



FRIENDS *of Retzer*

FRIENDS OF RETZER NATURE CENTER

SUMMER, 2024 NEWSLETTER

Upcoming Nature Center Events

- **WAUKESHA COUNTY PARKS SUMMER BEER GARDEN:** Retzer Nature Center will be hosting the popular event on the consecutive evenings of Friday, August 23 and Saturday, August 24. Once again, *Raised Grain Brewery* will offer up an assortment of brews, food truck vendors will provide additional munchies, and *JRyanTrio* will be providing a free jazz performance from 5:30pm-8:30pm. In addition, our Friends of Retzer and 50th Anniversary Committee team will be conducting a 50/50 cash raffle to raise funds for our proposed *Outdoor Classroom and Shelter*.
- **APPLE HARVEST FESTIVAL:** Retzer's major Friends-sponsored annual event is slated for Saturday, September 21 from 9am – 4pm and is a “don't miss” nature center event for nature center supporters of all ages! Back by popular demand will be the Apple Market, live music by JC Ayer, a Delafield Brewhaus beer garden, arts & crafts vendors, children's activities in the pine woods, a Passport Expedition along the Discovery Trail, shows in the Horwitz-DeRemer Planetarium, the Scarecrow Lane competition, and more. Friends volunteers are planning an indoor “theme basket” silent auction and a 50/50 cash raffle, plus overseeing a 50th Anniversary commemorative gift sale and a Reading Corner book sale. Should be fun!

NOTE: If you are interested in donating a theme basket for our fundraising cause, please contact Friends Board Vice President Kathy Arts at 262-893-1832 or karts@friendsofretzer.org for more information.
- **SCIENCE FEST:** Co-sponsored by the Friends of Retzer and Generac Corporation, this year's event is scheduled for Saturday, Nov 2 from 11am–2pm and will include a formal dedication of Retzer's recently completed citizen science lab. Various hands-on activities will be centered around the theme “Energy in Nature.” Admission is free.

For more information on all upcoming events, please reference the following link

www.waukeshacounty.gov/landandparks/park-system/find-a-park/retzer-nature-center/specialevents/

Recent Events

- **EARTH WEEK:** Commemorative activities were organized at Retzer on Saturday, April 20, including a birding hike, adventure hike and Story Hike on the nature center trails. In addition, free viewings of “Our Violent Planet” were shown in the Horwitz-DeRemer Planetarium.



The Discovery Trail attracted budding naturalists on a chilly spring day.



(left) MK, Kathy, Erin and Ellie the rabbit greeted families at the Friends information table

(center and right) Staff from the Waukesha County Recycling Program handled visitor inquiries in the impressive display area

- Our **FRIENDS of RETZER ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING and CHILI DINNER** was held on Monday evening, April 22 -- Earth Day! A buffet chili dinner was served at 5:30pm, followed by our annual business meeting and featured presentation by Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program Director, Becky Sapper. Member attendees heard an update from Parks and Land Use Senior Landscape Architect Nicki Jensen on the proposed *Outdoor Classroom and Shelter* project, and 50th Anniversary Committee shared plans for the upcoming “Cheers for 50 Years” event on June 22. Nature Center Supervisor Janet Barthel provided a statistical summary of Retzer’s busy year of programming, and President Larry Kascht offered a recap of the organization’s activities and achievements over the past months. He also extended well wishes to Steve Martin and Elaine Haberichter, who were stepping off the Board after years of dedicated service to the Friends. In turn, newly-elected Board members Meg Shad, Helen Holtz and Jenny Carter were welcomed into the fold.



(left) Keynote speaker Becky Sapper shared about the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program’s 10-Year history

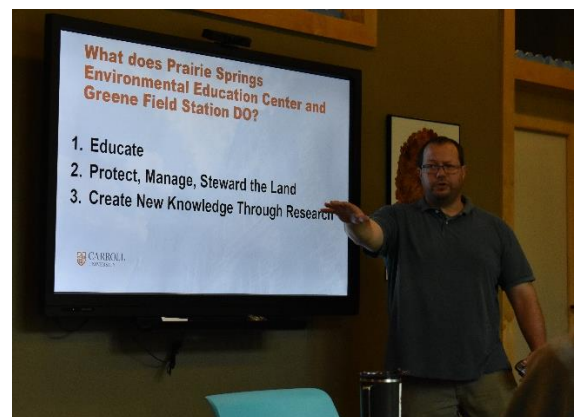
(right) Preliminary plans for an outdoor covered shelter at Retzer (“The Canopy”) were unveiled in the business meeting

- **“FOOD TRUCK FRIDAY” FEATURES FRIENDS OF RETZER:** Waukesha County Airport hosted its first Food Truck Friday gathering of the season on May 31, and a percentage of the proceeds from the food truck sales were donated to a worthy non-profit organization – us! President Andi Kornowski and other Board members were on hand to share plans for the proposed outdoor shelter and promote the many nature center projects and programs supported by our membership. Some Waukesha residents commented that they’d never been to Retzer, so it was a great opportunity to meet local folks and make new contacts.



President Andi Kornowski greeted food truck patrons and vintage plane enthusiasts at the Crites Field gathering

PRAIRIE SPRINGS ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER FIELD TRIP: Fifteen Friends members gathered in Genesee Depot on June 5 for a presentation by Carroll University Professor of Biology Todd Levine on the history of the university’s 75-acre Genesee Creek field station and the various wetland and prairie restoration research and monitoring initiatives currently underway there. Dr. Levine shared that the goals of the facility are threefold: 1) to educate students in wetland ecology; 2) to protect, manage and serve as stewards of the natural setting; and 3) to create new knowledge about the site via ongoing field research. He added that practical training in natural site management included such skills as chainsaw safety, controlled burn ecology, and wildlife handling. Drones are being used to monitor experimental burns on the site’s prairie plots as well as buckthorn eradication activity in the Genesee Creek riparian zone. We look to schedule another Friends visit to the field station next spring.



Dr. Todd Levine shared about the field station’s research initiatives inside the Prairie Springs Environmental Education Center



Field station trails featured a diversity of swamp and wetland vegetation zones within the Genesee Creek watershed



Dr. Levine showed us monitored areas of wetland restoration activity and upland prairie establishment



Field trip photos courtesy of Board member Helen Holtz

RETZER'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY "CHEERS FOR 50 YEARS" event was held on Saturday, June 22. Activities included a tree planting ceremony, a story-sharing session with the *Friends of John and Florence Retzer*, a tour of the Retzer family homestead site, "History Hikes" on the nature center grounds, and a premier video showing of "The Making of Retzer Nature Center." Delafield Brewhaus offered beer garden food and drink, and outdoor music was provided by the *JRyanTrio* jazz group. Soggy weather put a damper on attendance and a tornado warning brought an abrupt (and memorable!) end to evening festivities.



County Executive Paul Farrow, Nature Center Supervisor Janet Barthel, and Friends President Andi Kornowski officially opened the 50th Anniversary celebration by addressing visitors at the commemorative tree planting ceremony



(left) Johnson's Nursery donated the bur oak and arborist Rob Dummert prepared the tree planting site. (right) County Exec Paul Farrow, Wehr Nature Center Supervisor Carley Hintz, Friends President Andi Kornowski, Retzer Supervisor Janet Barthel and others were on hand to shovel in the commemorative oak.



Indoor displays included a sequence of orthophotos showing the nature center's expansion through the years, plus a marvelous wall length timeline of Retzer history.



(left) Board members Kathy Arts and Kathy Strazishar greeted visitors in the lobby, while Larry Kascht (not shown) organized a “Friends of John and Florence Retzer” chat with panelists Dave Steingraeber, Anne Jordan, Bill Jordan, and Jim Kavemeier.



Dave Steingraeber led a group to the historic Retzer homestead site, whose guesthouse still stands



(left) Delafield Brewhaus provided hot sandwiches plus a commemorative Retzer 50th Anniversary Ale and other craft brews (right) Salley and Lily helped grill s'mores around the campfire circle – a culinary treat despite the warm and rainy weather

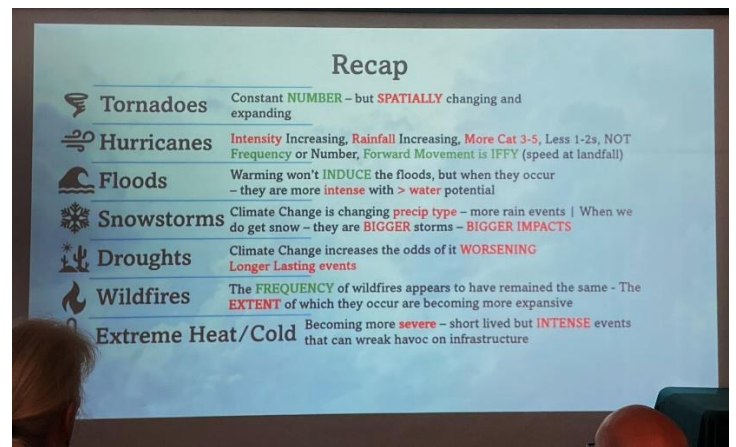
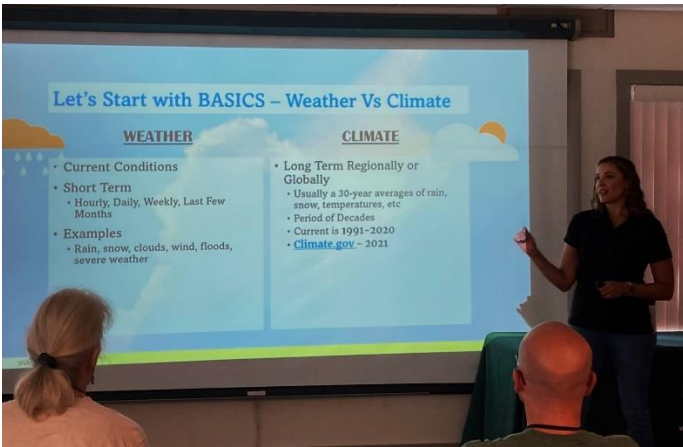


The JRyanTrio jazz band entertained visitors in the maintenance garage until Mother Nature ended the festivities.



Visitors of all ages enjoyed the lobby exhibits and the nature center's animal ambassadors. HAPPY 50th RETZER!

WISCONSIN MASTER NATURALIST TRAINING WEEK was hosted by Retzer July 15-20 and attended by 19 participants from around the state. The week-long workshop included visits to the City of Waukesha Clean Water Plant, UWM-Waukesha Field Station, Carroll University's Prairie Springs Environmental Education Center, Fox River Park, Lapham Peak and Retzer's own Horwitz-DeRemer Planetarium. Featured speakers addressed numerous topics of relevance, including Kelly La Blanc on glacial geology, Abbie Liedtke on recycling, Marlin Johnson on prairie and oak plant communities, Julia Robson and Samantha Schwartz on mesic forest and wetland plant communities, Jayne Jenks on aquatic life, and Lindsey Slater on weather and climate.



Milwaukee's WISN-12 forecast meteorologist Lindsey Slater discussed topics of contemporary concern ranging from climate change history to recent atmospheric trends and extremes, and underscored our role as informed citizens in responding to the compelling climate research evidence.

Mission Statement of the Friends of Retzer Nature Center

The mission of the Friends of Retzer Nature Center shall be to promote and support activities and initiatives which enhance the goals of natural resource conservation and environmental education and involve the community, through financial support and volunteer work, in the growth and improvement of programs and facilities at Retzer Nature Center.

FRIENDS BOARD UPDATE: CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

Class of 2027:

Helen Holtz
 Mary Kay Kelly, Co-Treasurer, RTN
 Almuth Soffee, Treasurer, RTN
 Megan Shad

Class of 2025:

Larry Kascht, President emeritus
 Kathy Arts, Vice President
 Cathy Ward, RTN
 Jenny Carter

Class of 2026:

Andrea Kornowski, President and Digital Communications Coordinator
 Susan Bosman
 Kathy Strazishar, RTN
 David Block, newsletter editor

Membership Renewal Reminder

As always, if you need to renew your Friends of Retzer membership, you may do so as follows:

- a) mail your check to Retzer Nature Center (S14 W28167 Madison St. Waukesha, WI 53188)
- b) stop at the nature center's front desk with check payment
- c) pay online via our website: www.FriendsofRetzer.org using a credit card or PayPal.

Your membership truly helps support vital projects and programs at Retzer Nature Center, and provides discount benefits for such events as Apple Harvest Festival and Wild Winter Nights.

Membership Levels: \$ 50.00 "General Membership (individual or household) \$ 75.00 "Contributor"
 \$ 100.00 "Supporter" \$250.00 "Sustainer" \$500.00 "Benefactor"

FYI: Stay up-to-date with what is going on at Retzer Nature Center, plus help us meet our 2024 goal of getting 500+ likes on Facebook, by [liking our page](#) and sharing it with friends. Thanks for your support!