

2021 SPRING/SUMMER

THE CANOPY

The Official Seno K/RLT Conservancy
Newsletter



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SENO K/RLT CONSERVANCY

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

3606 Dyer Lake Road
Burlington, WI 53105
262-539-3222
senokrlt@senokrlt.org

SPRINGTIME WITH SENO

MAPLE SUGARING, BIRDING, AND CLEANUPS OH MY!



It's been an eventful spring at Seno K/RLT Conservancy in 2021! Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic we launched new programs and events this year with precautions in place and had a great time. January kicked off with the GEMS (Girls Empowered by Math & Science) conference presented by Girls Inc. of Southeastern Wisconsin, where Nancy and Stacy hosted a virtual interactive workshop on glaciers and glacial land formations. Although virtual events have allowed us to continue to see one another during the pandemic, we were more than ready to see people again in person!

March was the start of a new program at Seno Woodland Center, our first ever Maple Sugaring Class. We had a blast with both of our small classes showing them how to identify and tap trees, as well as teaching everyone about the Native American history of this practice. We plan to hold this program again next spring, so if you missed out don't worry!

April showers didn't stop us nor the residents of our Woodland Waters Conservation Subdivision from coming out to set up a bluebird trail for families to monitor throughout the spring. Rick Fare from Hoy Audubon came out to train everyone in monitoring practices as well as help put up each family's box.

We're happy to hear that about a week later Bluebirds had already taken up residence in one of the new boxes! Rick helped us yet again in April by teaching our Beginner Birders NRF Field Trip. We are so thankful for his continued help, expertise, and of course his passion for birds!

Seno K/RLT was able to join Great Lakes Community Conservation Corps' Earth Week Beach Cleanups as part of the EPA's Trash-Free Waters program this April as well, along with many other environmental and local organizations. Seno board members, staff, and volunteers showed up to clean Penoyer Beach and walked away with multiple full bags of trash!

To those who joined us this spring and summer, thank you so much. And for those who couldn't, we hope to see you this fall!



THE SCIENCE OF SPRING

What is a Spring Ephemeral?

Spring ephemerals are plants that produce foliage, flower, and produce seed all in an extremely short period of time every spring before the canopy emerges. Their strategy is to be the first to arrive to the party and the first to leave before any other plants have emerged yet. Although short-lived annually, they can be extremely long-lived perennially. Some Trout Lily colonies can be over 100 years old in undisturbed forests! Conservation of undisturbed woodlands helps protect old spring ephemeral populations.

Too Much of a Good Thing?

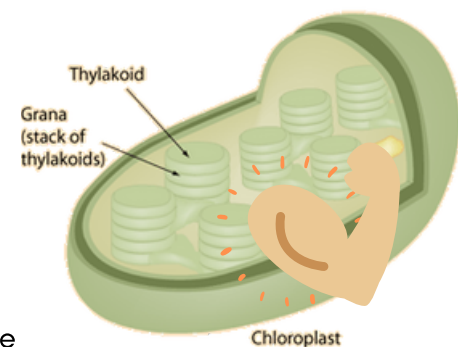
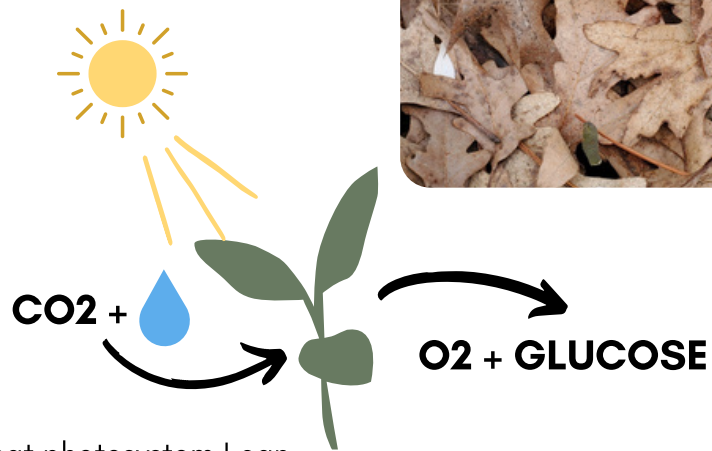
Remember those classic photosynthesis diagrams and equations in school? Carbon dioxide, water and sunlight (AKA energy) in, and oxygen and sugar out. Almost all plants self-sustain this way, creating sugar to fuel their various functions. You might also remember that this happens in a part of the cell called a chloroplast. Inside these organelles light is absorbed by two photosystems (I & II). Photosystem II usually takes the brunt of light so that photosystem I can focus on producing energy to make glucose for the plant. With no canopy, spring ephemeral's photosystems are getting absolutely blasted with sunlight in a way that would leave most other plants photodamaged.



If you've ever moved a houseplant out into direct sunlight and noticed leaves curling up and yellowing, you've seen the effects of photodamage on a plant. How can spring ephemeral's handle so much intense light where other plants would become photodamaged?

Spring ephemeral's photosystem II's are mega-buffed up and are able to mitigate what would normally be an unbearable amount of sunlight.

Dissipating extra energy as heat, or diverting it to other processes. Other summer plants who also see lots of intense sunlight often cope with this issue by altering their chlorophyll levels, but spring ephemerals do not do this. Their photosystem's are hardy enough that they don't have to bother with mitigating photodamage in this way. These are some tough little plants who, much like us after a long Wisconsin winter, are ready to soak up that spring sunshine!



THE SCIENCE OF SPRING CONT.

The Crayola 64 Box of Nature

Do you ever wonder at all the bright colors of blooming plants you see every spring and summer? Plant coloration is the outcome of the mixing of various compounds. Think of mixing your basic primary colors and the variety of shades we can get from just a handful! There are two major types:



Why Are Flowers Colorful?

Pollinators: Insects see colors differently than us! Colors on flowers, both those visible to the human eye and not, can signal to pollinators where to land. Red flowers, for example, are usually bird pollinated because bees and other insects are not great at detecting reds.



Temperature Control: If you have ever sat in a car with an all black interior in summer then you know firsthand the effect colors can have on temperature. Light absorption and reflection varies by color and plants can use this to their advantage to help manage the amount of sunlight they absorb.

Extra By-Products: Complex biochemical processes can accumulate anthocyanins or carotenoids and can affect plant color. Colors even change based on factors like the pH of water where the plant is growing or whether the flower is wilting or deteriorating. White Trillium's older blooms can often turn pink as the cells break down and influence the pH and amount of pigments in the petals, thus changing the color of the plant.

THE VISION OF A CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION

by Stacy Santiago



What is a conservation subdivision? This is a question even the people living in one often ask. The idea behind a conservation subdivision is simple; although the area will experience some development and homes will be built, the land used for development will be limited. Usually this means a little over 60% of the total acreage gets preserved, placed in easement, and protected. In an ideal scenario this is billed as a plus to potential homeowners, and the conservation easement areas throughout the subdivision are managed and cared for by residents. Such a place bolsters a connection between people and the land around them, and instills a sense of stewardship and land ethic to be shared by the subdivision as a whole.

The reality can be quite different though. Where typically an easement would have one landowner, these easements have many all at once. There's lots of possible dynamics this can take on, good and bad, as anyone who has ever worked with people in any capacity in their life will know well. Most of the time people move in without any knowledge that the area behind their home isn't just extra land for them to use. They mow it to expand their yard, place a shed there, start a garden, all unaware of the fact that they're encroaching on an easement area. I know almost always this is done no malicious intent to the natural space, and I don't really want to pitch these areas as a place "not for you", to homeowners. Ultimately we want to strive for that mutually beneficial relationship between people and nature that is Seno K/RLT's vision statement, one where humans are a part of nature and not separate from it. I know sometimes as a person with an background in ecology, or as an environmental educator, it can be hard not to be upset by what I see. Like everything in life, these places are complex and there are uniquely human aspects that create challenges; money, interpersonal tensions, and even just miscommunications. But I truly believe the way forward is in the patience of teaching homeowners to see these easement areas the same way we do. To inspire care, awe, and respect for what they are and what they can be if we tend to them. As we as an organization begin trying to implement this education effort in our subdivisions, I'm pleased to see the beginnings of what I always imagined these subdivisions could be at their very best; a place where people can live alongside with and appreciate nature that benefits the environment around them. I still think there's plenty of work to be done, but I hope that even if it's small steps, even if it's slow, that there will be a lasting benefit to both the people and nature alike within these subdivisions.





UPCOMING EVENTS



Art-In-Nature @ Seno Woodland Center - August 7th
10AM-12PM at Seno Woodland Center
Ticketing through Facebook: \$4 Kids under 13 and \$6 Adults

Chainsaw Safety Level 1 - September 4th
8AM-4PM at Seno Woodland Center - \$125 Fee
Register with Kevin Nolan 262-220-5222 // natura078@gmail.com

Chainsaw Safety Level 2 - September 5th
8AM-4PM at Seno Woodland Center - \$125 Fee
Register with Kevin Nolan 262-220-5222 // natura078@gmail.com

Calling the Mare Trail Adventure Run/Walk & Canicross - September 19th
10AM-2:30PM at Seno Woodland Center
Registration through XC Thrillology's website

Salem Witch Trials Storyteller - October 23rd
Details Coming Soon

VISIT OUR WEBSITE'S EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS PAGES & FOLLOW OUR FACEBOOK PAGE FOR DETAILS AND OTHER UPCOMING WORKSHOPS & EVENTS!



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 nacarlson@hotmail.com for details

Land Management Volunteers

Help with invasive species control at our woodland center with guidance and training from our Buildings and Land Management Committee Chair
Contact Mark Lesko at mark_lesko@icloud.com for details

Board Member - Outreach & Fundraising Committee Chair

Board Member - Education Committee Chair

Contact Stacy at stacy@senokrlt.org for details

VISIT OUR WEBSITE OR CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

The Estate of James Heller

The LUMW Foundation



**GAYLORD AND
DOROTHY DONNELLEY
FOUNDATION**

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BECOME A MEMBER OR MAKE A DONATION

.....
Every donation towards the Seno K/RLT Conservancy is used to support our mission of providing environmental education, promoting sustainable management of forests, wetlands, prairies, and wildlife as well as opportunities for permanent preservation of these lands. We are a registered 501(c)3 non-profit education organization and land trust. All dues and donations are tax deductible under IRS rules.

Your Information

Name:(s): _____

Address: _____

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State: _____ Zip: _____

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Membership Level (Please check one)

____ Individual\$25

____ Family \$40

____ Forestry Friend\$100

____ Land Protector\$500

____ Patron \$1000

____ Benefactor\$5000

____ Other amount\$

All dues and donations are tax deductible under IRS rules.

We also accept donations via PayPal on our website.

Make your check payable to Seno K/RLT Conservancy and send with this form to:

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