

2023 FALL/WINTER

THE CANOPY

The Official Seno K/RLT Conservancy
Newsletter



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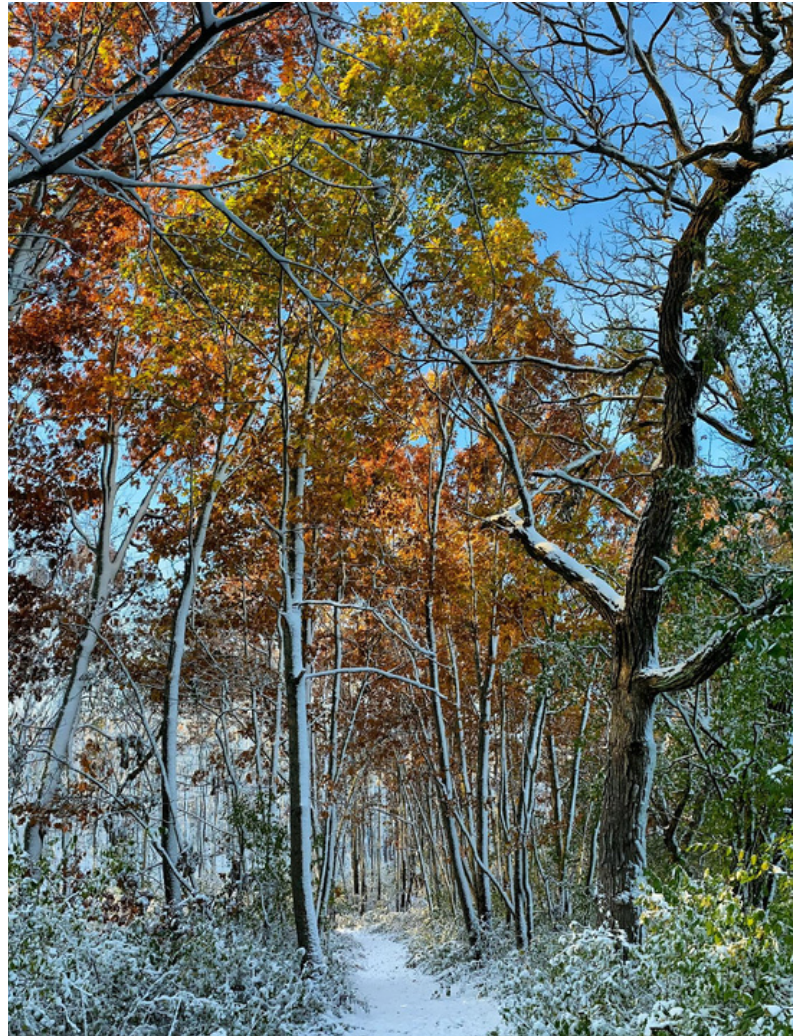


Photo by Eddee Daniel (A Wealth of Nature/Preserve Our Parks)

SENO K/RLT CONSERVANCY

**"FOSTERING A MUTUALLY
BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN THE LAND THE WATER
AND THE PEOPLE."**

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2023 - FALL IN REVIEW

WITH SENO K/RLT CONSERVANCY

It's hard to believe we are already saying goodbye to 2023, but here we are recounting another exciting year of fun events, exciting projects, and hard work at Seno K/RLT Conservancy.

We spent the rest of summer in classrooms, parks, and along the shores of Lake Michigan with students of all ages in Kenosha and Racine for our Discovering Nature Programs. We look forward to providing these opportunities for natural resource and environmental education programming to youth who are often underrepresented in conservation despite being those most affected by pollution and our changing climate. It's always a delight to get to meet so many potential future ologists!

We hosted our annual fall paddle on the Root River with the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, and are looking forward to offering a spring paddle in 2024. Some of our board members have joined and begun working with the Kenosha Regenerative Producers Group, a group of farmers working together to improve our community, water, natural resources, and farms through regenerative agriculture methods. Seno K/RLT Conservancy not only manages a tree farm, but holds multiple conservation easements that contain land in active agricultural production. We look forward to cooperating with this new organization and hosting a few of their future events at our Woodland Center in 2024!

Fall 2023 was one for the books for Seno, as we hosted two well-attended fundraising events at our Woodland Center. In early October we held our third annual Autumn Open House, inviting everyone to learn about, enjoy, and support Seno K/RLT. We were happy to see many new faces and we work every year to make the event better. This year, all our generous sponsors and participants truly made the event a great success. We also hosted our Boot Scootin' Brews fundraiser with the help of Burlington Dance Academy and Low Daily Brewery. Our board members had a hoot learning some new dance moves with you, and we're thankful for all participants who danced for our cause!

Looking forward to 2024, there is much planning behind the scenes that we have yet to share. Habitat restoration projects, an additional 200+ acres to be preserved in conservation easements, and new programs and events. Every year we strive to raise the bar and find new and efficient ways to fulfill our mission and make a positive impact on conservation in SE Wisconsin. We can't reach those new goals without your support. **Thank you!** We hope to see you in 2024!



2023



A WEALTH OF NATURE

“Preserve Our Parks” Helps the Public Explore the Wealth of Nature in SE Wisconsin

Seno K/RLT Conservancy is pleased to announce that Seno Woodland Center is among the parks and preserves featured on a website called [A Wealth of Nature](#), sponsored by [Preserve Our Parks](#), a non-profit dedicated to the preservation and promotion of parks and open space. Obviously, this is something near and dear to our hearts and mission as a land trust. Project Director Eddee Daniel travels throughout the six-county region of SE Wisconsin, documenting the abundance of nature and recreational opportunities that can be found here. The project website - www.awealthofnature.org - includes a map of places to visit, which can be filtered for a variety of activities, such as hiking or cross-country skiing. It also includes a blog called [The Natural Realm](#), with stories about places, events and issues related to nature in our area. Eddee has visited Seno Woodland Center throughout the last year to capture the visual magic of the seasons. We want to share and make special mention of the natural beauty that has been captured through their lens!



You can find more stunning photos such as this (and the one of the cover of this newsletter) showcasing Seno’s glittering gold tamarack bog during our first snow of the season, on the [Seno Woodland Education Center page](#) of the Find-a-Park map!

CONSERVATION STORIES: BRIGHTONWOODS ORCHARD

by Mark Lesko, Board President

Conservation easements are one of the most powerful and effective tools available for permanent protection of private lands. A conservation easement is a legally-binding agreement made between a property owner and a land trust or conservation agency, that limits or prohibits future development while allowing for traditional uses such as agriculture and forestry. Easements are recorded in land records and become part of the title to the land.

They provide a practical and flexible way to hold your land in safekeeping for the benefit of future generations. Conveying an easement to a land trust can make sound financial sense- in some case resulting in significant tax benefits through a federal income tax deduction.



Pictured above: Brightonwoods landowners Judith, Dr. Bill, and Paula at the orchard

Most importantly, such easements offer a means to ensure permanent protection of the land you love. I recently spoke with Dr. William and Judith Stone, and Paula Puntenney about their perspective and motivation to protect their 112-acre Brightonwoods Orchard and Winery, Brighton, WI with a conservation easement donated to the Seno K/RLT Conservancy. Paula emphasized that the orchard was established in the 1950's by her father, Irving Puntenney, and that the 20-acre orchard, 20 acres of hardwood forest, and 60 acres of land in agriculture were priorities for protection. Dr. Stone stated "The emphasis was for protection. The family did not want the land to be subdivided. Though the tax incentives were attractive, the easement guaranteed more open space and was consistent with trying to keep Brighton Township rural."

When asked about guidance they could offer to a landowner who might be considering a conservation easement, Judith said "You have to determine what you are getting versus what you give up through a conservation easement. If you truly love the land, a conservation easement will preserve it for you." It was clear to this author that the Stone and Puntenney families were very satisfied with the conservation easement, and actually proud of their commitment to preserve their land. When I asked them if it would be safe to say that through a conservation easement "YOU get to determine your land's legacy." The response was "Absolutely!".

CLIMATE CHANGE AND OUR GREAT LAKES COASTAL COMMUNITIES

by Nancy Carlson - Seno K/RLT Conservancy Lead Educator & Naturalist



Many of us in Southeast Wisconsin have enjoyed the warmer days we've been experiencing this fall. However, these warmer temperatures are detrimental to coastal communities across the Great Lakes. Ice cover on the Great Lakes is forming later, melting sooner, or not forming at all causing huge waves to make it to the shoreline. The lack of ice combined with high-water levels allow erosive waves to reach higher elevations on the shore, accelerating shoreline recession, beach loss and bluff failures.



Erosion at the Kenosha Dunes

Recently, each of the Great Lakes has reached record high water levels following the wettest five-year period on record for the region (*NOAA Centers on Environmental Information, 2020*). During times of high-water levels, flooding and erosion can be widespread in coastal communities, impacting homes, businesses, transportation infrastructure, port facilities, recreational beaches, water quality, public health, and community safety.

Among the impacts recently seen in

Wisconsin, three Lake Michigan counties (Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee) were designated as Major Presidential Disaster Declaration (*FEMA-4477-DR*) areas in response to flooding and erosion damage from a January 2020 coastal storm that was compounded by these record high water levels on Lake Michigan.

During the January 2020 storm, Kenosha Dunes experienced a major bluff collapse, eroding the shoreline into the dunes. Travel Wisconsin ranks Kenosha Dunes and its surrounding prairie number one on a list of seven scenic natural wonders in Kenosha County. The dunes protect an ecosystem that is home to more than 26 rare, threatened, or endangered plants and more than 75 bird species. Unfortunately, these rare and beneficial sand dunes are eroding at an alarming rate due to high water levels and lack of ice cover in Lake Michigan.

Continued on Page 6...

CLIMATE CHANGE AND OUR GREAT LAKES COASTAL COMMUNITIES (CONT.)

Now more than ever, we are faced with the realities of climate change happening across our planet and in our own communities. We are witnessing first-hand the increased intensity of storms, floods, drought, wildfires, and sea level rising. On November 9, 2023, researchers with the nonprofit group Climate Central released a report that the last 12 months were the hottest in 150 years of recordkeeping, and probably in the last 125,000 years. The researchers' report shows from November 2022 through October 2023, the planet's average temperature was about 1.3 degrees Celsius higher than the average temperature from 1850 to 1900. As we are increasingly exposed to these difficult realities, many of us can experience anxiety and grief for the future of our planet.



YMCA Summer Camp students along Lake Michigan's shoreline engaging in hands-on learning via our Discovering Nature program

As communities in the Great Lakes respond and adapt to changes along their coastlines, this creates a timely opportunity to connect the public to the interconnectedness of human activity and environmental conditions in the Root/Pike watershed. Seno K/RLT Conservancy is committed to conservation efforts to help combat climate change and coastal erosion. We work closely with landowners and community partners to help manage natural areas in Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties. Our established tree farm at Seno Woodland Center in Burlington helps capture carbon and water, mitigating the impacts of flooding and erosion. If you would like to take action to build resiliency from impacts of climate change, please consider becoming a volunteer with Seno K/RLT Conservancy or other organizations addressing climate change. We are the last generation who can make a memorable difference for the future of our planet!

VISIT [SENOKRLT.ORG/VOLUNTEER](https://www.senokrlt.org/volunteer) TO CHECK OUT OUR ONGOING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES & JOIN IN OUR EFFORTS TO COMBAT THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND BUILD OUR NEXT GENERATION OF LAND STEWARDS!

EXPERIENCING CLIMATE ANXIETY? VISIT [WWW.ALLWECANSAVE.EARTH/EMOTIONS](https://www.allwecansave.earth/emotions) FOR RESOURCES ON WORKING WITH CLIMATE EMOTIONS & ANXIETY



UPCOMING EVENTS



2024 SE Wisconsin Woodland Owners Conference - February 3rd

7:30 AM - 1:00PM at Waukesha County Technical College

Registration, agenda, & more information on our website

\$35/Person Registration Fee



Maple Sugaring - March 16th

10:00 AM - 12:00PM at Seno Woodland Center

More information & registration coming soon!

\$5 Kids under 13 and \$7 Adults



Heritage Wheat & Bread Making Workshop - April 13th

Time TBD at Seno Woodland Center

More information & registration coming soon!

Safety & Woods Worker S.A.W.W. Level 1 & 2 Training - April (Date TBD)

Time TBD at Seno Woodland Center

More information & registration coming soon!



Spring Bird Walk with Rick Fare - May 13th

Time TBD at Seno Woodland Center

More information & registration coming soon!



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



Environmental Education Volunteers

Help run educational programs both at our Seno Woodland Center in Burlington and throughout Racine and Kenosha counties. 2-4 hours per program + training days.

Contact Nancy Carlson at education@senokrlt.org for details

Board Members

Help direct and grow Seno K/RLT Conservancy! Board members are expected to participate in 6 meetings annually & serve on a committee. If you have an interest and/or experience in natural habitat management, fundraising, natural resources education, or marketing we'd love to have your expertise!

Contact Mark Lesko at senokrltesenokrlt.org for more details & information

WISHLIST

- Gas Cards
- Picnic Tables
- Leopold Benches
- Firewood
- Bird Houses
- Hand Lens Magnifying Glasses
- Acrylic Paints
- Paint Brushes
- Markers
- Painter's Tape
- Marbles
- Printing Paper
- Rubber Bands
- Sturdy Tote Bags
- Ziplock Bags
- Small Baskets
- Apple Cider Press

To make a donation please contact Mark Lesko
mark_lesko@icloud.com
 262-210-1424

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR EXTRA GENEROUS DONORS:

- | | |
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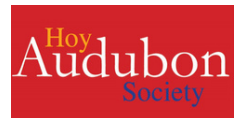
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BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF KENOSHA

BECOME A MEMBER OR MAKE A DONATION

We are a registered 501(c)3 non-profit education organization and land trust. All donations are tax-deductible under IRS rules.

Your Information

We accept donations via our website: senokrlt.org/donate--membership

and via check!

Make your check payable to Seno K/RLT Conservancy and send it along with your name, phone, e-mail, and mailing address to:

Seno K/RLT Conservancy
3606 Dyer Lake Road
Burlington, WI 53105