

Friends of Wisdom Prairie

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Holy Wisdom Monastery

All numbers in this report reflect 2023 year to date through Oct 20th

Environmental Education

Connecting people to the story and spirit of the land

7

Kids on the Prairie: sessions for families with children to explore the wonders awaiting them in Wisdom Prairie.

14

Prairie Tours: bringing new people to the monastery for tours including our history.

7

Indoor Educational Events: including Rain Garden Workshop, An Evening with Kaitlin Curtice, and Prairie Medicinals.

KIDS ON THE PRAIRIE

"My son flourished due to the care and interest of the wonderful volunteers. They encouraged his enthusiasm and were so engaging with the children and the nature surrounding us. I always learn lots of things too as an adult." - 2023 Kids on the Prairie Participant



THE GREAT WISCONSIN BIRDATHON

Our team, Wrens of Wisdom Prairie, soared to great heights with...

59

Participants

69

Species of birds observed at the monastery

\$1,810

Raised in support of bird conservation

Ecological Restoration

Nurturing the health of the land through stewardship

2

New rain gardens installed, which protect Lost Lake from runoff by absorbing stormwater.

**We gratefully acknowledge support from Xerces Society, who contributed 432 free native plants for our rain garden installation*

320

Hours worked by Mia Vaughan, summer prairie restoration intern.

34

Number of native shrubs transplanted to the hilltop.

4

high-risk windows treated to prevent bird collisions.

BIRDS

We were thrilled to hear Henslow's Sparrows on site throughout the summer. Henslow's Sparrows are a threatened species in Wisconsin. They are rare across their range, and even rarer in restored prairies.



Photo credit: Mike Reese



42

Acres revitalized with prescribed fire, including 5 acres of newly restored oak savanna that had likely been deprived of fire for a century or more.

**We gratefully acknowledge financial support from Dane County Parks to help fund our prescribed burns*

Volunteers

Our essential partners in caring for the earth

1,646 hours

Contributed by Friends of Wisdom
Prairie (FWP) volunteers in 2023.

4

Volunteer sessions hosted in partnership
with Dane County Parks.

*In addition, we thank volunteer groups from Edgewood
Campus School, Middleton High School, UW Madison,
TruStage and Clean Lakes Alliance for helping tend this land.*



Monitoring efforts play a crucial role in helping us evaluate the impacts of our stewardship work. Thanks to the help of dozens of volunteers, we have a thriving monitoring program comprised of more than 10 different projects. *Examples include:*



Monarch eggs
& caterpillars



Bluebird
nest boxes



Frogs
& toads



Bees &
butterflies



Bird/window
collisions



Prairie
plants



Acoustic
soundscape



Trail
conditions



Breeding
birds

NEW: LOST LAKE SEDIMENT DEPTH & WATER LEVEL

This year, we added two new elements focused on Lost Lake to our monitoring program, laying the groundwork for monitoring the impact of stormwater runoff.

Membership

Your membership helps sustain our work. Thank you!



- **22** Lifetime Members
- **17** FWP Council Members
- **34** First-time Members

♥ *Thank you to retiring council members:*

*Grace Vosen, Judy Troia, Kathleen Wessels,
Julie Melton, & Paul Slota*

REVENUE

\$5,575	FWP donations
\$9,005	FWP memberships
\$1,350	Greg Armstrong internship
\$11,160	Grants
\$14,477	Care for the Earth
\$41,567	Total

This revenue generated by FWP helped fund: prescribed burns, salary for Amy Alstad, Cortez Mitchell and Mia Vaughan, new tools & volunteer supplies, tractor repair and environmental education programs.



Thank You!

If a picture says a thousand words, then this report is voluminous. Where else in this county can you find such a diverse array of plants and animals in one location? What the pictures don't communicate is the gratitude to all of you who have contributed to the enhancement of our precious land. Volunteers, visitors and staff continue to energetically contribute to the monastery's mission to "care for the earth." As we acknowledge the 70th anniversary of a shared journey of the heart and spirit, I would also like to acknowledge the leadership and deep commitment of my colleagues on the Friends of Wisdom Prairie Council. Thank you!



Drew Howick
President of FWP Council



Thank You!

Poet Mary Oliver asserted that “attention without feeling is only a report.” As we put together this annual report, I couldn’t help but wonder... was she right? If so, then I will be so bold as to suggest that Friends of Wisdom Prairie has yet to produce a single report. Feelings abound here!

Behind each metric shared here is a story of people deeply engaged with this land. Visitors express feelings of gratitude and renewal. Volunteers share feelings of wonder, connection and accomplishment. Whether we call it a report or an ode or even a celebration, I detect a profound level of commitment and feeling in these pages, and I hope you do, too.

Thank you for being a part of this attentive, feeling community.



Amy Alstad

Director of Land Management & Environmental Education



Left to Right: Cortez Mitchell, Amy Alstad and Mia Vaughan



*Thank you for being
a part of our community.*

Volunteer . Donate . Support.

***Holy Wisdom Monastery occupies the
ancestral land of the Ho-Chunk Nation.***

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HolyWisdomMonastery.org

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