

View from the Hill

A newsletter for friends and members of Friends of Mosquito Hill, Inc. | Summer 2019

Solstice Celebration Fundraiser: June 21

Mike Hibbard, Director



Join us on Friday, June 21, as we celebrate the Summer Solstice, raise funds for the nature center and showcase the recently-acquired grounds atop Mosquito Hill.

The evening will feature a spanferkel (pig roast) with vegetarian options, a cash bar, live music by Christopher Gold, bucket raffles, games, property tours and a sunset hike to the overlook on top of Mosquito Hill.

The evening will kick off with social hour, music, lawn games and raffles starting at 5:00 PM. A dinner buffet will be served from 6:00 PM until 7:30 PM. Raffle drawings will be held at 7:30 PM. The evening will culminate with a solstice sunset hike starting at 8:00 PM.

Christopher Gold is an Appleton singer and songwriter who has been seen at Mile of Music performing his unique brand of

folk, country and bluegrass music. Gold was recognized as the Singer/Songwriter of the Year by the Wisconsin Area Music Industry in 2015. His music will begin at 5:00 p.m.

Guests are asked to park in the main parking lot by the interpretive building. Shuttle service will be available throughout the evening to transport people to the top of the hill. Guests are also welcome to walk to the top.

The cost is \$40 per person. Tickets can be purchased at the nature center office or online at mosquitohill.com. All proceeds will go toward display renovations and the education and volunteer programs at Mosquito Hill Nature Center. Please contact us at mary.swifka@outagamie.org or 920-779-6433 for more information.



Our Mission

The Friends of Mosquito Hill (FOMH) support, promote and enhance Mosquito Hill Nature Center. (MHNC) We realize this mission through volunteerism, fundraising and our shared passion for nature.

Follow Mosquito Hill Nature Center!



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*Published by
Friends of Mosquito Hill, Inc.
New London, WI
www.mosquitohill.org*

TICKETS! Get Your Tickets Here!

Raffle tickets, that is. Support the Friends of Mosquito Hill Capital Campaign and win big. We hope you share our excitement with this year's offerings.

First Prize - \$1,000 cash • **Second Prize** - \$500 cash • **Third Prize** - \$250 cash

Tickets are on sale now at the nature center for \$15 or two for \$20. Only 1,000 tickets will be sold. The drawing will be held Saturday, September 21 during Vintage Market on the Hill. You do not need to be present to win, but we hope you will attend to see the incredible vintage, hand-made, home-grown, one-of-a-kind items for sale!

Proceeds from this raffle will help fund our building renovation plan. Give us a call at 920-779-6433 or e-mail mary.swifka@outagamie.org for assistance. As always, we appreciate your support!

Endurance Runs Offer Events for Everyone

Come run with us at the 4th annual **Mosquito Hill Endurance Run on October 19 and 20!** Runners and walkers will journey through our 3.1 mile loop on trails traveling through wetlands, prairie and forest, to the top of Mosquito Hill. This is a great race for any trail runner of any skill level!

This year we will offer 3-, 6-, 12- and 24-hour options.

A moonlight 5k, and a 24-hour relay event are also planned.

Our timed events are designed to allow participants to run or walk as many miles as they desire, regardless of speed.

Visit www.runrace.net to register and find updates on Facebook (Mosquito Hill Endurance Run). All proceeds benefit MHNC.



Wish List

- Bird seed, especially black sunflower and Nyjer seed
- Paper shredder
- Gift cards, any denomination, to CHS Larsen Co-op (New London), Festival Foods, (New London), Fleet Farm, Kwik Trip, Menards, Petco, Michael's, Piggly-Wiggly (New London)
- Heavy-duty extension cords, 50 feet, 12 gauge
- Heavy-duty extension cords, 100 feet, 12 gauge
- LED lighted safety vests (to keep our volunteers and staff safe after dark)
- Rechargeable LED work lights
- Solar lights, to light trails after dark
- Surge protector power strips

Naturalist's Corner

Backyard Weeds: Stay or Spray?

Jessica Miller, Assistant Naturalist

Every year around this time, I begin to see TV commercials advertising herbicides to “kill those pesky weeds in your garden and lawn”. And every year around this time I cringe as I begin to see an onslaught of herbicide bottles in the arms of unsuspecting consumers in the checkout lanes of local big box stores. Donned in their protective gear, lawn-care specialists are out in droves, spraying in many-a-neighborhood, promising healthier, weed-free and greener lawns. Many have a strong desire to get out and eradicate any and every unknown plant species, but the environmental consequences may be stronger.

It's no secret that herbicides and pesticides have detrimental effect on our environment and our health. Monarch butterfly populations are at an all-time low partly due to an increased use of the chemical glyphosate (Roundup) on farm fields. That has drastically reduced the amount of milkweed across the country on which monarchs lay eggs.

Atrazine, an herbicide sprayed on agricultural crops, has been found to disrupt sexual development in frogs. Honeybee populations have also been declining rapidly and a class of insecticides called neonicotinoids may be to blame.

These and many other chemicals have been showing up in our food, beverages and drinking water. Recently, several lawsuits have been filed (and won) against Monsanto Corporation, maker of Roundup, claiming that the chemical causes cancer. The stories go on and on and on.

It seems timely for a big shift in our thinking about how we view “weeds”. Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines the word as, “a plant that is not valued where it is growing and is usually of vigorous growth” or “a plant that displaces native plant species”. I would wager to say that many of those who use herbicides do so on their lawn to kill weeds. Ironically, your typical lawn grass is not native to North America which makes lawn grass a weed. If you want to see native grasses, take a stroll through our prairie in early fall where you will find little and big bluestem, Indian grass, switchgrass, purple lovegrass and more.



Many so-called weeds actually have benefits for both wildlife and humans. Take, for example, the dandelion. One of the first nectar-producing plants of the spring, dandelions feed butterflies, bees and a host of other insects, as well as rabbits, chipmunks, ground squirrels and deer. Seed heads are not only eaten by a variety of birds, but the pappus (what we know as seed “fluff”) is used in nest building, including that of the ruby-throated hummingbird.

Humans benefit from the mighty flower in that all parts of the plant are edible. Its slightly bitter, exceptionally nutritious leaves are often included with other greens in salad mixes. The flowers are often battered and fried as tasty fritters, and also used to make wine. The roots! Oh, the roots! Dried, roasted and brewed as a delicious coffee substitute, dandelion roots have an amazing flavor. They are also considered a traditional tonic for the liver and the blood.

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Calendar of Events



www.mosquohill.com

Visit us at Plamann Park Kids' Day!

Saturday, June 8
8:00 AM – 12 noon

Enjoy a day filled with fun! Nature center staff and volunteers will be hosting an event at this fundraiser at Plamann Park. Take a spin on the Bike Blender, get messy with art projects, try out a kayak or stand-up paddle board on Plamann Lake, watch karate sessions, visit the Children's Farm and much more! FREE.

Restorative Yoga

Sunday, June 16
1:00 – 2:30 PM

Restorative yoga is a therapeutic practice that allows for relief of tension and stress. Postures are practiced on the floor with the support of props such as bolsters, blankets and blocks and are held anywhere from 2 to 15 minutes. Experience gentle stretching and strengthening of the body. Leave feeling refreshed and rejuvenated. Please arrive 10-15 minutes early. The instructor is naturalist Jessica Miller, certified yoga instructor. \$15/person. Registration and payment due June 10.

Solstice Celebration

Friday, June 21
See front page article.

Electronics Recycling

Saturday, June 29, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Folks from K9 Tech Recycling will be here to collect everything with a cord, battery or motor. Watch our website and Facebook page for more details.



The interpretive building and office will be closed on Thursday, July 4. Trails and Playscape will remain open.

Plants for Digestive Woes

Sunday, July 14
1:00 – 2:30 PM

Summer is a wonderful time to collect those garden herbs that are known for not only their culinary benefits, but for medicinal purposes as well. While some reach for an antacid to help with digestive ailments, many of our tried and true plants can offer a natural form of relief. Participants will be introduced to plants such as chamomile, mint, basil, fennel, lemon balm and anise hyssop during a brief hike and then partake in some taste testing afterwards. \$12/person. Registration and payment due July 5.

Volunteer Recognition & Annual Meeting

Wednesday, July 17, 5:00 – 7:00 PM

Every year, we make time to publicly thank all the volunteers that make this place hum. We'll gather for social time and cold beverages at 5:00 and enjoy a picnic meal at 6:00. After dinner, a brief update from the Friends of Mosquito Hill board of directors will be followed by a program in honor of all the people we count on to make MHNC a great place to visit.

Monarch Tagging Workshop

Saturday, August 24, 12:30 – 3:00 PM

Every fall, millions of monarchs east of the Rocky Mountains make their way down to the Transvolcanic Mountains in Central Mexico where they overwinter. And every fall, hundreds of thousands of tags are purchased to place on migrating monarchs to help scientists answer many questions about their migration pattern. Join naturalist Jessica Miller as she explains the basics behind one of the coolest phenomenon on Earth, monarch migration. In addition, each participant will have the opportunity to assist with tagging, testing and releasing a butterfly. \$6/person or \$10/household. Registration and payment are due August 16.



Fungi and Wild Edibles Foray

Sunday, September 1
10:00 AM Start

Join us and the Wisconsin Mycological Society for this magical event! We will venture around the property in search of mushrooms and other edibles with foray leader Matthew Normansell of Eden Wild Food. \$5/person - Free for all WMS members. Registration and payment due August 23.

Environmental Science Merit Badge Clinic

Saturday, September 7, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Boy Scouts will explore all aspects of the natural environment and learn how to protect our natural resources. This is an intensive workshop and several assignments need to be completed before the clinic. Early registration is strongly recommended. Scouts must be 14 years old by the time of the clinic. The clinic facilitator is MHNC director Mike Hibbard. \$25/scout. Registration and payment due August 15.

Honey Sunday

Sunday, September 15, 12:00 – 3:00 PM

Come and help us celebrate the honeybee and the gentle art of beekeeping during this annual event co-sponsored with the Waupaca County Beekeepers' Association. Watch honey being extracted from the hive, beeswax candle dipping and a cooking demonstration. Take in some short informational sessions, visit the kids' craft area and, of course, don't miss out on our delicious honey-baked goods and honey sundaes. Bring your family and friends out for some sweet sensations. \$10/car.



Naturalist's Corner

Backyard Weeds: Stay or Spray?

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If a particular plant needs to be removed from your lawn, the hand-pulling method is not only a great way to get in some extra physical nourishment (exercise), it forces you to put your hands in the soil. In a 2007 paper published in the journal, Neuroscience, researchers found that certain soil bacteria activate groups of neurons in the brain responsible for producing serotonin, a neurotransmitter that, when impaired, can cause depression. In other words, playing in the dirt can actually, chemically, make you happy.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has a list on their website of the most aggressive non-native plants that threaten the diversity of our native ecosystems. Kentucky bluegrass, a common type of lawn grass, is on the list. Dandelions are not. I challenge you, dear reader, to think outside the box going forward and look for alternative ways to deal with "undesirables" in your yard. While I know that there are always exceptions and large areas of destructive invasives may not be able to be pulled by hand, I encourage you to do your homework and, if needed, use the least offensive method of eradication possible. Can the area be tarped for a few weeks, smothering the offending plants and their roots? Can an organic herbicide or boiling water be used instead? Can the plants be dug up and used for farm animal feed or mulch for your garden?

Let's all do our part to protect the air, water, and soil for everyone on this planet now and in the future. Our quality of life depends on it.

Coming Up!

September
8
Plants for
Cold & Flu

September
8
Cub Scout
Adventure

September
21
Vintage Market
at the Hill

October
12
Harvest Moon
Festival

Board:

Jared Ashland, Appleton
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Jennifer Goggins, Appleton Area School District
Nicholas Maravolo, Emeritus Professor, Lawrence University, Appleton
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Chris Worzalla, Kimberly-Clark Corp., Neenah, Capital Campaign Chair
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Address Correspondence To:
Friends of Mosquito Hill
N3880 Rogers Road
New London WI 54961
920.779.6433
www.mosquitohill.org

Interpretive Building Hours:
Tuesday-Friday:
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday:
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Staff:

Loren Dieck, Director, Outagamie County Parks
Mike Hibbard, Director/ Naturalist
Jessica Miller, Assistant Naturalist
Mary Swifka, Staff Assistant
Adam Brandt, Park Ranger

Newsletter:

Editors - Pat Brown, Ginny Buschke, Deb Mentzel, Mary Swifka
Layout & Design - Jayne Thielen Frazier
NEW Printing, Appleton
Outlook Graphics, Neenah

Volunteer Coordinator Pat Lund-Moe to Retire

by Dave Wuebben, President, Friends of Mosquito Hill, Inc.

In her role as volunteer coordinator, Pat Lund-Moe was the face of the Friends of Mosquito Hill organization for 11 years! Pat gave notice of her desire to retire as of May 17. At the March FOMH board meeting, with both regret and great appreciation, we accepted her resignation.

This past decade, Pat was the person lining up volunteers to make all those great events the best they could be. She was out at all the various events staffing our Mosquito Hill booth and encouraging those passing by to come to the Hill. Pat was the answer person for the "Where do I go?" and "What do I do?" questions. Through it all, Pat answered and assisted with a smile and warmth appreciated by all.

Board member and volunteer Jenny Goggins shared, "Pat will be greatly missed but I'm pleased to know she will continue to volunteer at events.

It's hard to imagine the Friends organization without Pat."

We all share in wishing Pat the very best as she moves on to new chapters in her life. Going forward, many of Pat's duties will be shifted back to county staff within the nature center office. Prior to a volunteer coordinator position, the work was completed by office staff. This is a return to that method. Please bear with us during the upcoming transitional period.



“What I love most about Pat is her warm smile and her ability to always look on the bright side of life. She has a calm pleasant mannerism and her passion regarding event success made volunteering at Mosquito Hill enjoyable.”
- Tammy Vanevenhoven, FOMH Board Member

“Pat's positive attitude and gentle demeanor were always reassuring. She always went above and beyond the call of duty. Pat was an integral part of our staff and we will miss her very much. Good Luck in retirement Pat and I'm sure we will see your smiling face often at the Hill.”
- Mike Hibbard, Director

“Pat was always happy to see us, the volunteers. She would bend over backwards to make sure everything went well for us.”
- Barb Baumgartner, Volunteer

Volunteer Voice

“You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give.”
- Winston Churchill

by Pat Lund-Moe, Volunteer Coordinator (volparks@outagamie.org)

As I write this, I am thinking once again how lucky we are to have fantastic volunteers involved in so many facets of our nature center. Whether behind the scenes, or front and center, volunteers make everything possible at MHNC. I hope you had the opportunity to see our Volunteer Appreciation banner during April, national volunteer appreciation month. We hope volunteers feel our gratitude all year round, because without them, we would not be!

During my 11 years as the Friends of Mosquito Hill volunteer coordinator, I have had the opportunity to meet, work with and make wonderful friends. I have learned so much from the staff and volunteers, probably asking way too many questions at times. What a wealth of knowledge our

naturalists have; I am grateful for their patience in sharing it with me!

I retired from this position as of May 17, but hope to continue seeing you here. I do love this place and hope to continue working side by side with you as a volunteer. Thank you for all your support, hard work, laughter and love for Mosquito Hill.

You will notice some changes going forward, but we know with your dedication we will continue working together as volunteers and staff to provide the events and experiences that make our nature center special. Friends of Mosquito Hill will no longer be funding the volunteer coordinator position in order to be able to direct funds specifically for the capital campaign and other needs of the nature center. Outagamie County has a freeze on creating new positions,

but has offered to reorganize staff responsibilities to include the volunteer program coordination.

With these changes, it is clear that FOMH will be filling gaps to continue supporting Mosquito Hill programming in whatever way possible. We hope members and volunteers will consider what else each of us can offer to keep us moving ahead, growing and improving. Our FOMH Board is in need of volunteers to join as well. Committee work is available, including with the Capital Campaign. We know people are busy, but if we can ask ourselves what we can give, great things can happen.

We have had fun this spring with some new programs, collaborating more with other groups and agencies, and planning for our Solstice Celebration on June 21.

Volunteer Opportunities

Outreach in the area is always fun, as we share our passion for MHNC with the wider community. Anytime we can talk to people, it is a plus. Those of us who staff the booths at community festivals, fairs or local events have a great time, sharing activities with kids, selling brats and raffle tickets, or just talking about what people can experience when they visit Mosquito Hill.

Green thumbs, where are you? Our gardens provide a wonderful respite for anyone to dig down into the warm earth, remove unwelcome plants and offer more room for our native flowers to flourish. Once you have learned where the work is needed and what to do, you can come out whenever it is convenient for you. Let us know when you are ready to dig in.

Volunteer naturalists have been out with school groups in April and May. Youth groups are signing up for summer programs that provide fun and learning. We always welcome enthusiastic volunteers to lead environmental education field trips for youth (and some adults). Training is provided and ongoing support abounds from staff and veteran volunteers.

Office times await you if you prefer to have some indoor time, have a welcoming smile and are okay with some quiet moments. Answering the phone, greeting visitors, and assisting with small office tasks will be the needs during office support shifts.

Friends of Mosquito Hill, Inc.

Mosquito Hill Nature Center
N3880 Rogers Rd. • New London, WI 54961
920.779.6433

www.mosquitohill.org (Friends of Mosquito Hill)
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