



Hawthorn Hollow Newsletter

Summer 2026

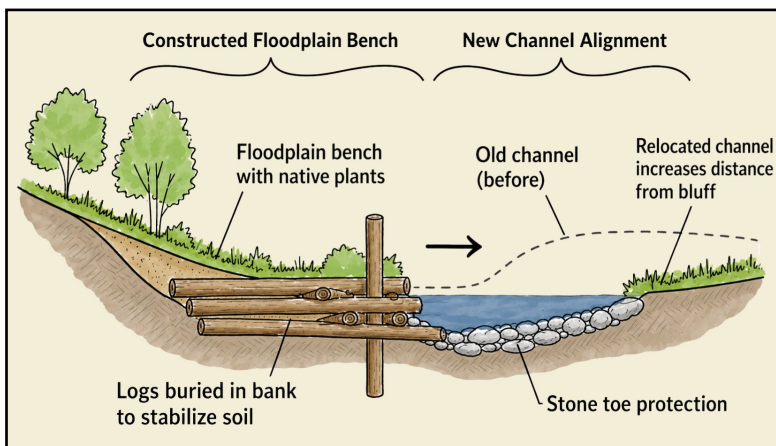
www.hawthornhollow.org

HH'S NEW PIKE RIVER RESTORATION PLAN

A Healthier Future for the Pike River

Over the past year, **Ben Lee of Fish Creek Restoration** has conducted an assessment of the Pike River at Hawthorn Hollow, evaluating the river's overall health, identifying areas of concern, and developing a restoration plan that protects the river's natural character while addressing its most critical needs.

Our portion of the Pike River is overall in good health, with a well-connected floodplain and many natural features that support a thriving ecosystem. Fallen trees and other natural materials provide essential habitat for fish, birds, and other wildlife while maintaining a healthy, functioning stream system. The assessment did identify three bluff areas that contribute excess sediment to



the river, which negatively impacts water quality and habitat.

To address these concerns while preserving the river's natural character, the restoration plan recommends a bioengineered nature-based solution. This will shift the river channel approximately 20 feet away from the bluffs and stabilize the banks using natural materials such as logs, stone, and native vegetation. Doing this will reduce erosion by creating a stable

floodplain bench, mimicking the complex features found in healthy rivers.

We're excited to move forward by establishing a timeline, pursuing funding opportunities, and building partnerships to bring this project to life. We are grateful to everyone who has supported this effort and helped us take steps toward protecting the Pike River for generations to come.

GROWING UP AND OUT AT THE FARM



There's always something new growing at Hawthorn Hollow's Farmstead! This year, our amazing farm team, along with some incredible volunteers, is showcasing creative ways to make the most of garden space while growing a variety of food and flowers. The Farmstead's purpose is to promote healthy eating in our community through educational programs.

Our former pumpkin patch has been transformed into a vertical growing space with an H-shaped tunnel structure. Pumpkins, squash, gourds, and cucumbers are climbing the sides and will eventually cover the tunnels, creating an immersive space for children and adults to explore. It's also a great example of how vertical growing can maximize space and make produce easier to see and harvest.

We rebuilt the Farmstead's teepee using natural branches from Hawthorn Hollow, woven grapevines, and twine. Malabar climbing spinach (*Basella alba*) is being trained to grow up the

structure. Unlike traditional spinach, this heat-loving vine thrives in summer and produces edible leaves with a mild, peppery, slightly citrusy flavor.

Thanks to a grant from **Wild Ones**, we're also stocking the labyrinth with native perennial plants selected to attract pollinators. In our raised beds, tomato plants are being trained using espalier techniques, while our herb garden features a spiral rock bed designed to maximize growing space and drainage.

Thank you to our Farmstead supporters—**Racine Community Foundation, SC Johnson, The Kloss Foundation, and the Milwaukee Brewers Foundation**. Their support makes these educational programs possible. Be sure to visit the Farmstead during your next trip to Hawthorn Hollow and explore some of these unique and interesting growing spaces!



New Faces at the Hollow for 2026

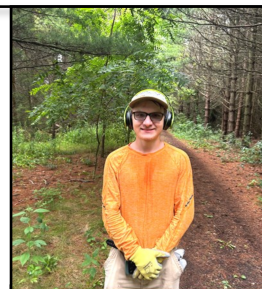


Every summer brings a slew of new folks to the Hollow. From left, John & Junior are working with us through the Boys & Girls Club Youth Employment Program.

Down on the Farm, manager Susan and intern Jesse are working with super volunteers Rick & Gigi, among others, to repurpose the farm to focus on urban gardening techniques. (see front page for more about the farm).

This year, David is mowing the grass and Saul join James working on grounds and maintenance projects around the Hollow as our part-time staff, such as fallen tree removal and painting.

Nicole has been working with Josef, Nick, & Mason on various conservation and ecology projects such as invasive species removal. Thank you everyone for helping at the Hollow!



Making a Splash: A New Pier for Learning & Discovery

Hawthorn Hollow's Pollywog Pond has undergone an exciting transformation this summer with the construction of a new, expanded pier. The project was driven by the growing demand for pond based programs, which reached more than 500 participants in 2025 through programs such as Frogs After Dark, Nature Camp, and Pollywog Pond and Forest Discovery field trips. These field trips were among our most popular offerings, and with interest continuing to grow, the new pier will help us accommodate larger groups and provide more opportunities for hands on learning at the water.

The previous pier was a single, small section that could accommodate only four or five children at a time. During much of 2025, low water levels left the end of the pier nearly six feet from the water, making it difficult or impossible to use for many activities. The new pier includes additional sections and a larger deck that extends down to the water, allowing groups of 20 to 30 students to comfortably gather at once. The pier now extends nearly 20 feet into the water, helping ensure access even during dry periods. This means

students can spend more time exploring and learning instead of waiting for their turn on the pier.

The new pier has also quickly become a favorite spot for observing wildlife. Turtles can often be seen near and underneath the pier, while fish gather around its edges, creating opportunities for up close encounters that were not possible before.

The pier is just one part of the larger transformation taking place at Pollywog Pond. Work to restore native plants and remove woody vegetation along the shoreline is helping create a healthier habitat while improving the space for education and exploration. Together, these improvements are turning Pollywog Pond into a more engaging outdoor classroom, one that can welcome larger groups of students and inspire wonder and curiosity about pond life for years to come.

The pier wouldn't be possible without our generous donors. A huge thank you to Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist Church, Mary Anne Wilkinson, Barb Delaney & Robert Jacobson for their major grants & gifts, and to all the donors who supported this great project!



Volunteer Spotlight: Shelly

By Shelly Nelson

I'm Rochelle (Shelly) Nelson, a lifelong resident of Kenosha who currently lives in Somers, WI with my husband Steven and our dog, Mac. A Registered Nurse with a background in Community Health, I recently retired from teaching nursing at UWM and UW-Parkside.

I play the clarinet and have been a member of the Kenosha Pops Band and the Parkside Community Band for 38 years. Currently, I'm the president of the Nurses Foundation of Racine and also usher for the Racine Theater Guild.



Shelly Nelson

What brought me to Hawthorn Hollow? I attended the art fair and concerts, and was interested in serving concessions at events. The volunteers encouraged me to become a Friend of Hawthorn Hollow and get more involved. I've volunteered 6 years and have been a FOHH board member two and half years.

Volunteering at HH has introduced me to nature and a group of volunteers and staff that are welcoming and fun to work with at the center. I enjoy the community outreach events, concerts, Little Hikers program and school field trips. Socialization and education are my primary interests when it comes to volunteering.

I appreciate the quiet beauty of nature and I've become more physically active exploring Hawthorn Hollow. I can now identify invasive species like garlic mustard as well as native plants. Hawthorn Hollow offers unique experiences for every season!

Hawthorn Hollow's Pike River Benefit

PRESENTED BY THIRD COAST RETINA

CONCERT

ONE WAY OUT
A Tribute to the Allman Brothers Band

FRIDAY SEP 25 6 PM

PRESENTED BY THIRD COAST RETINA IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

BANNER COURTESY OF

Thank you Scout Troop 505!

Troop 505, longtime supporters of Hawthorn Hollow, recently dissolved. Many of their scouts completed their Eagle projects at Hawthorn Hollow over the years. One of their last acts was to donate their remaining financial resources to Hawthorn Hollow. Thanks to everyone who has been a part of Troop 505 for your years of support!



Some recent Troop 505 Eagle Projects include (L) Nate Smith (North Hollow Bridge Restoration, 2023) and (R) Diego Alanis (Wigwam Restoration, 2020)

JOIN US!

SEPTEMBER 26TH 2026, 6:00 - 9:00 PM

Gala Under the Stars

WONDER. OBSERVE. UNDERSTAND.

Celebrating 10 Years of Discovery!

Join the Friends of Hawthorn Hollow Today!



Space Camp was Stellar!

Space Camp at the Heide Observatory recently wrapped up, and it was another huge success! This year, campers had the opportunity to choose between two sessions designed to provide a more focused, age-appropriate experience. Space Camp Explorers welcomed kids ages 8-12 for hands-on adventures in the world of space and astronomy, while Space Camp Innovators was designed for ages 10-14 and placed a greater emphasis on STEM principles. By tailoring each session to the campers' ages and interests, we were able to create engaging opportunities for young explorers to learn, discover, and have fun while reaching for the stars!





HAWTHORN HOLLOW

NATURE SANCTUARY AND ARBORETUM

880 Green Bay Rd
Kenosha, WI 53144



Hoop House at the Farm



ART ~ MUSIC ~ FOOD

Saturday, September 12

10 AM - 4 PM

www.hawthornhollow.org

LATE SUMMER EVENTS

AUGUST

- 8/21: Frogs After Dark*.....6:30 pm
8/22: Planets & Pancakes*.....3:00 am
8/22: FREE Wildflower Walk*.....10:00 am

SEPTEMBER

- 9/5: Ecology Workday.....10:00 am
9/12: Walk in the Woods Art Fair.....10:00 am
9/17: Yoga & Meditation*.....6:00 pm
9/25: Concert-One Way Out.....6:00 pm
9/26: Gala under the Stars*.....6:00 pm

OCTOBER

- 10/03: Ecology Work Day.....10:00 am
10/10: Dragonfire Skies: Draconids*.....7:00 pm
10/23: Spooky Hollow Night 1.....6:00 pm
10/24: Spooky Hollow Night 2.....6:00 pm

*Registration Required

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