

# Friends of the Blufflands







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# Executive Summary

- We're here to ask for your help for Coulee Region blufflands
  - Membership
  - Time
  - Talent
- The blufflands need an overwhelming amount of work if we want to maintain their natural diversity, scenic, recreational, and economic value, for residents and visitors



# Why does FoBL exist?

- To be a voice for a wide variety of blufflands users who value the area blufflands for –
  - the natural habitat they provide, species diversity
  - the scenic beauty they provide for residents and visitors
  - the outdoor nature study and nature-based recreation opportunities that they provide
  - the values green space provides to local communities and their residents
- Leading to higher quality of life

# Why do we exist? Part 2

- To promote sound conservation practices to maintain the health of the Coulee Region blufflands
  - Control of invasive species
  - Prairie management
  - Forest management / reforestation
  - Advise on trail placement and construction
  - Preservation of rare and endangered species
  - Keep in natural state



# Why do we exist? Part 2

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# What is FoBL?

- Wisconsin Non-profit Corporation
  - Incorporated Aug., 2016
- IRS Non-profit, Tax Exempt – 501 (c)(3)
- \$50 lifetime membership
- Low overhead
  - Work with public & private partners to achieve goals
- We're newly incorporated, but are not a new group –



# FoBL Ancestry

- 1975-1985 – Chamber of Commerce's Hixon Forest Trail Committee
- 1985-1989 – independent
- 1989-2007 – Hixon Forest Nature Center's Hixon Forest Trail Comm./Conservation Comm.
- 2007-2014 – Myrick Hixon EcoPark HFCC
- 2014-2016 – Outdoor Recreation Alliance CC
- 2016-onward – Friends of the Blufflands

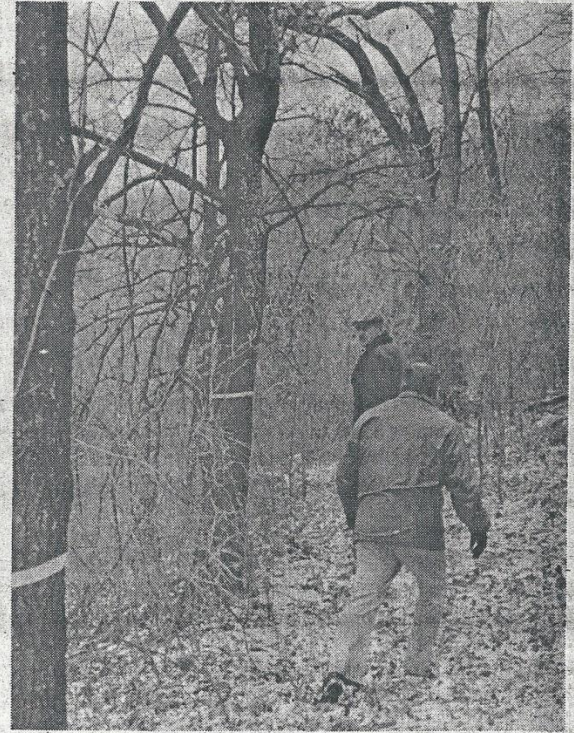


# Bicentennial Trail – 12/1975



en Brown

Ski And Hiking Trail Merge For A Short Distance  
Eugene Fry, Harold Kiehne And John Freisinger Get Ready To Hike



Taped Trees Mark Ski Route Through Woods  
Lack Of Snow Makes Kiehne And Fry Walk

## Trails Open Hixon Forest



# Bicentennial Trail – 12/1975

- From 12/1975 Tribune, Euey Fry:
  - “While some of the [trail] plans lie in the future, the trails in Hixon Forest should make more city residents aware of the scenic and natural area that is within minutes of their doorstep.”
  - “He [Euey] sees the new trails tying in with other parks in the city that could provide a trail across Myrick Marsh from Red Cloud and Myrick Park.”



# River to Bluff Trail – 5/1990



Cathy Acherman of the Tribune staff

**SHOWING THE WAY:** Peg Zappen, right, a volunteer for the Hixon Forest Nature Center, and Pat Caffrey stand by a new sign atop Grandad Bluff marking the head of the Bicentennial Trail on Hwy. FA.

## New signs help lead way for hikers on nature trails



# Who is Friends of the Blufflands?

- Board of Directors
  - Pat Wilson – President
  - Fred Skemp – Vice President
  - Stephanie Hanna – Secretary
  - Pat Caffrey – Treasurer
  - George Arimond
  - Jacob Sciammas
  - Jon Rigden
  - Matt Brantner
- 20 member households
  - And growing, starting now!



# Why is FoBL needed?

- There is no group dedicated to the preservation of our area blufflands. Threats to the blufflands continue to increase
- There needs to be a voice to present the conservation public input to various agencies:



# We partner with

- City of La Crosse Park and Rec Department
  - We work with Sunshine Love, Leah Burns, Jay Odegaard
    - Forest Management Coordinator Position
  - The City's "La Crosse Blufflands Strategic Plan"
  - Environmental Leadership Forum
    - Pat C, Pat W, George A, Matt B participate
- La Crosse County & LAPC
  - We work with Charlie Handy, Tom Faella
    - They hope to hire a Project Coordinator
  - "The Blufflands, A Plan for Conservation and Recreation Throughout the La Crosse – La Crescent Region"
  - Regional Bluffland Coalition
    - Pat C, Pat W participate



# FoBL also partners with

- Mississippi Valley Conservancy
- Outdoor Recreation Alliance
- Department on Natural Resources
- Friends of the Marsh
- Neighborhood Associations
- Prairie Enthusiasts
- Coulee Region Sierra Club
- Coulee Region Audubon Society



# What are we working on?

- Prairie restoration





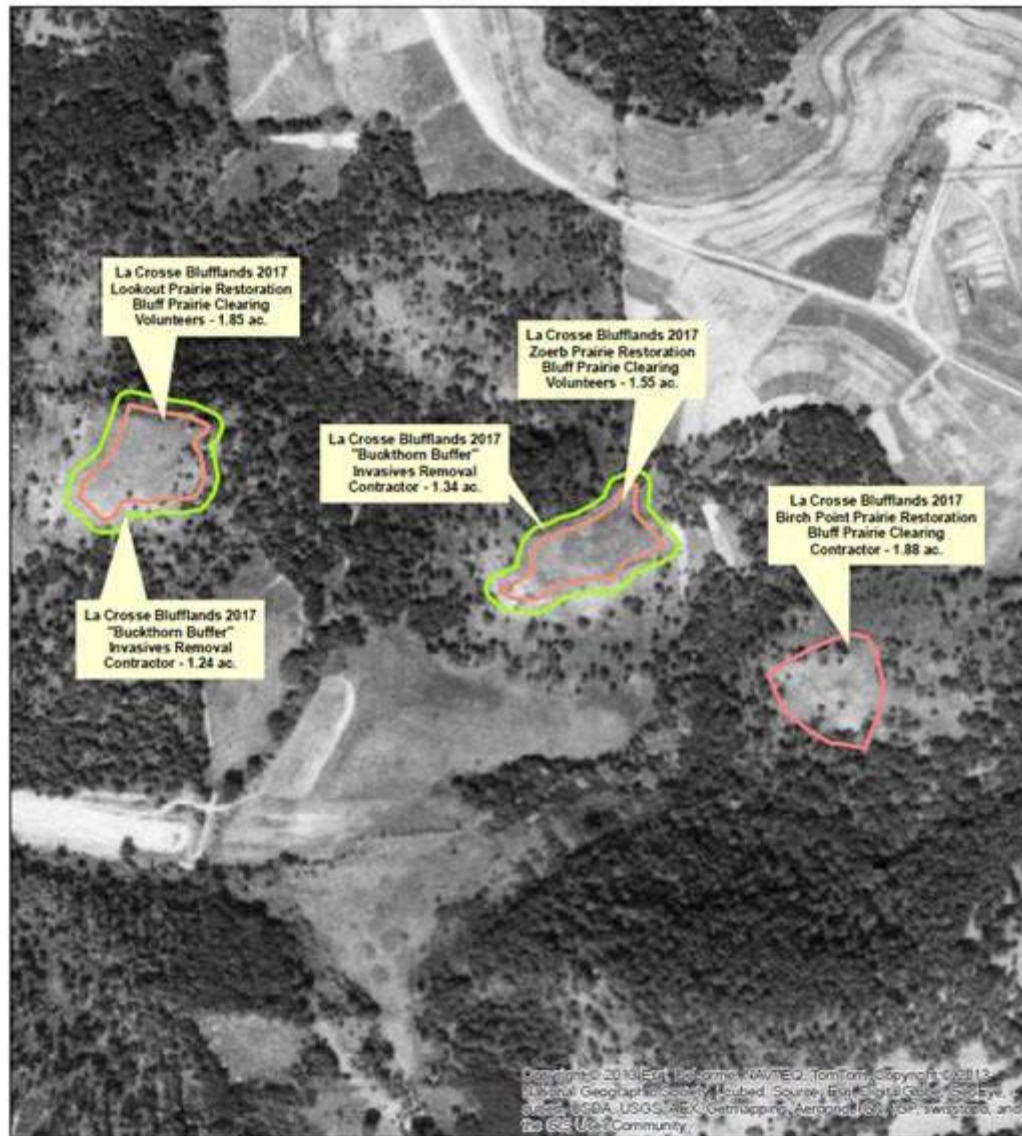


- Miller Bluff as seen from Lake Park [Myrick Park] during high water April 9, 1899



# USFWS Monarch Butterfly Initiative

## 2017 La Crosse Blufflands - Hixon Prairies 1939 Photo



0 125 250 500 750 1,000 Feet



City of La Crosse  
Parks, Recreation, & Forestry

La Crosse County  
Medary Township  
T. 16N - R. 07W Sec. 27  
90° 11' 56.9"W, 43° 49' 49.9"N  
La Crosse Blufflands Focal Area



### Legend

- Project Area
- La Crosse Blufflands 2017
- La Crosse Blufflands
- La Crosse Blufflands Buffer







# What are we working on?

- Prairie restoration
  - Lookout, Zoerb, Thompson/Oak Savannah, Birch
  - Miller Bluff, Mathy, Juniper Partners
  - Pollinator prairie
  - City to contract prairie burns
- Invasive Species Control
  - All over – Buckthorn, Japanese Barberry, Invasive Honeysuckle, Black Locust, Garlic Mustard, Oriental Bittersweet, Autumn Olive,...
- Tree Plantations
  - Reforestation of old fields
    - Two 6.5 acre plots and one smaller one – Fred Skemp
- Education
  - Held Fall 2015 session on use of Hixon for education
  - Resulted in education loop being included in the Vista 2 Trail project







# What are we working on?

- Dry Prairie Restoration
  - Lookout, Zoerb, Thompson/Oak Savannah, Birch
  - Miller Bluff, Mathy, Juniper Partners
  - Pollinator prairie
  - City to contract prairie burns
- Invasive Species Control
  - All over – Buckthorn, Japanese Barberry, Invasive Honeysuckle, Black Locust, Garlic Mustard, Oriental Bittersweet, Autumn Olive,...
- Tree Plantations
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# What are we working on?

- Assistance with trail location and routing
- Protection of species of concern
- Participation in planning for
  - future land acquisitions in the blufflands
  - future trail development in the blufflands
  - future user facilities
- Expanding our activities to a wider geographical area



# What can you do?

- Join
- Participate in Work Outings
- Participate in Public Meetings on Blufflands
- Like our Facebook site so you get updates on activities
  - <https://www.facebook.com/friendsoftheblufflands/>



# Upcoming Work Outings

## Habitat Improvement Volunteer Days: 3 Part Series

- (1) Saturday, February 25, 2017 (#555006-18);
- (2) Saturday, March 25, 2017 (#555006-19); and
- (3) Saturday, April 8, 2017 (#555006-20)

9:00am-12:00pm

Location TBD after sign up

Ages 16+      Min: 5      Max: 20

**FREE (Registration Required)**

Your bluffland ecosystem needs your help! Please sign up for one or all volunteer days. We will be cutting/moving/treating invasive brush, or reclaiming rogue (user made) trails. We will often utilize power tools and small amounts of herbicide. Please come prepared with water, boots, long pants, long sleeve shirts, and gloves/safety goggles if you have them.





# Upcoming Programs

## **Best Habitat Practices for the Driftless Region: 3 Part Series**

**6:30pm-7:30pm**

**Myrick Park Center**

**FREE (pre-registration encouraged prior to each program)**

Please sign up for 1 or all programs! Each program will touch on what you can do to help our environment.

### **(1) Thursday, January 19, 2017-Current Projects (#555009-80)**

Learn about the current ecosystem improvement projects conducted by local groups.

### **(2) Thursday, February 16, 2017-Native, Non-Native & Cultivated Plants (#555009-81)**

What is the difference between a native and a cultivated plant? What is the big deal with non-native plants? What's all the buzz about pollinators?

### **(3) Thursday, March 16, 2017-In Your Backyard (#555009-82)**

Creating a healthy ecosystem in your own backyard using native plants! Come learn the ins and outs from planning to maintenance.

*\*If you attend all three programs and pledge to do one of the action items covered in the series (plant native plants, volunteer with a presenting group, etc.) you will earn a certificate from the La Crosse Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department declaring you a "Hometown Habitat Hero!"*





# Thank You!

