

WILD Center History Timeline: 2006-2011

August 2011

Wild Ones Annual Meeting was held at the WILD Center August 19-21. Sixty-two members representing twenty-two chapters participated. The movie Green Fire was shown on one of the evenings. Eight workshops were held giving advice about strengthening your chapter.

July 2011

First Thursdays were begun at the WILD Center. Members and community volunteers are welcomed to come work and share a potluck supper afterward.

May 2011

The WILD Center added to its administrative. Jamie Fuerst moved from Administrative Assistant to Marketing Assistant. Through AmeriCorps we have an Administrative Assistant replacement and a WILD Center Site Coordinator. They are employed through August.

August 2010

The WILD Center was given a John Deere tractor and trailer through the generosity of Marilyn Jones of the Twin Cities Chapter. WILD Center volunteers are very happy and grateful to have this to help them with their projects.

July 2010

The WILD Center was hit by a hailstorm. Damage was sustained to two exterior walls, the roof, windows, garage doors, soffits and gutters, and all painted and stained surfaces. All was covered by insurance except for the deductible. Much damage was also caused to the demonstration gardens. Restoration work was done through the work of volunteers.

May 2010

Our first retreat was held at the WILD Center with the national marketing committee members. Everyone had a good night's rest and woke up to the sound of the birds and geese and pelicans flying overhead.

April 2010

Unanticipated additions were added to the east rain gardens due to a huge contribution of prairie plants from a spur-of-the-moment plant rescue. Local members, as well as members from far away chapters, have been stopping by to lend their hand at helping with garden maintenance.

March 2010

In March, a rain barrel seminar was held at the WILD Center, followed in April by a rain barrel workshop. It was very well attended by both local community residents and Wild Ones members. Several pages were added to the web site for the WILD Center with lots of new photos showing progress being made at the Center.

February 2010

Fox Cities Greenways members helped us install temporary solar lighting in the parking area so it isn't so pitch dark when members leave from late-night meetings. Lisa Picconi painted the entrance ramp with Herculiner, a liquid, which when applied provides a rough surface on which to walk, in hopes of reducing the slipping and sliding during icy, snowy weather.

January 2010

We have our second center renter. Fox Valley Area Chapter of Wild Ones has decided to make the WILD Center their headquarters as well. Welcome!

November 2009

Installed a rustic-looking timber pole to hold motion detection lights to light the parking area for evening visitors. Wild Ones member Rich Winter held a buckthorn round-up and volunteers removed all the remaining mature trees so we have no more seeders on the site.

October 2009

GW Partners has removed all their equipment and stockpiles of gravel and sand, and have restored the upland to its original topography. A temporary cover crop of winter wheat has been seeded, so we can monitor the site for wild parsnip before we develop our oak savanna.

August 2009

Wild Ones members Dave Edwards completed the quasi-French drain near the foundation of the sunroom to catch the water dripping from the roof edge. He and Lisa Picconi will continue to work at finishing the water feature which takes the runoff away from the foundation, down the retaining wall, into a small pond and finally into the backyard raingarden.

July 2009

Business member Lake Shore Cleaners constructed the permeable pavers (H2O Pavers) for the entrance and Wild Ones volunteers planted hundreds of shade and sun-loving wildflowers around the front entrance and in the raingarden at the foot of the birch tree.

June 11, 2009

We have our first center renter. Fox Cities Greenways has decided to make the WILD Center their headquarters as well. Welcome!

March 2009

Wild Ones members Steve Windsor, Dave Peck and Dave Edwards completed construction of the storage shelves in the storage area of the WILD Center and we're moving in materials stored off-site from various locations. What a satisfying feeling knowing that we have almost everything all together finally.

January 2009

The remodeling is done and we are now open for public visitation. This is the perfect location for us.

Fall 2008

Thanks to the great landscaping designs submitted June 2008, we have begun developing our demonstration gardens. With donated plants from Wild Ones member Katie Larabell and Wild Ones business members Stone Silo Nursery and Prairie Nursery, we have a sizable rain garden in the backyard. Students, teachers, and parents from Fox River Environmental Charter School helped us put in many of the plants, along with many Wild Ones volunteers. We also have had some site clean-up through the able assistance of many Wild Ones volunteers.

August 22-24 2008 Wild Ones Annual Meeting

Our first national meeting held at the Wild Ones Ecology Center was in tents with lots of mosquitoes as uninvited guests. Neil Diboll of Prairie Nursery was our keynote speaker. A new name was given to the national headquarters. Henceforth, Wild Ones headquarters shall be known as Wild Ones Institute of Learning and Development, or the WILD Center for a short reference.

August 11, 2008

Lease signed with GW Partners for the use of the four acres of upland south of the headquarters building as a holding area for the capping materials used in conjunction with the PCB clean up. At the conclusion of the lease, GW Partners will participate in the restoration of the site to a savanna.

July 15, 2008

First day in the Wild Ones Ecology Center. We've moved into the Wild Center and will be maintaining Wild Ones headquarters here for a very long time. Thanks to the office furniture donated by R.R. Donnelly, we were able to set up our offices and continue serving our members quickly.

June 19, 2008

Closing date for the purchase of the additional 12.5 acres of the Wild Ones Ecology Center site. Wild Ones has its first permanent national headquarters. This is a dream come true!

June 3, 2008 (Tues)

EcoCenter Landscape Design Challenge

Thanks to Diane Olson-Schmidt of Lacewing Gardening and Consulting Services, Terry Marvel of Terraforms, LLC, and Jennifer Baker of Prairie Nursery, we have received some interesting and exciting landscape designs in answer to our "Landscape Design Challenge."

November 20, 2007 (Tues)

WILD ONES HAS A NEW HOME

In December we closed on the part of the Wild Ones Ecology Center which will enable us to move our headquarters to a permanent facility. But we still have lots of work to do to make the facility handicap accessible before we can move in, so please keep your donations coming in to offset the expenses. [To donate.](#)

Although we have not gathered sufficient funds to purchase the remaining 12.5 acres of upland/riparian woodland/marsh which would complete our EcoCenter, we will continue to apply for grants and solicit donations with the hope of being able to do so by the end of 2008. [To donate.](#)

So celebrate the new year with Wild Ones! Mark your calendar for the grand opening celebration this summer.

November 20, 2007 (Tues)

Exciting news today! We got the word today from the First National Bank – Fox Valley that they have accepted our offer for the house and 3 acres which will become the first step toward the development of the Wild Ones EcoCenter and national headquarters. This doesn't mean that the rest of the acreage including the marsh is ours – yet. We have a lot of funding still to raise. But it's a start! We should be able to move in to the EcoCenter by the end of the year.

July 07, 2007 (Sat)

Wild Ones EcoCenter Challenges

We have another challenge going on right now to help us raise funds needed to develop the Wild Ones EcoCenter. An anonymous member from Illinois has challenged the other Wild Ones members to a 1:2 match up to \$20,000 for any donations received after July 1st.

So if you haven't already made your donation, please do so now. We need all the help we can get! Call the Wild Ones National Office, toll-free, at 877-394-9453, with your credit card information. Or, just click the "EcoCenter Challenge Donation" button below, and make your donation through PayPal or your credit card online. Once you arrive at the PayPal checkout area, fill in the "Payment For" area (example, "Donation for EcoCenter Challenge") – and then fill in the "Amount" area with the dollar amount you'd like to send. Click the drawing to see full-size.

June 19, 2007 (Tues)

Wild Ones EcoCenter Site Featured in Workshop

Wild Ones EcoCenter site was featured in one of today's workshops held by the CDS-NRDP Community and Rural Development Conference in Appleton, Wisconsin. This workshop provided a close-up view of one aspect of the dynamic relationship between community and the environment. Participants visited one of the largest PCB contamination and clean-up sites in the world and learned about the community impacts associated with efforts to restore the natural environment.

Presentation stops included the Trestle Trail (which is part of Wisconsin's Friendship Trail System) to view the river and learn about the paper industry's role in environmental issues; the Little Lake clean-up site and facility, where PCB-contaminated sediments are being dredged; The Stroebe Island marsh, an ecosystem restoration site funded by fees paid by the paper companies; and, Wild Ones Ecology Center site to learn about the role of community-based non-profit organizations in education and advocacy efforts.

Apr 04, 2007 (Wed)

EcoCenter Challenge

Great News! The Fox Valley Area (WI) Chapter of Wild Ones has issued an ECOCENTER CHALLENGE to all the Wild Ones Chapters. Karen Syverson, Chapter President wrote: Now is the time to act! Wild Ones have a rare and exciting opportunity to step up its promotion of environmentally sound landscaping practices. A permanent national Wild Ones headquarters along with a working ecology center will help immensely in this effort. Having it in the Fox Valley, home of one of the largest PCB contamination clean-up projects in the world, will help make the EcoCenter a showplace of what can be done to restore the health of an ecosystem. Members of the Fox Valley Area Chapter of Wild Ones wish to show our support for purchase of the Wild Ones EcoCenter with a 1:2 pledge of an amount up to \$20,000 and a challenge to Wild Ones chapters across the country. FVAC will match \$1.00 for every \$2.00 raised by Wild Ones Chapters across the country with the hope that our \$20,000 will raise an additional \$40,000 by March 1, 2008.

Our chapter has been fortunate in the past 12 years to have raised substantial funds through our annual conference and plant sales in order to be able to support worthwhile efforts like this. Please encourage your chapters to step up to the challenge!

Apr 03, 2007 (Tue)

Members EcoCenter Capital Campaign

Requests for contributions toward the Wild Ones EcoCenter Capital Campaign have gone out to Wild Ones members and friends along with a beautiful 4-color 4-page brochure detailing the goals of the EcoCenter.

All proceeds will be placed in a restricted account until all funding is secured and the Wild Ones EcoCenter is acquired. Only with your help will this effort be the success we know it can be.

Mar 15, 2007 (Thu)

Anonymous Donor Gives to Wild Ones EcoCenter

Wild Ones has received a generous donation of \$100,000, along with a \$100,000 no-interest loan commitment, from an Illinois foundation (which is managed by Wild Ones members who wish to remain anonymous) in support of the acquisition and development of the Wild Ones Ecology Center project.

The Wild Ones EcoCenter located on 13 acres on Butte des Morts Beach Road in the Town of Menasha will be a place where people can learn how to care for the natural world – a world we are rapidly losing in the face of global warming, invasive species, over-use of herbicides and pesticides, increased urbanization, and depletion of non-renewable resources.

When speaking with Donna VanBuecken, Executive Director of Wild Ones, we were told that the anonymous donors sent the gift with a note saying: “We are happy to be able to help Wild Ones bring this project home.”

Oct 28, 2006 (Sat)

Wild Ones Ecology Center

Looking for Matching Funds

Wild Ones Natural Landscapers is seeking matching funds to be used toward the purchase of the West Shore Preserves Environmental Center. Your assistance in accomplishing this financial goal of approximately \$400,000 is needed.

Oct 25, 2006 (Wed)

WILD ONES HQ and ECOLOGY CENTER

A rare opportunity has befallen Wild Ones to assume ownership of a valuable property on the west shore of Little Lake Butte des Morts near our current headquarters. Because this property is located in the area already designated as West Shore Preserves, we are calling this property the West Shore Preserves Ecology Center.

Wild Ones will be able to assume ownership of this property through the assistance from grants from the Trustees Council for the Fox River and the Habitat Area funds from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program and from Wild Ones matching funds. The overall goal of the Ecology Center is to involve citizens in the protection and restoration of habitats associated with the Fox River ecosystem which is part of the Great Lakes Watershed.

Our purpose in creating the Center is to provide both an indoor and outdoor “home” for organizations, individuals and students who are working on projects and/or learning about ways to protect and restore the environmental quality of life in our communities.

Our indoor focus will be on providing space and administrative support for the activities of many area conservation and environmental science partners who do not have their own dedicated facilities and staff. We especially want the Center to develop the capacity to promote the efforts and projects of all our partners through project planning, grant writing, and communications using a variety of media.

Our outdoor focus will be on the restoration and maintenance of the Fox River through wetland and associated upland habitat preservation, re-establishment and enhancement.

Letters of Endorsement

- Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust
- Wolf River Conservation Alliance
- East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
- Heckrodt Nature Reserve
- School on the Lake Charter School
- Community Foundation of the Fox Valley Region
- The River Group of Valley New School
- Winnebago Audubon Society
- Citizens Natural Resources Association of Wisconsin
- UW-Oshkosh Aquatic Research Laboratory
- UW-Extension Basin Educator for Natural Resources – Upper Fox and Wolf River Basins
- Waupaca County Natural Resources Foundation
- UW-Fox Valley Department of Biological Sciences
- Winnebago Lakes Council
- Fox Cities Greenways
- Gordon Bubolz Nature Preserve
- River Alliance of Wisconsin
- Fox Valley Technical College Natural Resource Program
- Winnebago County Land and Water Conservation
- Mosquito Hill Nature Center