

FALL 2023

NATURALIST BACKYARD

HORIZONS THE VOICE OF THE FRIENDS OF HAVENWOODS

New Nature Area Beckons All Ages

The closing one year ago of community gardens north of the Nature Center at Havenwoods State Forest provided an opportunity to restore native plants and blend the space into the adjacent woodland.

Superintendent Angela Vickio sketched her ideas on paper. First, she drew locations of existing native trees and shrubs. Then she filled in the former vegetable plots and other open spaces with more trees, shrubs, wildflowers and grasses, and paths.

"We will show a variety of plant communities found around Havenwoods," she said. "And paths here will connect to existing trails on the forest."

She sketched a circle where a garden would be filled with plants designed to delight children's senses. Spoiler alert: there will be prickly pear cactus, native to southern Wisconsin.

Welcome to the Naturalist's Backyard

Angela's concept of a 3-acre shaded oasis welcoming exploration and offering rest attracted a \$14,226 grant from the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin

Milwaukee Chapter of Sewa USA, a Hindu humanitarian organization, volunteers helped build the archway entrance, Naturalist's Backyard. (Photo, Angela Vickio, Wisconsin DNR)

to pay for a formal landscape design and other expenses. Helianthus LLC of Milwaukee was hired to design the Naturalist's Backyard with locations of signs, paths, benches, boardwalks, shortgrass and tallgrass prairies, the children's sensory garden, a birch grove and a few clusters of other native trees.

Trees and more trees

There will be a cluster of "climate adaptive" tree species now common to Illinois. Angela asked urban foresters at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for recommendations.

Those that made the list, including pecan, pawpaw, osage orange, and northern catalpa, are expected to do well in southern Wisconsin as average temperatures here rise in a warming climate.

Before any of the new vegetation could be planted, Havenwoods staff removed unwanted invasive plants, including buckthorn, wild parsnip, non-native honeysuckle, and Siberian elm. *(continued next page)*

(continued from previous page)

Help making the Backyard possible

Additional grants were received to fund the full project and community organizations lined up to help put roots in the ground beginning in April of this year. The Southeastern Wisconsin Invasive Species Consortium contributed a total of \$15,000 over two years, 2023 and 2024. Brent Gregory donated \$2,500. Friends of Wisconsin State Parks provided \$200.

Scout Troop 360 built the boardwalk and railing at the entrance to go along with the archway pictured on the cover.

Angela hired Cream City Conservation & Consulting and Employ Milwaukee Earn & Learn to assist, then set up a planting schedule with biweekly volunteer days to get the work done. Messmer High School, Marquette University, Groundwork Milwaukee, and The Nature Conservancy sent volunteers.

Nearby Nature Milwaukee staff and interns from local colleges helped remove invasive wild parsnip and buckthorn, planted native shagbark hickory trees, and put rattlesnake master and other wildflowers into the ground.

Those interns learned about the plants, and the forest around them, as they dug into the ground with shovels and trowels.



Mars Patterson, Arts & Conservation Educator and Land Steward with Nearby Nature, planting asters in the Naturalist's Backyard. Photos this page, Don Behm



Above, Angela Vickio (left), Havenwoods State Forest Superintendent and Allison Munson, Artist-in-residence with Nearby Nature Milwaukee, planting Shagbark Hickory tree in Naturalist's Backyard.



Right, Jaeden Carrasquillo, urban conservation and storytelling intern with The Nature Conservancy, Milwaukee office, finishes the job.

Said Nearby Nature's Mars Patterson, "I wanted them to be familiar with this place that is near where they live, and to take responsibility for this green space. Their degree studies all tie into conservation. This experience allows them to meet people here already working in conservation who are potential mentors."

Angela expects the Naturalist's Backyard at Havenwoods to be a popular spot, especially for older visitors, people with disabilities, and families with small children, since access is provided by a boardwalk entrance and level paths, and it is only a short walk to the Nature Center and its bathrooms. School classes likely will stop here to enhance field trips to Wisconsin's only urban state forest. 🌳

New Homes for Bees

Visitors to Havenwoods State Forest will see wooden boxes on posts filled with tubes and sticks. *Please don't touch, peek into or remove the contents.*

These are “beeminiums,” specially-designed homes for carpenter and mason bees.

They are just two of the many native bee species who don't live in colonies. These solitary bees live alone in the ground, in dried stalks of grasses and flowers, or in tree bark.

Information signs will be installed this fall where beeminiums have been placed at Havenwoods, Lakeshore State Park and along the Hank Aaron State Trail.

Havenwoods' beeminiums are intended to draw public attention to the decline in pollinator populations. Since 1974, populations of bees have dropped an average of more than 50% due to diseases, pests, habitat destruction, climate change and use of pesticides. That is a concern because bees, butterflies and other flying insects are needed to pollinate more than 75% of agricultural crops.



Beeminium photo, Don Behm



Mark your Calendars

Fun, informative and family-friendly events Saturdays at Havenwoods State Forest

September 30, 11 a.m.—1 p.m: Home and Habitat Fest — rain or shine. Resources offered on homeownership, home loans or renting. Children can pet turtles. Sponsors Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority will provide free food while supplies last; s'mores courtesy Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

October 21, 4—7 p.m: Autumn in the Forest. First, a one-hour screening of adventurer Emily Ford's films. In “Breaking Trail” Emily is the first woman and person of color to thru-hike the 1,200-mile Ice Age Trail in winter. “A Voice for the Wild” follows her winter trek across the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in northern Minnesota. Later, enjoy a candlelight hike with s'mores, apple cider and warming stations. Dress for the weather. Donations to Friends of Havenwoods State Forest encouraged but not required.

December 16, noon—2 p.m: Winter Fest. Hike Havenwoods' trails, find animal tracks and learn how they prepare for winter. Make your own animal tracks to take home. Enjoy hot chocolate, hot cider, s'mores and snacks. Snowshoes will be available.



October 10: Annual Meeting, Friends of Havenwoods (FOH) State Forest

Members are invited to our annual meeting beginning at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 10 in the Nature Center. We'll review this year's successes. A meeting of the FOH board will follow to appoint new board members and elect board officers. Arrive at 5 p.m. to meet board members, enjoy snacks, ask questions, and share your ideas on the future of Havenwoods.



Friends of Havenwoods, Inc.
6141 North Hopkins Street
Milwaukee, WI 53209

FOH Board of Directors

President: Judy Dollhausen
Vice President: Melissa Cook
Treasurer: Dale Yerkes
Secretary: Rachel Jones

Board members: April Calvert,
Jim Goetz, Stephanie Harling, Dennis
Kaehny, Naomi Miller, George Morrison,
Lamont Smith

Nature Center Hours

8:30 a.m.—4 p.m.

Tuesday thru Saturday

The grounds are open 6 a.m.—8 p.m.
If you will need to enter the building
please call 414-527-0232 to make sure
the staff are not busy elsewhere.

Friends of Havenwoods Membership

Name_____

Address_____

City, State, Zip_____

Email_____

Amount_____

Individual Memberships

___ Single. \$20

___ Family. \$25

___ Lifetime. . . . \$400

Corporate Supporters: for information about corporate
donor levels, please contact fohpresident@gmail.com

Please send your membership check to:

Friends of Havenwoods, Inc.
6141 N. Hopkins Street
Milwaukee, WI 53209