

Spring 2023

Scenic Views

A newsletter from the Milwaukee Area Land Conservancy

Our Mission

To preserve and protect valuable land and water resources for the benefit of the public, as well as for the wildlife dependent on these resources, in order to maintain quality of life, biological diversity, and natural scenic beauty for future generations.

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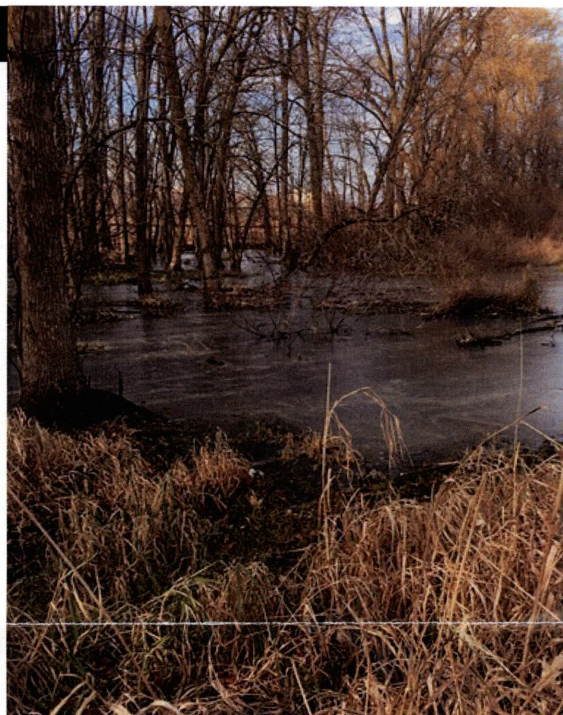
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For the Love of the Land

Sometimes Good Things Come in Small Parcels

In order to evaluate the ecological quality of open space lands in any region, landscape ecologists take several characteristics of individual sites into consideration, such as areal extent, (size), number of native species, presence of rare plant or animal species, evidence of disturbance, landscape context, diversity of habitats, uncommon plant communities, size-class tree distribution (numbers of trees in different size classes), and prevalence of non-native invasive species.

In some respects, Sidney Woods in Glendale is an anomaly. While Sidney is small and is unremarkable in terms of diversity of habitats, it is surprising when it comes to other key factors. The footprint of the woods is long and narrow, under 4 acres in total. This means there is essentially no area far enough away from an edge to provide for a forest interior environment. So, Sidney Woods is limited as a wildlife habitat. For example, no forest interior environment means no successful breeding of forest interior birds. But Sidney shines as a haven for plant communities. It is mostly a dry-mesic upland woodland, dominated by red and white oaks, basswood, and sugar maple, with American beech as a minor component, and a shrub layer dominated by chokecherry. Several wetlands, formerly dominated by green ash, add to habitat diversity. Size-class distribution of trees is good, with several oaks nearly 40"



in diameter.

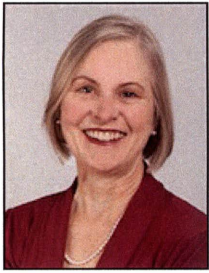
What is significant, though is the number of plant species present, exceptional for a woodland of this limited size. MALC biologists have tallied 160 native plant species. Ground flora species include white trillium, wild leek, wild sarsaparilla, spring beauty, blue cohosh, Canada Mayflower, golden Alexanders, and 19 sedge species. One State-designated Threatened species—forked aster—is also present. By comparison, another high-quality MALC property, Fitzsimmons Woods in Franklin, over 10 times the Sidney acreage, supports 148 native plant species.

An even more important inquiry concerns the sort of species that are present. We can evaluate this by applying the methodology first devised by two Chicago biologists—Floyd Swink and Gerould Wilhelm—to quantify the floristic quality of a given site. Basically, each (Chicago) native plant species was ranked on a zero to ten scale according

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Dear MALC Supporters, We Love Sidney Woodland Preserve!



Ideas for this year's spring newsletter synergistically coalesced around Sidney Woodland Preserve and we are delighted to share with you why we love this surprising little triangle of precious land.

Sidney, located in Glendale on Sidney Place, east of 27th Street and north of Silver Spring, is our sole land

holding outside of the City of Franklin. MALC acquired Sidney, a 3.7-acre parcel, in 2012, through a grant from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund for 50% of the purchase price, with the other half donated by the Wisconsin Electric Power Company. Board member, Larry Leitner, PhD, biologist, recounts how impressed he has been with the biodiversity found in this small natural woodland, and volunteer, Karen Kant, expresses her appreciation for this special place in her neigh-

borhood. And the passing of another neighbor, Martha Lunz, champion of nature, has inspired a memorial tree planting to take place here in April.

Our responsibility for stewarding the woods has not been without its challenges. Undesirable plant species invade here with a vengeance. We have been able to control patches of invasive and sometimes dangerous plants like wild parsnip. However, common buckthorn is another story. Volunteers came out in September and October of 2021 to remove scores of buckthorn plants, but the experience revealed that we needed an all-out effort at control. So, in late 2022, we contracted with Native Niche for 76 hours of work on removal and prevention.

The results are stunning. Come see for yourself!

With warmest regards,

Linda Frank

MALC President



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Milwaukee Area Land Conservancy 2022 Financial Report

MALC has maintained a strong financial position.

While in 2021, we doubled our land holdings for conservation, in 2022, we saw our public support more than double. MALC invested numerous volunteer hours in our first year of stewardship of Ryan Creek Prairie. In addition, we continued to perform land management duties through contractors and volunteers at our other properties.

MALC manages 103 acres of natural area owned in fee title and protects another 23 acres by conservation easement. Your generous donations of time and money are critical to the further progress toward our mission to preserve and protect valuable land and water resources in Milwaukee County.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY Jan. 1, 2022 – Dec. 31, 2022

Beginning Net Assets **\$1,756,107**

OPERATING INCOME

• Direct Public Support	\$3,370
• Investment Income	\$279
• Other Revenue	\$6,297
• Conservation Land Contributions	\$0

TOTAL INCOME **\$9,946**

OPERATING EXPENSES

• Land Management	\$11,724
• Administrative	\$4,994
• Travel and Meetings	\$189
• Other Expenses	\$32

TOTAL EXPENSE **\$16,939**

Ending Net Assets **\$1,749,114**

MALC Volunteer Profile: Karen Kant

Karen shares her passion for Sidney Woods and the work of MALC

Living Across from Sidney Woods

I moved into my house across from Sidney Woods in 1996. Having a wooded area across the street was a big draw to living here. Seeing the seasons change with the woods, watching birds use the woods as a migratory wayside, and other animals find refuge - over the years, I've seen a muskrat take up residence for a while, and as coyotes became more of a presence, the deer population moved on, stopping the over-browsing that was occurring in the woods (and in my garden!). Sidney Woods provides a buffer zone and small sanctuary from the urban area nearby. My children played and explored there. I was delighted and relieved when I heard that MALC was taking over stewardship of Sidney Woods in 2012, because every so often "For

Sale" signs would be posted there, and my fear was that the wetland and woods would be destroyed and developed.

Stewardship Work Is Rewarding

I've long been interested in native plants, and over the years, turned most of my yard over to native plantings. I love going into the woods to observe the native species there and occasionally pull the invasive species that appear. When MALC posted announcements of workdays to eradicate the invasives, it was something I wanted to help with - this is my neighborhood. Volunteering to help maintain trails and remove invasive species is fun and



Karen Kant

Continued on back page

YES! I would like to help the Milwaukee Area Land Conservancy preserve and restore beautiful places for the public's enjoyment. Enclosed is my tax deductible gift.

___ \$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 ___ \$200 ___ Other

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Mail this form with your check to: **For additional information:**

Milwaukee Area Land Conservancy
P.O. Box 320304
Franklin, Wisconsin 53132

email: MALC@mkeconservancy.org
www.mkeconservancy.org
Phone: 414-377-3851

MALC accepts donations online. See the donation page of our website at:
mkeconservancy.org



Print your name as you would like it to appear in our newsletter acknowledging our supporters. If you choose to be listed as anonymous, place the letter "A" after your name.

Contributions will be applied to land acquisition, stewardship, and operating expenses to help carry out our mission. MALC is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law.



Milwaukee Area Land Conservancy

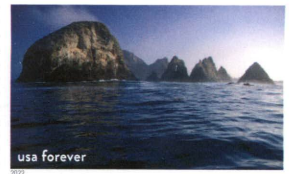
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educational. It allows me to talk with people who have experience and knowledge in different professions involving ecological work and preservation. I have also seen the results of contract work done for larger invasive species control projects. For example, Native Niche completed the removal of buckthorn and other invasive species at the end of 2022 and the results were amazing. The woods has been transformed and really opened up.

I Believe in this Work

Protecting natural areas is very important to me. With our planet being challenged with climate change, it's so critical that we do what is within our power to help. So much is at stake. Small efforts can make a big impact. In the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, "In the woods, we return to reason and faith."

GOOD THINGS continued from page 1

to its perceived fidelity to a natural plant community. For a given site, these values were added and with a simple calculation, a Floristic Quality Index (FQI) resulted. An FQI of 35+ is considered ecologically valuable. Areas with FQI above 50 are extremely rare and of paramount regional importance. In 2003, Wisconsin ecologists revised the scale to apply to state species.

Based on those revised values, Fitzsimmons Woods has an FQI of 55 and Sidney Woods has an FQI of 52. Thus, from a floristic viewpoint, both Fitzsimmons and the much smaller Sidney support outstanding assemblages of the native flora. One of the major objectives of any conservation organization is to preserve regional biodiversity. Though Sidney Woods may be small, and basically an ecological "island" within an urbanized area, it does exactly that.