
Friends of
Wisdom Prairie
2026 ANNUAL REPORT
Holy Wisdom Monastery

Thank You!

If it takes a village to raise a child, just think what it takes to restore a prairie, savanna and/or wetland. It takes a community of dedicated like-minded people who understand that we are a part of this land and therefore need to take care of it. The continued restoration and care of Holy Wisdom lands is possible due to you, our members, whether through giving financially, working out on the land or through a multitude of other volunteer opportunities. Thank you for your support.

I'd also like to thank my colleagues on the Friends of Wisdom Prairie (FWP) Council for their leadership and dedication in caring for the land and supporting this community of people who surround it. As described in our 'One With The Land' statement, "…Our care for the land, for nature itself, is ultimately care for ourselves as well as our community." I'm honored to be a part of such a wonderful community!

Sue Knaack

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President of FWP Council







One With The Land Here We Stand

The Benedictine sisters of Holy Wisdom Monastery have committed themselves to restoring these 191 acres of the earth as a healing gift and a living learning resource. The rich diversity of all life forms in the prairie, savanna and woodland are an offering of great beauty to the surrounding communities.

This land, lovingly cared for by many, invites us to be attentive with all of our senses awakened. Learning about and understanding the plants and ecological relationships elevates understanding of ourselves as inseparable from nature.

A quiet mind connects us to the land and dispels separations within ourselves. As our work in the ecological restoration restores us inwardly, it brings us together with others who care, as well as the larger community. The prairie nurtures and restores relationships among us all.

Seeing the cycles of the seasons, the constant changing of colors and species, we can perhaps come to the understanding that the prairie and savanna are an intrinsic part of who we are as humans. The beauty that we see is there because it already exists inside us.

Our care for the land, for nature itself, is ultimately care for ourselves as well as our community.

Ecological Restoration

Nurturing the health of the land through stewardship

INTERNS



600

Hours contributed by Isaac Ruby (left) and Benjamin Lowry (middle), summer interns on the land care team joining us from Lawrence University and Yale Divinity School, respectively.



OAK SAVANNA RESTORATION





Restored 4 more acres of oak savanna with 49 species planted in seed mix.

125

Volunteers who contributed time and labor!





Land Management

CONTROLLING LEAFY SPURGE



- Release of Aphthona beetles for biocontrol
- Not one but two prescribed burns in 2026
- Herbicide application

♥

We gratefully recognize

Dane County Parks, Natural Resource Conservation Service, WI Dept of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for financial support of our land management work in 2026.

Strong storms on June 10th caused significant damage to trees at Holy Wisdom. Friends of Wisdom Prairie members volunteered 175 hours towards clean-up efforts and planted 27 trees.



Environmental Education

Cultivating relationships with the land

FWP OFFERED A TOTAL OF 28 EVENTS

Great Wisconsin Birdathon
4 seasonal prairie tours
Monthly bird walks
Monthly plant ID walks
Archaeology of Madison







KIDS ON THE PRAIRIE

Inviting kids and their families into wonder and curiosity.

160
Kids attended

5
Sessions



Volunteers

Our essential partners in caring for the earth

3,182

Hours contributed by FWP volunteers in 2026.



In addition, we thank volunteer groups from the following local schools and organizations for helping tend this land: Edgewood High School, Middleton High School, UW Madison Badger Volunteers, TruStage, Clean Lakes Alliance, Groundswell Conservancy, Dane County Public Health, Governor Nelson State Park, Carroll University, Madison Missions Youth Group and Messiah Lutheran Church.

Membership

Your membership sustains our work. Thank you!



34 Lifetime Members

13 FWP Council Members

63 First-time Members

♥ *Thank you to retiring council member:*
Draw Howick

REVENUE

$21,629	FWP memberships
$93,052	Care for the Earth
$114,681	**Total**

Revenue generated by FWP helped fund: prescribed burns, staff salary, new tools and volunteer supplies and environmental education programs.



Gratitude for You

All land longs to be loved, to be known and to be actively tended. Too often, this longing goes unfilled, as the late poet Wendell Berry alludes to when he writes "There are no unsacred places; there are only sacred places and desecrated places."

Friends of Wisdom Prairie is integral to this place regaining and retaining its sacred identity. Thank you for so beautifully, generously responding to this land's longing. Together, we can ensure that Wisdom Prairie remains loved, known and well-tended.

With gratitude,

Amy Alstad
Director of Land Management & Environmental Education



Thank you for being a part of our community.

Volunteer . Donate . Support.

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

Connect with us on Social Media

HolyWisdomMonastery.org

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All numbers in this report reflect 2026 year to date through Oct 20th.