

Frogs Fertilize Trees (Really!)

As land restoration continues at the Mequon Nature Preserve, ecological cycles that were lost many years ago are now re-establishing themselves. One example of a cycle that has been re-established starts at our new wetlands. There, sunlight is converted by photosynthesis into algae. Tadpoles feed on the algae, converting the energy to tissues. The tadpoles become frogs and leave the pond. The frogs then travel into the surrounding landscape including our woodlands. Our snakes are eating the frogs where their bodies and excretions spread nutrients that enrich the soils. Finally, some of the frogs return to the ponds and lay eggs—thus completing the cycle.

Some studies document this process with radioactive isotopes that are placed in frogs. The isotopes are then traced upland into forests. The nutrient cycling probably is rarely so significant that plant growth is affected. Nevertheless, frogs do feed the trees!



Photo by Dr. Gary Casper, Mequon Nature Preserve Volunteer

Short Takes

Visit our new website at mequonnaturepreserve.org (Mequon Nature Preserve run together). We will be adding a field guide this year so each viewer can print a guide for his or her personal use

at the Preserve. . . . Thanks to volunteer **Norm Doll** who is remodeling the kitchen at the PieperPower Education Center. He is using “green” materials, and he is also donating high-efficiency appliances. Norm’s gift will make the kitchen more functional for our volunteers and guests **65 Concordia University Wisconsin students** are each contributing eight hours of volunteer service. A lot is getting done!! Thank you to our **Alexian Village volunteers** who serve as receptionists several days a week at the PieperPower Education Center.

A Great Team Makes Great Plans

As our land moves from agricultural fields to a natural landscape of forests, wetlands and open fields, it is the volunteer service of our Ecological Planning Team that is providing the planning necessary to have a successful transition. The team reviews the past year’s efforts and plans the coming year’s restoration work. Our genuine thanks to each of them; their work will ensure a bright future for the Nature Preserve possible.

The team members are: **Cheryl Brickman**, team chair, horticulturalist; **Dr. Phil Arnholt**, Concordia University ecology professor; **Nancy Aten**, natural landscape architect; **Gerold Berg**, farmer; **Dr. Gary Casper**, herpetologist; **Dr. Doug Cherkauer**, UW-Milwaukee hydrogeology professor; **Dr. Noel Cutright**, ornithologist; **Mark Feider**, ecology consultant; **Dr. Glenn Fredlund**, UW-Milwaukee soils professor; **Tom Isaac**, DNR wildlife biologist; **Joanne Kline**, DNR wetland ecologist; **Lester Laack**, farmer; **Julie Peltier**, DNR forester; **Don Quintenz**, Schlitz Audubon Nature Center education director; **Dr. Jim Reinartz**, UW-Milwaukee Field Station director; **Missy Sparrow**, DNR private lands wildlife biologist; **Andrew Struck**, Ozaukee County parks director; **Marc White**, Riveredge Nature Center director of research; and **Mike Yanny**, Johnson’s Nursery propagator. Thanks also go to **Kristin Gies**, horticulturalist and the Mequon Nature Preserve manager.



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A Student In Her Own Words

Genna, along with her classmates at Germantown High School come to the Mequon Nature Preserve one day a week as part of their program to earn a GED, a high school equivalency diploma. Read on to learn how Genna views her experience at the Nature Preserve:



Genna—Germantown High School student working at Mequon Nature Preserve

“The Nature Preserve is one of my favorite places. I have really come to enjoy performing my act of community service there. Being at the Nature Preserve has inspired me to volunteer outside of school, for other activities that have to do with the environment and wildlife. The instructors are great, they are all supportive and really motivate our class to work hard and put an effort towards making Trinity Creek a clean, calm and gorgeous landscape. It's such an amazing project that I support to the fullest, there are so many wonderful ideas that are just going to make the environment so

much more functional and appealing. There are so many different things our class has come up with doing there and I can't wait to get started. I really enjoy doing hands on things like cutting down the cattail and the buckthorn. Picking seeds is always so much fun for me, I'm sure I'd enjoy sowing them too. I don't think I'd necessarily prefer to stay inside and work but separating seeds was actually kind of fun for me. But being at the Nature Preserve, working outside and being out in the fresh air is a really calming experience. It literally takes away my stress and takes me away from reality. It's a place to unwind and although you're working, it's so tranquil. I'd love to spend more time there, what ever I can do to help, I'll be there.”



As part of the Wisconsin Ephemeral Pond Project, volunteers are monitoring a vernal (spring) pond in Harvey's Woods at the Mequon Nature Preserve.