.**

Don Skalla





Upcoming Fundraisers

Did you know that Kishwaukee Nature Conservancy receives NO TAX DOLLARS? It operates only through donations, grants, and annual fundraising events along with the dedicated assistance of hard-working volunteers. Help us meet our 2026 goals through your support and participation in this year's fundraising events:

50/50 RAFFLE



KISHWAUKETOE
NATURE CONSERVANCY

50/50 RAFFLE

\$20 EACH OR 6 FOR \$100

WINNERS WILL BE DRAWN
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26TH AT 6:30PM
DURING THE KNC WINE WALK AFTER PARTY
AT THE GREEN GROCER.
NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN.

 **1ST PRIZE**
CASH PRIZE – 50%

 **2ND PRIZE**
A WINE BASKET

 **3RD PRIZE**
MERCHANDISE BASKET

BUY TICKETS AT:

-  Kishwaukee 5k Run/Walk – July 4th
-  Concierge table, Saturdays 9am–1pm. KNC main entrance
-  Geneva Lake General Store
-  Green Grocer
-  Chuck's Lakeshore Inn
-  Look for us at local events!
-  KNC Wine Walk

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE
AND COULD MAKE YOU A WINNER!

3rd ANNUAL WINE WALK

Saturday, September 26th (2:00-5:00pm)

Stroll 1.3 miles through the conservancy while sampling wines from local distributors on a (hopefully) beautiful autumn afternoon! Wine bottles will be available to purchase afterwards through the Green Grocer with 20% coming back to KNC. New this year, an artisan market – local artists selling their works of art at the entrance. Also, the fresh flower arrangements on display at check-in and each tasting stop will be available to buy. Again, we will have the After Party at the Green Grocer with live music, culminating with the 50/50 raffle drawing at 6:30pm. Tickets will be available in August on our website. Mark your calendars!



What is Arbor Day?

Arbor Day is an annual holiday, founded by J. Sterling Morton in 1872, dedicated to planting, nurturing, and celebrating trees and encouraging environmental stewardship. It typically involves community tree plantings, educational events, and tree care. Trees play an important role by providing clean air, shade, and habitat for animals and insects.

Every year Kishwauketoe invites local schools to come out and plant trees. This year the Williams Bay Elementary School (5K through 5th grade) and Woods School (3rd through 5th grade) joined in the Arbor Day plantings. With 56 trees to plant with just under 300 kids, teachers, parents and volunteers, it turned out to be a beautiful celebration.

The event began with a gathering in the Arboretum, the pledge of allegiance was recited, followed by the Indigenous acknowledgement. Williams Bay village president, Adam Jaramillo, delivered the Arbor Day proclamation. KNC board member, Chrissy Wen, finished with how to plant and take care of the trees they would be planting. White Pines, Red Pines, Butternuts and Cedars were planted this year in and around the Arboretum.

Most classes had two larger trees to plant while the 3rd and 4th graders had six to seven small trees. In order to plant as random as possible with the smaller trees, each student was given a bean bag to toss with their eyes closed. Wherever the bag landed is where a tree was planted. The students and the teachers loved this activity and it encouraged working together and taking turns.

Each teacher was then given a laminated bingo or scavenger hunt sheet to complete with their class thus providing a short walk and activity before returning to the bus. At the end of the day, the students went back to school with mud on their shoes, fresh air in their lungs and a little more knowledge of the importance of trees.

Jenn Yunker



Losing Giants

“Ancient trees are precious. There is little else on Earth that plays host to such a rich community of life within a single living organism.”

- Sir David Attenborough

Some of us are lucky enough to have large older trees on our properties, and the rest of us can be content to stroll through our conservation areas and parks to visit them and stand, sit, read, dream and picnic in their shade. However, all over the world, we are losing huge trees of every species, many of them well over one hundred years old. Summer wildfires have endangered giant sequoias in California; ash borers are working their way through the country, and tornadoes and windstorms have taken giant trees in recent years.

According to Science.org, “Sturdy as they are, giant trees are particularly susceptible to . . . lightning, drought, and invasive pests. The biggest trees, standing tall through storms and harsh winters, may look invincible. But a series of recent studies analyzing the effects of lightning, drought, and invasive pests on forests indicates that for trees, size is not strength, and forest giants are quite vulnerable.”
(<https://www.science.org>)

There is quite a bit of science regarding the importance to the environment of our ancient trees, but there is also an emotional impact when a great tree dies. It is not just the beauty of something irreplaceable, but the impact of this massive piece of nature suddenly disappearing from our lives. These huge old trees are full of memories for many people. Each time we lose one of these big old trees, we are saddened by its loss.

So, as you look at these large older trees in your yard, neighborhood, or on a hike, think about how many people and how much wildlife have found joy in what those trees have to offer. Then go plant another tree.

Brenda Dahlfors





Upcoming Events

Summer Outdoor Education - Free

This summer, Kishwaukee Nature Conservancy welcomes back Outdoor Education Coordinator, Danielle Simons. Danielle is eager to jump back into educational programming at the conservancy, bringing back some previous favorite classes as well as offering some new ones for kids and families to enjoy.

The outdoor education program's main schedule will be twice weekly classes free of charge to the community, with no limit to age or class size. The program will be structured so that families are able to show up with no prior registration. This allows attendees to naturally go with the flow of the summer and incorporate Kish Kids into their schedule, or lack thereof!

Forest Bathing at Kishwaukee - Free

Immerse yourself in nature and discover the healing benefits of spending time in the natural world. Forest bathing is a guided walk designed to engage all of your senses. Research shows that forest bathing boosts the immune system, lowers blood pressure, and improves mood and cognitive function.

This is not a vigorous walk or a talk by a naturalist. Rather it is an opportunity to soak up the healing aspects of nature and to connect with your own inner peace. It is open to anyone age 16+. Wear comfortable shoes & socks, bug repellent, and a hat; bring water. We will be walking about two miles and you will need the physical ability to sit down on the ground and get back up.

Meet at the KNC main entrance shelter.

When: **Sunday, August 23rd & Saturday, September 19th, 10:30am to noon**

Instructor: **Cindy Conlon**

Two Emily Stone Programs - Free

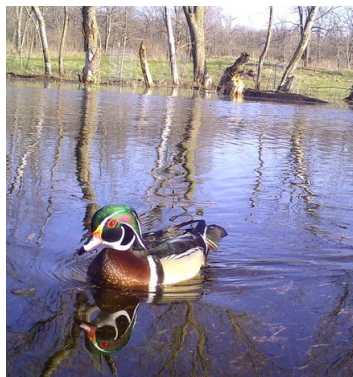
(Wisconsin Naturalist/Education Director at the Cable Natural History Museum and author)

August 19th - 9:00 – 10:30 am – Emily presents the Kish Kid Explorer program, “Treasure Finder Adventure”, with the assistance of Danielle Simons. Meet at the KNC shelter. Discover the hidden treasures of KNC; explore overlooked wonders, search for animal homes and signs, discover camouflage in nature, and learn how every tiny treasure is part of a web of connections that keeps our ecosystems thriving.

August 19th @ 6:00pm-7:30pm - Emily will present a Nature Series program “Illuminating the Web” (for adults and families) at the Lions Fieldhouse. She will share some of her favorite stories, including readings from her “Natural Connections” books. She’ll bring you right out into the forest with her, discover something interesting in nature, and then explains the science behind it. Her voice is a breath of fresh air in the nature writing genre. Book purchase & signing will follow this program.



Wisconsin Wetland Association Tours of KNC & Social Gathering @ the Green Grocer



August 29, 2026 (Saturday)

Longer Tour: 10:15 – 11:45 AM

Shorter Boardwalk Tour: 11:00 – 11:45 AM (accessible)

Gathering/Social at the Green Grocer: 12:00 – 2:00 PM

This two-part event invites you to connect with nature and community - you're welcome to attend either field trip, the gathering, or both:

FIELD TRIPS – two choices! Leaders: KNC

volunteers and Wisconsin Wetlands Association staff

- **10:15 – 11:45 AM | Longer walking tour of the Kishwaukee Nature Conservancy**

This longer hike will traverse the diverse landscapes of the 231-acre KNC. Hike about 2 miles on mowed trails that could be wet and/or muddy.

- **11:00 – 11:45 AM | Short walking tour on the accessible Kishwaukee Nature Conservancy boardwalk**

This short hike will traverse the accessible lakefront boardwalk of KNC and will connect with the Geneva Lake shore path along the Williams Bay lakefront.

COMMUNITY GATHERING

- **12:00 – 2:00 PM | Gathering at The Green Grocer in Williams Bay**

Whether or not you attend one of the KNC tours, you are invited to gather with other wetland enthusiasts and WI Wetlands Assoc. members at the Green Grocer. Weather-permitting, we'll enjoy the rooftop patio with a view of Geneva Lake and KNC. Food and drinks will be available for purchase.

REGISTRATION

- Advance registration required – cost is free.
- Register at the Wisconsin Wetlands Association website:
<https://www.wisconsinwetlands.org/gatherings/>

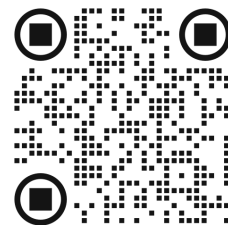
Grand Marshall of the Williams Bay 2025 Memorial Parade was our own Harold Friestad!

This year's Memorial Day parade organizers decided to have a Grand Marshall and we think they couldn't have picked a better candidate than Harold Friestad! KNC was again well represented with a golf cart, zero-turn mower, tractor and gator all filled with smiling KNC staff and volunteers! And the leader was Harold in a snazzy red convertible! A good time was had by all!



Why We Use Zeffy – and Why It Matters to You

When you donate to Kishwaukee Nature Conservancy online, every single dollar you intend for the conservancy arrives here. That's because we process donations through Zeffy, a fundraising platform that charges nonprofits absolutely zero fees — no platform fees, no transaction fees, no credit card processing fees.



How does Zeffy make that work? When you complete your donation, you'll see an optional prompt asking if you'd like to leave a small tip directly to Zeffy to help keep their platform running. That contribution is entirely your choice — you can adjust the amount or decline it altogether. Either way, 100% of your gift to Kishwaukee comes straight to us.

It's a small thing that adds up — and it reflects the same spirit of stewardship we try to bring to everything we do at Kishwaukee.

Storm Damage Update!

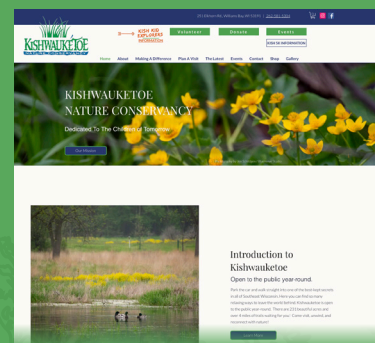
On July 3rd, a fierce storm with 100 mph winds blew through the lakes area and KNC incurred a lot of damage. Over 20+ trees fell over and many, many branches came down. Once again, we are in recovery mode (like after the 2024 tornado). Luckily, our new bridge survived just fine. We have managed to clear all the trails but the damage in the interior areas is still being assessed. We could use your donations at this time as we work to restore KNC to the gem that we all know and love.

Thank you!



»» CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE at friendsofknc.org!

Early this spring, we kicked off our new and improved website! Hopefully you can find everything you need to know about KNC, see what's happening in Kish, purchase new KNC items and send us a donation! Let us know what you think or if anything is missing! Many thanks to Amy Wolski @ Revive Creative LLC, Jen Nix, Susan Franzen, Chrissy Wen and Peg Pollitt for coordinating this huge effort!



KISH KID EXPLORERS KISHWAUKETOE NATURE CONSERVANCY

SUMMER CALENDAR



Check Facebook for class and event times,
schedule changes, and additional
learning opportunities.



JULY



July 6

Measure Up

Build boats, experiment in the creek, and discover how we measure the world around us.

July 13

Tree Time

Explore the arboretum, identify trees, play tree bingo, and discover what trees do for our world.



July 20

MUD!

Squish, splash, create, and get messy in the best way possible.



July 27

Animals Hide

Search for tracks, scat, nests, and signs of the animals that call Kishwaukee home.



July 29 — Stories & S'mores with Night Hike



July 1

Wet & Wild

Splash, explore the creek, and discover what lives in the water around us.



July 15

Creepy Crawlers

Meet, observe, and learn about the tiny creatures living all around us.



July 22

Wet & Wild

Splash, explore the creek, and discover what lives in the water around us.



July 29

Step Into Nature

Slow down, notice more, and connect with nature through sensory exploration and journaling.



AUGUST



August 3

Measure Up

Build boats, experiment in the creek, and discover how we measure the world around us.

August 10

Tree Time

Explore the arboretum, identify trees, play tree bingo, and discover what trees do for our world.



August 17

Nature Detectives

Search for clues, follow trails, and help us test new adventure activities coming to Kish Kid Explorers.



August 24

Letters in Nature

Discover shapes, colors, patterns, and hidden letters all throughout Kishwaukee.



August 28 — Stories & S'mores with Night Hike



August 5

Wet & Wild

Splash, explore the creek, and discover what lives in the water around us.



August 12

Creepy Crawlers

Meet, observe, and learn about the tiny creatures living all around us.



August 19

Animals Hide

Search for tracks, scat, nests, and signs of the animals that call Kishwaukee home.



August 26

Kish Quest

Follow clues, explore the trails, and get a sneak peek at future Kish Kid adventures!



WHAT TO BRING

- Water bottle
 - Weather-appropriate clothing
 - Closed-toe shoes
 - Sense of adventure!
- Please note: there are no restrooms available within the conservancy.



We play, explore and learn outdoors rain or shine! Come curious, leave inspired.

LET'S STAY CONNECTED

Follow us on Facebook for updates, schedule changes, special events, and additional learning





Staff & Boards

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

KNC Commission Board

Donald Skalla, Chairman
Jim Killian, Vice Chairman
Brian J. Cook
Liz Cox
Brenda Dahlfors
Kim Parker
Chrissy Wen
Harold Friestad, Emeritus

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Sue Vandenbroucke

Staff

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

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. See our website for more information.

Volunteers

Kishwauketoe 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. Sign up on our website.

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 Kishwauketoe grow and develop while gaining hands-on experience and first-hand knowledge about the conservancy.

We have an abundance of size 2XL and 3XL clothing items. Do you know someone that would like one?

Email us at info@kishwauketoe.org to claim your free item!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT!

Did you know that two wonderful volunteers, **Judy Ackerly** and **Nancy Birkett**, staff the KNC concierge table most Saturday summer mornings from 9am-1pm (weather permitting) at the main shelter? They greet our visitors, answer questions, hand out trail maps, and sell our wonderful KNC merchandise & raffle tickets. Stop by sometime and say hello!

And two other wonderful volunteers, brothers **John** and **Dick Vandenbroucke**, mow our trails ALL summer long to make sure our visitors have the best experience hiking in KNC! If you see them, give them a high five!

Of course, there are many more wonderful volunteers that make KNC run smoothly and we will highlight some more in future newsletters!



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2025 DONORS

Special Friend: \$5,000 & above

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In Memory of Janis Lowell

Rebekah Kaider
Gustav Korsholm
Cynthia Martin

In memory of Hollie Fitz Blanchard

Michelle & James Blanchard
Tom & Sheri Parker

In Memory of J Tom Johnson

Kathleen Johnson
Colette & Randall Szczesny

In Memory of Andy Campbell

Nelson Campbell

In Memory of Ed Copeland

Diane Schlichting

In Memory of Jack Rohner

Susan Origer

In Memory of Jeff Bloss

William & Catherine Bloss

In Memory of Dale & Steve Buelter, Taylor Scott

Barbara Buelter

In Memory of Joan Born & Joe Maher

Diane Schlichting

In Memory of the Halverson Family

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In Memory of Janet Rickert

William Duncan

In Memory of Eileen G. Anderson

Karen Preusser

In Memory of Herbert & Phyllis Erikson

John Erikson

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James & Jill Kaphengst
Steven & Rena Monroe

In Honor of Jim Killian

William Thompson

In Honor of Dave Deis

Emily Deis
Jessica Deis

In Honor of Mary & Brian Cook

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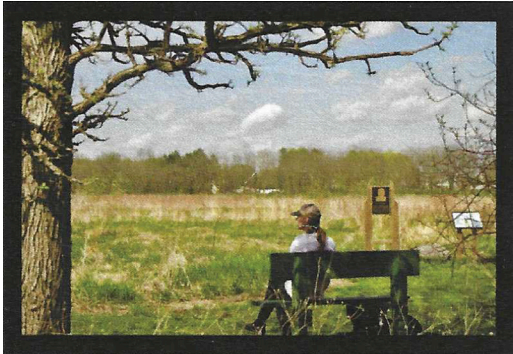
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