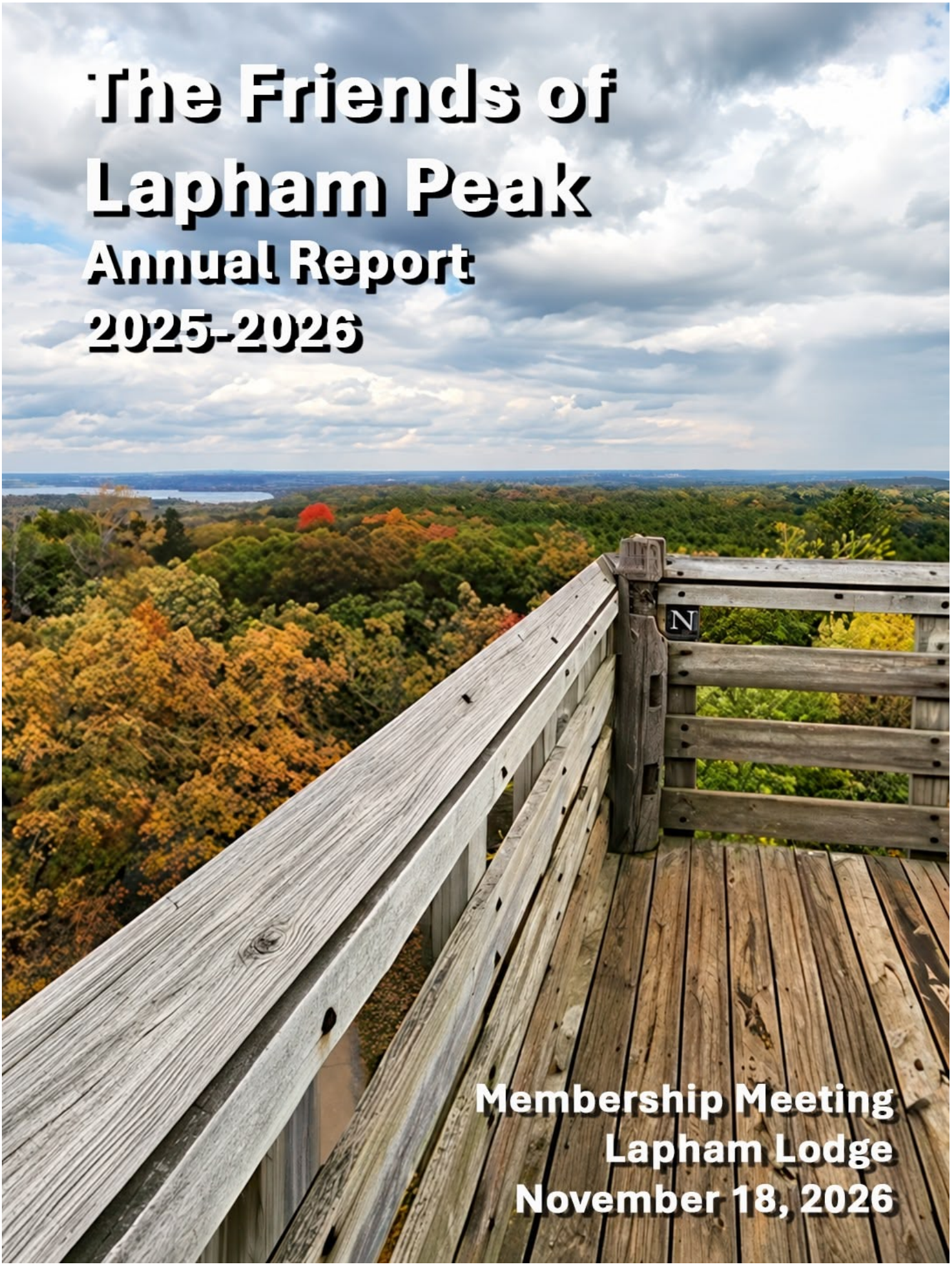
The Friends of Lapham Peak

Annual Report 2025-2026



Membership Meeting
Lapham Lodge
November 18, 2026

Letter from the President



As I reflect on this year, I'm struck by how much Lapham Peak is made possible by people who give their time, talents, and support. Together with our DNR partners, members, donors, and volunteers, the Friends of Lapham Peak helped make this a place to explore, recreate, learn, gather, and return to every season.

At the end of 2025, we summed all the volunteer time that went into it—19,900 hours! That's up from the prior year when we logged 18,200 hours. We don't tally totals again for the full organization until the end of 2026, but I have some impressive numbers though the end of this September.

As an example, approximately 2,000 hours went into snowmaking operations that provided 108 days of skiable snow during the last season, the only option in southern Wisconsin or Illinois. About 55,000 people came to the park in both January and February, 45,000 in March!

Habitat Restoration crews worked year-round, at least three days each week, and contributed over 9,500 hours—up from 8,000 last year. This work includes clearing invasive brush, caring for trails, woodlands, and prairies. The number of volunteers grew to over a dozen each day, so a larger 6-seat UTV was acquired to help transport them and equipment to each day's projects.

We saw Lapham Lodge settle into its role as a year-round community gathering place. It welcomed park visitors and hosted events from the Lapham Loppet to Fright Hike to meetings and weddings. The generosity that built the Lodge continues to support its operation and future care.

At the Hausmann Nature Center, nearly 3,500 visitors enjoyed nature programs and story-times, supported by 670 volunteer hours. The annual Women & Wine in the Woods fundraiser raised over $10,000 for renovations and future projects.

The butterfly garden and brick pathway, bluebird program, ski league & races, run/walks, candle-light hike, and many other activities (hiking, biking, horseback riding) welcomed people of all ages.

Looking ahead, we are planning and fundraising for an accessible path and fishing pier at Lupo Pond, and an improved path to the Nature Center. These projects reflect a simple goal of making more of Lapham Peak accessible and welcoming to more people.

Thank you to everyone who contributed—whether by volunteering, joining FLP, donating, attending an event, or visiting the park. Your support sustains this special place and strengthens its future.

With appreciation,



John Hillmer
President, Friends of Lapham Peak

Friends of Lapham Peak
Mission and Membership

By Rita Keber and John Hillmer

Mission and Organization

Friends of Lapham Peak Unit–Kettle Moraine State Forest, Inc. (FLP) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization incorporated in 1989 (EIN 39-1650068). Our mission is to promote, support, and perpetuate activities at the Lapham Peak Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest. In cooperation with the DNR, we develop and promote outreach, educational, and conservation programs, volunteer opportunities, and fundraising projects that support the park.

Our Board of Directors guides the FLP and coordinates its activities with the Park Supervisor. The Friends sponsor special events, assist with property projects, and provide additional services to park visitors.

Membership

FLP welcomed 34 new members in 2026, bringing total membership to 340: 111 paid annual members and 229 lifetime members. Since the organization began, its membership structure has remained largely unchanged, with individual, family, senior, lifetime, honorary, corporate, and sustaining membership options.

Beginning January 1, 2027, the Board will simplify membership to two levels:

- **Individual:** $30 per year for one person, with one vote
- **Family:** $50 per year for two people, with one vote per person

Both levels include newsletters. Current lifetime members will retain their lifetime membership.

Donations and Park Support

Members receive a tax-exempt letter for their membership contribution. Donations to the FLP and its approved projects may be tax deductible; please consult your tax advisor about your circumstances. When renewing (or at any time), members may also give to Snowmaking, General, Habitat Restoration, Hausmann Nature Center, Butterfly Garden, Accessible Fishing Pier and Path, or the Endowment Fund. Memorial/Recognition Bricks are available for the Butterfly Garden pathway too.

We invite park users to join the FLP, stay informed, and enjoy the park's recreational and educational opportunities while supporting its future. Membership provides a support base that helps the DNR, and strengthens the FLP's grant applications. It also helps the FLP when we work with the DNR on terms and conditions, and when we request changes to park rules or events.

Friends of Lapham Peak
W329 N846 County Hwy C
Delafield, WI 53018
Phone: 262-646-3025
Website: laphampeakfriends.org

FRIENDS OF LAPHAM PEAK

BOARD OF DIRECTORS – CALENDAR YEAR 2026

With Officer Roles Identified

Voting Members – (Term is 3 Calendar Years)		
Name	**Position**	**Last Year of Term**
John Hillmer	President	2026
Melissa Jarecki	Vice President	2027
Karl Timm	Treasurer	2027
Anne Riendl	Assistant Treasurer	2026
Rebecca Burton	Secretary	2026
Christine Ciszek	Voting Member	2028
Mark Fischer	Voting Member	2028
Mark Herr	Voting Member	2027
Steve Huser	Voting Member	2028
Rita Keber	Voting Member	2027
John Kolbe	Voting Member	2028
Kris Maki	Voting Member	2028
John McCarthy	Voting Member	2026
Non-Voting Advisory Members:		
Mike Ring	Natural Resources Property Supervisor	
Sean Daane	DNR Ranger	

Elections are held at the November Annual Meeting of the entire membership. New Board Members begin their 3-year term the following January. Officers for calendar year are elected by Board Members in January.

CALENDAR YEAR 2027

Directors Renewing their Terms (to be voted on)		
Name	**Position**	**Proposed Term**
Rebecca Burton	Director	2027-2029
John Hillmer	Director	2027-2029
John McCarthy	Director	2027-2029

Stepping Down from the Board
Anne Riendl

FINANCIAL REPORT 2025-26

Summary



The overall financial health of the Friends of Lapham Peak is solid with $672,869 in cash assets with each of our core service programs being well funded: Snowmaking, Habitat Restoration, Butterfly Garden, Jarecki Prairie, Nature Center, and the Lapham Lodge. (See the spreadsheets on the following pages for details.) Our usual fundraisers continued to contribute to the organization: Feel the Burn and Colorama run/walks, Women and Wine in the Woods for the Hausmann Nature Center (HNC), Fright Hike, and the Ski Series with the Lapham Loppet. The HNC sells merchandise and charges a small fee for weekend programs, Habitat sells merchandise and makes firewood for donations. These efforts are fundraisers that help with the expenses of their programs and services.

With the construction of the Lapham Lodge complete, there was no need for a formal audit this year as the level of donations and grants dropped below the threshold for this being required. The Lodge no longer needs donations as it has about $200,000 in assets as required by the state to maintain the building and for enhancements as we fine tune the operation of the building.

The Friends group has two major new initiatives this year. The first is providing an updated and accessible pier for access to the Lupo Pond. The second is for an accessible, paved path to the Nature Center from the back side of the building down to the accessible Prairie Path near the Butterfly Garden. In addition, the Snowmaking Committee has been working on ideas to extend the manmade loops in addition to its ongoing maintenance activities.

Vanguard Endowment Fund

At the close of fiscal year 2025–26, the Vanguard Endowment Fund was valued at $98,438.73, compared with $87,662.36 at the October fiscal-year start, a balance increase of $10,776.37. Donations of $650.00 were added to the Endowment Fund this year and are included in the total.

Friends Designated Funds

The FLP has a number of on-going "**permanent**" funds that are used for the expenses of those functions, projects, and services. The following spreadsheet lists these funds and their activities this past fiscal year.

The FLP also has events and fundraisers that create "temporary**"** or "**transient**" funds, such as a run-walk that benefits a project, or the Loppet Ski Race that benefits the Snowmaking project, as examples. Once these events are complete, the proceeds are then transferred into the Permanent Fund for their use.

FRIENDS OF LAPHAM PEAK
STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENSES
Period October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026
Permanent Funds

	GENERAL FUND	SNOW Making	Habitat Fund	Bench Fund	Brick Fund	Butterfly Garden	Jarecki Prairie	Nature Center	Lapham Lodge	TOTAL
BEGINNING BALANCE	99,588.66	139,579.11	17,716.14	4,857.16	9,349.24	3,707.88	12,117.64	46,702.90	220,557.87	569,783.40
RECEIPTS										
DONATIONS	22,270.42	78,825.06	26,631.43		2,772.75	240.00		812.00	39,387.50	181,012.16
MEMBERSHIP FEES	2,700.00									2,700.00
INTEREST	20,704.32								3,750.00	24,454.32
BEVERAGE/FOOD SALES										650.00
DNR/OTHER GRANTS	0.00	400.00	500.00					3,500.00	10,000.00	38,400.00
ENTRY FEES / ADMISSIONS								499.00		88,392.45
MERCHANDISE/MISC SALES			15,091.58					3,563.09		21,080.67
VENDOR FEES										1,500.00
SPONSORSHIPS										7,350.00
MISCELLANEOUS										50.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS	45,674.74	79,225.06	42,223.01	0.00	2,772.75	240.00	0.00	8,374.09	53,137.50	365,589.60
DISBURSEMENTS										
SUPPLIES & EQUIPMENT	9,433.17	20,848.56	32,992.62	40.56		804.47	573.69	3,067.43	12,797.77	87,573.25
CONTRACTED SERVICES	7,316.31	21,052.11	13,684.02				1,764.94	12,666.66	25,704.16	135,927.96
POSTAGE	31.20	16.40	28.79					16.40		199.27
PRINTING	928.55	108.60	286.54					455.63		2,522.19
BANK CHARGES	41.00									41.00
RACEWIRE FEES										0.00
PAYPAL / Square FEES	140.46	287.71	276.33			3.77		277.09	67.73	1,233.60
FILINGS	101.02		20.00					26.00		147.02
INSURANCE	3,330.48	1,080.78								4,411.26
BEVERAGE/FOOD								177.59		3,086.18
AWARDS & BANQUETS										1,427.89
MERCHANDISE/MISC SALES			10,012.93					3,748.13		13,761.06
FUNDRAISING		170.00								1,970.00
ELECTRONIC PRESENCE										0.00
CORPORATE DONATION	500.00							100.00		600.00
UTILITIES		8,811.86								8,811.86
MISCELLANEOUS	90.89									790.89
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	21,913.08	52,376.02	57,301.23	40.56	0.00	808.24	2,338.63	20,534.93	38,569.66	262,503.43
TRANSFER	-3,473.92	14,056.53	14,507.25							0.00
NET INCOME 2025-26	20,287.74	40,905.57	-570.97	-40.56	2,772.75	-568.24	-2,338.63	-12,160.84	14,567.84	103,086.17
ENDING BALANCE	119,876.40	180,484.68	17,145.17	4,816.60	12,121.99	3,139.64	9,779.01	34,542.06	235,125.71	672,869.57

FRIENDS OF LAPHAM PEAK
STATEMENT OF ASSETS, LIABILITIES, AND FUTURE OBLIGATIONS

Fiscal Year 2025-26	9/30/2026 End of Fiscal Year	10/1/2025 Start of Fiscal Year	Change Fiscal Year	Percentage Fiscal Year
CASH				
WAUKESHA ST BANK - SAVINGS	$ 303.37	$ 303.23	$ 0.14	0.05%
IntraFi	$ 462,789.55	$ 368,257.02	$ 94,532.53	25.67%
WAUKESHA STATE BANK - CHECKING	$ 209,776.55	$ 201,223.15	$ 8,553.40	4.25%
TOTAL CASH	**$ 672,869.47**	**$ 569,783.40**	**$ 103,086.07**	**18.09%**
OTHER ASSETS				
VANGUARD ENDOWMENT FUND *(Change and percent excludes new deposits of $650)*	$ 98,438.73	$ 87,662.36	*$ 10,126.37*	*11.55%*
PistenBully	$ 110,119.00	$ 110,119.00	n.a.	n.a.
TOTAL OTHER ASSETS	**$ 208,557.73**	**$ 197,781.36**	**$ 10,776.37**	**5.45%**
TOTAL ASSETS	**$ 881,427.20**	**$ 767,564.76**	**$ 113,862.44**	**14.83%**
DEDICATED FUNDS				
SNOWMAKING (SM)	$ 180,484.68	$ 139,522.86	$ 40,961.82	29.36%
HABITAT RESTORATION FUND	$ 18,141.41	$ 17,716.14	$ 425.27	2.40%
MEMORIAL BENCH FUND	$ 4,816.60	$ 4,857.16	$ (40.56)	-0.84%
ENGRAVED BRICKS FUND	$ 12,121.99	$ 9,349.24	$ 2,772.75	29.66%
BUTTERFLY GARDEN FUND	$ 3,139.64	$ 3,707.88	$ (568.24)	-15.33%
DAN & MELLISA JARECKI PRAIRE RESTORATION FUND	$ 9,779.01	$ 13,322.24	$ (3,543.23)	-26.60%
NATURE CENTER (HNC)	$ 42,707.59	$ 47,202.90	$ (4,495.31)	-9.52%
LAPHAM LODGE	$ 235,125.71	$ 218,853.27	$ 16,272.44	n.a.
TOTAL DEDICATED FUNDS	**$ 506,316.63**	**$ 454,531.69**	**$ 51,784.94**	**11.39%**
TRANSIENT MONIES				
TEMPORARY FUNDS	$ 46,676.54	$ 9,442.04		
TOTAL TRANSIENT	**$ 46,676.54**	**$ 9,442.04**		
NET WORTH (TOTAL ASSETS MINUS TRANSIENT)	**$ 834,750.66**	**$ 758,122.72**	**$ 76,627.94**	**10.11%**
AVAILABLE DISCRETIONARY GENERAL FUNDS (GF)	**$ 119,876.30**	**$ 105,809.67**	**$ 14,066.63**	**13.29%**

2025-26 LAPHAM LODGE UPDATE



By Mark Herr

What a Year!

It is hard to believe that May 17, 2026, marked the one-year anniversary of the Lapham Lodge ribbon cutting ceremony. After four years of design, fundraising, and construction, the 5,000 sq. ft., $2.5 million Lapham Lodge was finally opened. Now, after almost 17 months of occupancy, it is clear that Lapham Lodge is a good investment and great all-season success. From supporting daily Lapham Peak Park visitors, to hosting Friends of Lapham Peak special events and enabling WI DNR rentals, Lapham Lodge is a significant improvement over the former Evergreen Shelter which has been repurposed as a mountain bike and ski rental concession. Lapham Lodge amenities, which were requested by park users during the pre-design phase, included larger accessible restrooms, changing rooms, lockers, kitchenette, audio-video systems, fireplace, Wi-Fi, seating for 125, plus a Multi-purpose Room, patio, outdoor grill and drinking fountain.

Warranty Work and Additional Improvements

The completion of construction in 2025 did not end the work of the FLP Building and Fundraising Committee members: Will Edwards, Mark Herr, Paul Keber, Rita Keber, John McCarthy, Charlie Ritter, and WI DNR Superintendent, Mike Ring. It normally takes a year to work out the bugs in a new building. Over the last twelve months, the Committee oversaw the completion of the final punch list, coordinated warranty work by the building contractors, and added the following improvements to the building and site that were not included in the original bids:

- Added a dial timer to control the gas fireplace.
- Installed acoustical panels at the upper walls of the Gathering Space.
- Installed a Starlink satellite to provide public Wi-Fi internet access.
- Added two additional club chairs and two additional end tables in front of the fireplace.
- Added a portable coat rack.
- Added another Eagle Scout constructed ski rack.
- Installed a large, donated clock on the west wall of the Gathering Space.
- Reseeded grass around the building; watered the new trees and west side garden plants.

Awards and Special Events

This past year, the Lapham Lodge project was entered in the following design award competitions by Galbraith Carnahan Architects and GRAEF Engineers:

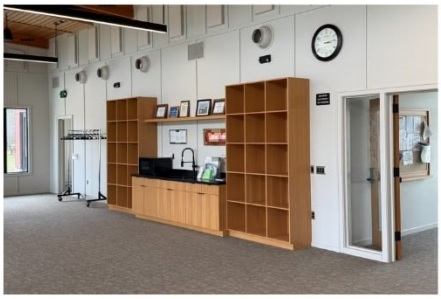
- Association of Consulting Engineering Companies Design Awards- Awarded a “Finalist Award”
- American Society of Civil Engineers WI Engineering Achievement Awards- Award pending
- The 2026 American Institute of Architects Design Awards
- Wisconsin Parks and Recreation Association Design Awards- Award pending

Some notable events hosted at Lapham Lodge in FY 2025-2026 included:

- Friends of Lapham Peak Annual Meeting
- Lapham Peak Ski Club Season Opening Party and Season Closing Party
- Fright Hike
- Lapham Loppet
- Governor's Annual Day of Service
- 2026 Olympic cross country ski medalist Greg Schomacher meet and greet

Fundraising

The Friends of Lapham Peak wish to again thank all of the donors who made Lapham Lodge possible, especially Paul and Rita Keber, whose lead gift of $500,000 launched the project. As of Sept 30, 2026, $3,035,175 has been raised to support the Lapham Lodge project. This includes $143,151 from the Donor Catalog program to cover the cost of furniture and furnishings, and $43,834 from the patio Donor Brick program. In addition to paying for the design and construction cost of the building, the funds raised also cover the first five years of building operating costs and $200,000 for future maintenance and improvements as required by the Memorandum of Understanding between the FLP and the DNR. With funding goals met, as of Sept 30. 2026 the Fundraising Committee has suspended the Donor Catalog and Donor Brick programs. With five spaces remaining on the donor recognition sculpture on the west wall of the Lapham Lodge Gathering Space, there is still an opportunity to donate to the Lapham Lodge project. A gift of at least $2,500 will be recognized on the donor wall. There are also many other Friends projects and programs that one can support including: New Accessible Fishing Pier and Paths, Snowmaking, Habitat Restoration, Hausmann Nature Center, and our Butterfly Garden and bricks there.








2025-26 BLUEBIRD REPORT



The Bluebird restoration program had a good year. While the number of eggs laid were comparable to previous years, the number of bluebirds hatched was the largest in the last four years by 30%. This was probably due to mild weather and success in keeping predators out of the boxes. Most of the boxes had 2 broods in them with a total of 35 bluebird nests, 7 tree swallow nests, and 1 house wren nest.

While bluebirders, in general, work hard to keep other species out of the boxes, such as mice, we found a surprise guest in a box, a Flying Squirrel; we left it alone. We also saw a tree frog in one empty box!

While in past years, we've had a few House Sparrows and Chickadees in our boxes, this year we saw none of those.

Box Type	Box #	Box Name	Bluebirds				Tree Swallows				House Wrens			
			Eggs	Hatched	Fledged	# Broods	Eggs	Hatched	Fledged	# Broods	Eggs	Hatched	Fledged	# Broods
K	1	North of Jay's	4	4	4	1	6	6	6	1				
K	2	Tree Corner					4	4	4	1	5	5	5	1
K	3	Romey's Hillside	9	8	8	2								
K	4	Tree Pasque Flower Hill	11	11	11	2								
P	5	Hill West of jays	5	5	5	1	5	5	4	1				
K	11	Savanna Near Barn	10	10	10	2								
P	12	IAT & Field	7	7	7	2								
P	13	Corner Field	9	9	9	2								
K	14	Top Garlic Mustard Hill	9	9	9	2								
K	15	Timm's Woods					5	5	5	1				
K	A5	Past Timm's Woods	5	5	5	1	4	4	4	1				
K	A6	Bench Overlook					6	6	6	1				
K	16	Big Oak Tree	10	10	10	2								
K	17	Past Driveway Over the Hill					4	4	4	1				
K	18	Romey's Field by IAT Corner	9	6	6	2								
K	40	Halfway Hill	6	6	6	1								
K	41	Needlegrass II	9	9	9	2								
P	42	Accessable Trail Curve	9	9	9	2								
P	43	Butterfly Garden	8	6	6	2								
K	44	Purple Trail	10	10	10	2								
K	A1	South Field (Bottom Big Slide)	9	4	4	2								
K	A2	Pond Overlook (Green Loop Return)	9	5	5	2								
K	A3	Across Steet from Barn	5	5	5	1								
K	A4	Exit Box	9	9	9	2								
		TOTAL 2026	**162**	**147**	**147**	**35**	**34**	**34**	**33**	**7**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**1**
		TOTAL 2025	169	121	84	41	29	22	22	6	4	4	4	2
		TOTAL 2024	155	114	103	37	18	16	15	4	14	14	14	3
		TOTAL 2023	160	114	114	35	29	27	26	6	9	9	9	2

	Box Type
P	Peterson
K	K-Style

2025-26 BUTTERFLY GARDEN REPORT

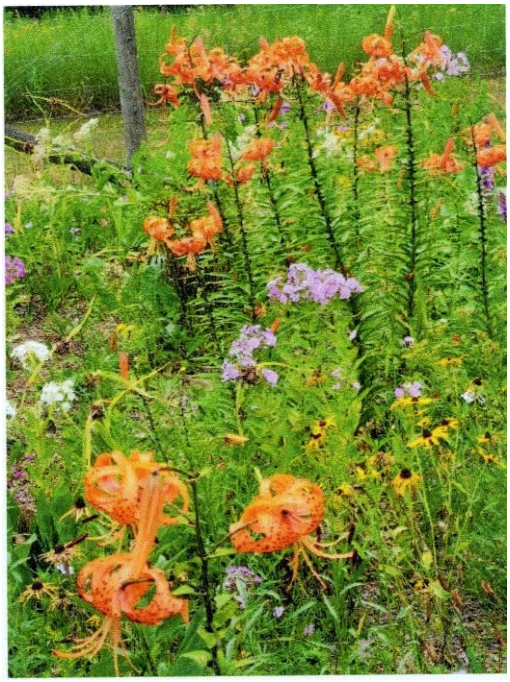
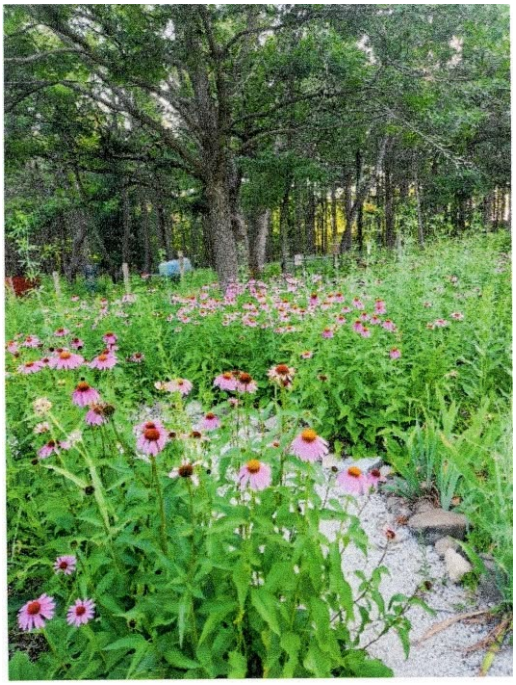




May and June had record amounts of rain, while July and August's lack of rainfall put us into drought conditions. Yet the garden never seemed to notice. From May's daffodils to September's asters, it was glorious – new plants blooming weekly.

We welcome many visitors to the garden daily from school groups to hikers asking questions about certain plants to what I call the "buggy brigade," groups of young mothers with their infants and toddlers in strollers, who use the picnic tables outside the garden to dole out morning snacks after walking through the garden. There is never a dull moment.

As always, donations of time and/or money to the garden are welcome!

2025-26 BUTTERFLY GARDEN PERSONALIZED BRICKS

Becky Burton

SUMMARY

So far this fiscal year we have had 24 brick donations: 13 small and 11 large, plus an additional $208 in donations. Our donors are increasingly choosing the credit card payment option. Despite the service fee of 3.5%, this has been a successful change (started in Q2 last fiscal year).

2025-26 Bricks	Small	Large
Check	4	1
Credit Card	9	10

Our net gain this fiscal year is currently $4,678.75. The set-up fee shown in the table below refers to a custom logo fee, which was paid by the donor.

Item	Amount	Total
INCOME		
Check Payments	$ 938.00	
Credit Card Payments	$ 4,550.00	
Added Donations	$ 208.00	
		$ 5,696.00
EXPENSES		
Brick Fees	$ 827.00	
Credit Card Fees	$ 160.25	
Set-up Fee	$ 30.00	
		$ 1,017.25
NET		**$ 4,678.75**

PROJECT TO DATE

During the entire Butterfly Garden brick fundraiser, which began in October of 2016, a total of 440 bricks have been ordered for a total net gain of $55,761.75.



CHANGES

The cost of the bricks to us increased a bit in the fourth quarter. Small bricks went from $25 to $27. The fee for large bricks increased from $45 to $47. Additionally, we used to get free shipping with a 5-brick order. We now need to order 10 bricks to get free shipping. As a result, we are raising the donation levels from $150 to $175 for small bricks and from $300 to $350 for large bricks.

2025-26 HABITAT RESTORATION CREWS

On weekdays & weekends, volunteers restored habitat, cared for trails, and helped maintain Lapham Peak for every season. About 25 regular volunteers participate in this work. Together, the crews contributed more than 9,500 volunteer hours this fiscal year, up from 8,000 the year before.

9,500+
VOLUNTEER HOURS
Up from 8,000 last fiscal year

1,100+
BRUSH PILES REMOVED
Invasive cut brush cleared from the park

2,500+
ICE AGE TRAIL HOURS
Trail stewardship alongside park work

$15,500
MERCHANDISE SALES
Up from $10,700 last fiscal year

A year of steady progress

The crews worked across woodland, prairie, and trail corridors, with a focus on the hillside between Two-Tier and the Ice Age National Scenic Trail (IAT). Volunteers cut invasive buckthorn, honeysuckle, and autumn olive, removed deadfall, and followed up with herbicide to limit regrowth. More than 1,100 brush piles were removed, opening areas for healthier native growth and a safer park.



One of the many student groups who came out to volunteer with us



Here are a few of the corporate groups who joined us to harvest seeds, clear buckthorn, and plant trees

Restoring habitat and strengthening trails

Woodlands and invasive species

Crews made noteworthy progress clearing buckthorn between the Two-Tier trail and the IAT. Dozens of acres are now visibly open. Some areas were burned for maintenance, and the rest were treated with herbicide. In recent months, crews focused on the woods north of SummerStage and the area east between Tail-End and Magic Carpet Ride, also south of SummerStage and west to the IAT. With buckthorn removed, hardwood trees are visible again, and native plants can thrive.

Volunteers treated regrowth and addressed other invasive plants, including autumn olive, black locust, crown vetch, knapweed, phragmites, and pampas grass.

Prairies and native trees

Good Oak and our trained crews burned 44 acres of prairie and 13 additional acres of woodland. These burns prepared sites for native growth and future invasive species control.

Crews planted more than 100 oak trees over the summer and nearly 100 more in September. They fenced young oaks to protect them from deer and planted native prairie grass. Visiting volunteer groups and our crews harvested bottlebrush grass seed that would have cost more than $2,500; some of this was planted in the woods last March and grew well over the summer.

Trail care and Ice Age National Scenic Trail

The IAT passes through the park, and Habitat crews contributed more than 2,500 hours to its maintenance this year. They cleared invasive plants beside the trail, removed fallen trees, and prepared trail sections for park events. Volunteers also cut hundreds of buckthorn walking sticks for DNR and Ice Age Trail Association groups and prepared stumps for a school blaze-painting activity.







Controlled burns and clearing brush have opened up the woodlands and reduced invasives

Supporting the whole park

Crews also support day-to-day needs across the park, while working year-round on Habitat.

Park operations and visitor care

- Cleared fallen trees and hazardous deadfall from trails, parking areas and roads, salvaging wood for firewood.
- Made snow usually from 11 pm - 3 am; cleared trees & brush for a new Ski Trail.
- Prepared trails and props and produced Fright Hike; supported the Candlelight Hike with lights, firepits, setup, cleanup.
- Maintained memorial benches, including repairs and weed trimming, and cleaned Nemahbin Spring, and around Lupo pond.
- Assisted Eagle Scout projects, helped with the accessible pier project, Colorama, and other park activities.

Fundraising that sustains the work

- Merchandise sales reached $15,500, up from $10,700 last year, generating about $6,200 in profit for Habitat operations.
- Firewood production and donations brought in about $5,300 this fiscal year. Since the program began in 2023, firewood donations have totaled $13,600.
- Fright Hike generated about $11,000 for Habitat this fiscal year, and Feel the Burn provided $900 of support.
- Fundraising helps pay for herbicide, prescribed burns, equipment and repairs; this all makes restoration work possible. This summer, an additional 6-seat UTV was purchased for this work.









Thank you to every volunteer, Ranger, volunteer group, and donor who made this year and this progress possible!

2025-26 HAUSMANN NATURE CENTER

This year, the Hausmann Nature Center was open two to three weekends per month during a season that ran from April to October. Nearly 30 volunteers helped staff the nature center, and we were once again able to support a DNR Naturalist position for this season, thanks to our receipt of the Friends of Wisconsin State Parks Incentive Grant and the continued success of our annual fundraiser, *Women & Wine in the Woods*. The funds raised at our 2025 event and the receipt of this matching grant allowed us to have a reliable DNR partner to help staff the center on open weekends and someone to research new programs. John Ward, our naturalist, was also able to present several programs in his area of expertise: the Glaciation of the Kettle Moraine, Walk with a Naturalist, How to Use a Compass, an additional program on Increase Lapham, and one on the History of the Hausmann Nature Center. We hope to compete for this grant next year and continue this partnership with John.

In addition, the funds raised were added to funds from our general fund and from the DNR, which allowed us to refinish the flooring throughout the Hausmann Nature Center. We added three donated televisions that provide information to guests on upcoming programming and will be incorporated into our upcoming educational display renovation, which we hope to complete during 2027.



We again welcomed nearly 3,500 visitors to the Hausmann Nature Center in this fiscal year. We presented 28 educational programs as well as six Storytimes, which included guest readers such as Delafield's Mayor Tim Aicher. Our programs and events this year welcomed a combined attendance of 694. Some of the programs this year included a Live Raptor Show with Jack Pace and a presentation on Bluebirds by Karl Timm. We learned about tree identification with Jeff Kante, and Helen Holz taught us about Wisconsin Pollinators and Turtles. Linden Reid helped us to identify edible, medicinal, and deadly native Wisconsin plants, and we increased our Girl Scouts programming with three new programs that welcomed 64 scout participants.

We again sold merchandise, including books, hiking medallions and pins, hats, mugs, shirts, and stickers, and created our first mascot, Hoot the Hausmann Owl.

In September, we held the third annual fundraiser called *Women & Wine in the Woods*. We limited our attendance to 150 tickets but provided VIP Early Access for an additional fee. Through generous donations and participation in a fishbowl raffle, silent auction, cork pull, 50/50 raffle, and by-the-glass wine sales, we raised over $10,000 for the Hausmann Nature Center. We plan to

use that money in the coming year on continued renovations to our educational display areas as well as a future project of creating a handicapped-accessible path from the Hausmann Nature Center to the Pine Grove Path, for which we have already received a $1,000 grant from the Greater Delafield Community Fund. All the raffle prizes and wines for the cork pull were donated by local businesses and Friends of Lapham Peak members. Thank you to all who participated and to the wonderful volunteers who helped plan and present this event!

We continued our partnership with Wild Birds Unlimited in Delafield. They continue to donate birdseed and maintenance on our feeders.

We were thankful to welcome previous and new volunteers who spent more than 670 hours volunteering this fiscal year: our Hausmann Nature Center Committee—Melissa Jarecki, Lynn Eschenburg, Linda Davis, Glenn Chadwick, and Kris Gould—and all of you who continue to step up. Our success is thanks to you and all the volunteers who show up every weekend we are open to staff the nature center: Jim and Cathy Wilson, Anna Wilson, Tom Schiessl, Helena Faraca, Jane Krenz, Mary Kay Diderrich, Jill Schultz, Carol Krause, Rita Keber, Kathy Eimer, Nicole Diedrick (who feeds the birds!), Gidget Petty, Kirsten Davies and her children, Kathy Johnson, Janet Plowman, Jeff Kante, Nan and Jim Delwiche, and Peg Oettinger. Thanks to the DNR for all their help this year and also to the board members for their continued support!

2025-26 DAN & MELISSA JARECKI PRAIRIE RESTORATION AND PINE GROVE PATH MAINTENANCE

The Pine Grove Path was plowed multiple times this past winter.



In January and February an area of the Pine Grove Prairie was reseeded. Due to heavy rains in the spring, the area will need to be reseeded again this winter. In May, the prairie was burned. Weeding of invasives is ongoing. The shoulders of the path were reinforced with additional stone and gravel. The path was also resealed in July at no charge due to an ineffective seal in 2025.

In September, the Kubota was used to place candlelight bags for *Women & Wine in the Woods*. Sweeping the path and the Hausmann Nature Center driveway is ongoing. Total Volunteer Hours: 131.8

2025-26 REPORT ON SNOWMAKING

By: John McCarthy

The 2025-2026 season was the **21st** for snowmaking at Lapham Peak. Consistent cooler temperatures made for good snowmaking and skiing conditions. Thousands of skiers enjoyed the best, and sometimes only, skiing in southeast Wisconsin, thanks to the hard work of our snowmakers, groomers, and the DNR, and the generous support of our donors.

Snowmaking Operations – 2025-2026 Ski Season

A late November snowstorm dumped about 8 inches of wet snow on the trails, allowing for limited skiing on Nov. 30th. Snowmaking operations began on Dec. 3rd, with the first segment of the trail opened to skiing on December 5th. All snowmaking loops were open by December 23rd. Snowmaking continued throughout the season, with the last snowmaking on Feb. 6th as a few warm-ups and rain events depleted the snow base. The last day of grooming with the Pisten Bully was March 1st. A snowstorm on March 15th dumped about 9 inches of wet snow on the trails, followed by a quick warm-up. There were 108 days, from start to finish, of skiing on the snowmaking trails.

The rubber tracks purchased last year for the Pisten Bully were used for grooming during January and February, providing a better skiing surface without the deep cutting of the base by the steel tracks. Skiers immediately noticed the difference in the skiing surface after the rubber tracks were installed following the spreading of the initial snow.

There were great skiing conditions on the snowmaking loops throughout the season. Grooming operations generally involved three nights with the Pisten Bully, and three nights with the DNR's Ginzu groomer.

Snowmaking System Improvements and Repairs

A fault in the wire to a pedestal at the intersection of Magic Carpet and Tail End Hill knocked out power to several pedestals on the Woods Loop, necessitating a work-around. Several hundred feet of high-capacity extension cord were purchased and used to supply the power needed by the snowguns for snowmaking on the affected trail. Repairs to the fault were completed this fall.

Rehabilitation of the snowmaking well was completed by Guthrie and Frey in the fall of 2025. The old pump was removed, and the well was cleaned out. A new pump and new well discharge piping was installed, which included lowering the pump deeper into the aquifer, with the goal of increasing the well capacity and shortening the time to fill the pond for snowmaking. The initial work was successful at increasing the well discharge, but not as much as we would have liked. A 'restrictor' that limits the discharge rate was replaced this spring, increasing the well discharge to about 100 gallons per minute. A new well house, including a new concrete pad around the well, was construction by Mike Koester, with help from the Friends and the DNR.

Components of the snowmaking system continue to age, requiring repair and replacement. Two hydrants developed leaks and several others continue to have problems with freezing. These two

hydrants were replaced this fall with new Ratnik hydrants, which we hope will be more reliable than the Rogers hydrants used throughout the system.

The new lights provided at the start area as result of the Lodge project greatly improved the trail lighting in the busiest area of the trail. The new Friends Equipment Shed (aka the 'timing hut') worked well for the management of races on the trail and the convenient storage of the necessary equipment. The Lapham Lodge was a huge success in its first snow season, getting rave reviews from skiers and spectators, culminating in a hugely successful Lapham Loppet.

Overall, snowmaking operation, maintenance, and capital improvement expenses totaled about $70,000 for the 2025-26 fiscal year.

Snowmaking Committee, Snowmakers, and Groomers



Leadership of the snowmaking committee transitioned from Anne Riendl to Jim Marschalek this summer. The snowmaking committee wishes to thank Anne for her many years of service as the committee chairperson and recognize her involvement with the committee since its inception. Thank You, Anne!

The most pressing need for the snowmaking project is for new volunteers for snowmaking operations. Snowmaking needs people to operate the snow guns at times that are often inconvenient, as the best conditions for making snow often arrive in the middle of the night and sometimes on weekends and holidays. The Friends need to expand their volunteer base for snowmaking operations overall, and especially at those times.

There is also a need to add active members to the Snowmaking Committee. The committee needs new members to provide for succession of the committee's functions. Volunteers are needed to help plan, fundraise, operate, and provide technical support for the snowmaking project.

The Friends have much to be proud of regarding the snowmaking project, providing well-groomed snow for skiers of all abilities and supporting programs for youth and adults for the past 21 years, including in 2025-26, when we had what was essentially the only skiable snow in the region for almost the entire season.

The snowmaking committee looks forward to continuing to serve our skiing community and we are grateful for the resources and support that have made snowmaking at Lapham Peak a resounding success.

ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS IN THE WORKS

Accessible Fishing Pier and Path

In 2026, the Friends of Lapham Peak launched a project to replace the aging pier at **Lupo Pond** with a modern, fully accessible fishing pier. Designed to welcome visitors of all abilities, the new pier will meet ADA/ABA accessibility guidelines and make it easier for people with mobility challenges to enjoy fishing and the natural beauty of Lapham Peak.



Sample, not the exact design

The pier will be located on the south shore of Lupo Pond. An asphalt path will connect Lapham Lodge to the pier, providing a smooth, accessible route for wheelchair users and other visitors.

The estimated cost of the pier and path is $65,500, to be funded through donations and grants. The project is currently about halfway funded, and additional support is needed to complete it.

Lupo Pond is designated as an **Urban Fishing Pond** and is stocked periodically by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The Lapham Peak Master Plan specifically calls for an accessible fishing pier at the pond. Installation is anticipated in 2027.

DID YOU KNOW?

Wisconsin Urban Fishing Regulations at Lupo Pond: Fishing is open year-round. During a special spring season, fishing is limited to anglers under age 16 and people with qualifying disabled fishing licenses. Length and possession limits apply, though some are relaxed.

Accessible Access to the Hausmann Nature Center from the Pine Grove Path

The accessible **Pine Grove Path** passes near the east-side entrance at the back of the **Hausmann Nature Center** (HNC). A steep dirt and gravel trail currently connects the path to this entrance. The slope makes access difficult for visitors with mobility needs. During rain, gravel and soil wash onto the paved Pine Grove Path, creating an uneven surface for wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers, as well as additional cleanup.

The Friends have begun fundraising for a gently sloped trail from the Pine Grove Path to the rear entrance of the Nature Center, where visitors can access the building and its elevator.

2026 FEEL THE BURN RUN/WALK

In mid-July this year, Kris Maki again served as Race Director for our Habitat Restoration run/walk, "Feel the Burn." This event took participants on a 5K through the west side prairies. While attendance was down from prior years, it was hot again, but even so after expenses, the event raised $996 for the work that the Habitat Crews do to maintain and further develop the prairies.

2026 COLORAMA RUN/WALK

The 37th Lapham Peak Colorama Run/Walk and Smokey Bear Fun Run enjoyed a beautiful day on October 3rd. A very efficient committee led by Kris Maki: secured a new timer, Trackside Timing, and ordered t-shirts and awards; Jon Jeffords educated Kris on the intricacies of the RunSignUp online registration. Each committee member was tasked with registration, passing out t-shirts, providing water stops, announcing, making treat donations, managing parking, setup, and cleanup. Smokey Bear made his (her) appearance too!.

Final tally was: 163 runners, 38 walkers and 18 Smokey Bear fun run kids

Although attendance has been down due to so many runs now, we did manage to make $4500 for new amenities for the park. This year we plan to support the new walkway from the accessible trail to the Nature Center.

Due to age and health considerations, I am formally retiring from all things Colorama. I do hope the Friends of Lapham Peak will continue this legacy and plan more Colorama events in the future.

Thanks for the memories! Sincerely, Kris Maki



2026 SKI LEAGUE AND LAPHAM LOPPET

The Lapham Peak Ski league includes the Wednesday Afternoon Time Trial headed by Mike Graham, the Wednesday Night K6 kids race, Middle School, and High School races run by Rita and Paul Keber, Sam Edwards, Mary Eloranta, and the adult races headed by Kris Maki, Jon Jeffords, Rita Keber, Paul Keber, Bill Arnold, Ellen DeMers, and Jim and Nan Delwiche. Six events were held thanks to the incredible manmade snow and grooming by many volunteer snowmakers. An end of season awards banquet was held at the Lapham Lodge for the first time with 80 attendees. Attendance at the adult races continues to be impressive with over 90 for the first race of the season.

The Lapham Loppet was also a success due to our incredible manmade snow and facilities. Trackside Timing was contracted to add chip timing to the race for the first time. Due to no natural snow, 149 racers skied 6 laps of the course and Trackside recorded every lap with their efficient system. Our Italian awards were given in a very timely fashion after the final skier finished.

A final accounting shows $11,308.60 transferred to snowmaking from these events!

Many thanks to all who braved the cold to provide a fun activity for skiers.









FRIGHT HIKE 2026

27th Annual Event | October 23–24, 2026

2,638	13	27th
Tickets sold	Community scenes	Year of tradition

THE EVENT

Dry trails and ideal weather made for a memorable two evenings beneath a nearly full moon. With both nights competing against the World Series, attendance was lower than last year; nevertheless, 2,638 tickets were sold.

SPONSORS & FUNDRAISING

Fright Hike's cash sponsors included:

- Zombie ($250): Mama D's, Equitable Bank, Culver's Wales
- Werewolf ($500): Waukesha State Bank, State Farm–Brian Bartz, Albrecht's Sentry
- Vampire ($1,000): Generac, Hupy & Abraham

Local businesses added in-kind donations. Food trucks: Shanahan's Coffee, Doughnation, Sweet Delight Kettle Corn, Big Dawgs, and Costa Cookies—will contribute 25% of their profits. Fright Hike merchandise included T-shirts, hoodies, and stickers.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Cozynook Farms donated 100 pumpkins. The cast party celebrated student actors and volunteers with awards, bobbing for apples, pizza, and treats donated by local businesses: LeDuc's and Delafield Brewhaus root beer floats, Chocolate Factory subs, and Marcus movie popcorn. Dockhounds donated wizard keepsakes for all actors.



SCENES & ENTERTAINMENT

Local groups, families, and performers brought 13 scenes to life. The top three, as voted by attendees:

- 1st: Thunderhorse Acres: Headless Horseman
- 2nd: Waukesha West: Deadmen Tell No Tales
- 3rd: Mukwonago Thespians: Texas Chainsaw Massacre

Other scenes were provided by: KM Jr. Optimist Club; KM Alumni; Milwaukee Danceworks; Kettle Moraine Key Club; Koppen Family; Boy Scout Troop 20; Gold Attitude Dance; St. John's Northwestern Military Academy; Maggie Urbas; and JR Custom Cycles.

Summer Stage featured Step Dog on Friday and Odd Man Out on Saturday. Circus on the Sun entertained guests at the Evergreen entrance on Friday. All bands performed in costume!

THANK YOU

Thanks to Friends of Lapham Peak volunteers, Buckthorn Busters, DNR staff, student actors and teachers, sponsors, Summer Stage, and Ice Age Trail Alliance volunteers. Guests shared many compliments, including:

- *"Everyone did a fantastic job." — Simon S.*
- *"We had a great scary time… Thank you all!!" — Sheryl K.*
- *"Best season yet! Looking forward to next year!" — Donna H.*

GET INVOLVED

To volunteer next year, see Angela Meyer: frighthikepeak@gmail.com, 262-290-8710
Photos: facebook.com/laphampeakfrighthike.

"I am proud to work with Friends of Lapham Peak and Park Staff to organize a festive annual tradition our community looks forward to each year."

— Angela Meyer,
Marketing & Events Coordinator

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

Hello Friends!

What a year it has been! I've learned so much about this property, its people, its happenings, and what makes it so unique as a property within the State of Wisconsin's State Park System.

Park Infrastructure Improvements

We've done a lot of work on Park Infrastructure in the park this past year. Improvements have been made to eroded trails, trail lights, and some of our pit toilets. We've worked on patching some of the roads, repairing the front gates and line striping. We've upgraded water-treatment systems to address iron in the well water where needed. The Park residence has gotten needed repairs and improvements to its chimneys, floors, and fixtures. On the Glacial Drumlin Trail, we've redecked 4 bridges, replaced doors and fixtures in Sullivan, Wales, and Dousman rest stops. We've worked to repair the many washouts on the GDT as well.

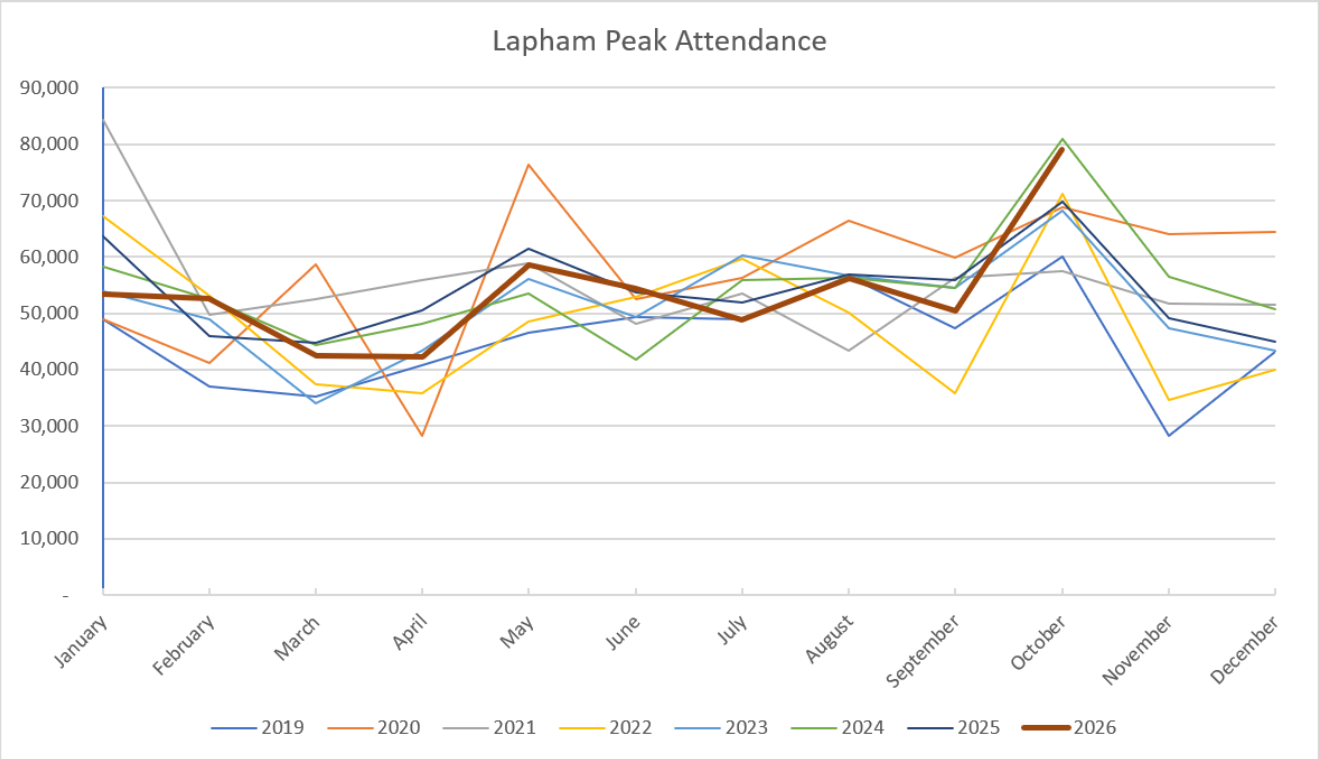
DID YOU KNOW?

Park staff are responsible for more than just Lapham Peak! Their work also includes maintaining the Glacial Drumlin Trail from Waukesha to Sullivan.

This year, we've completed over $160,000 in Development Project Infrastructure Repairs on Work Unit properties. I'm excited to see what gets funded in the future through this process.

Lapham Peak Attendance

Lapham Peak is always busy, and the numbers are adding up to prove it.



Where most other properties see a dramatic slump in visitors in the winter, Lapham remains steady or increases. October remains our busiest month, however. If we finish the year on average, we'll host over 634,011 people at Lapham Peak.

This past September, our long-time Ranger, Collin Bergholz, transferred to KMSF- Southern Unit. His vast institutional knowledge and skill will be missed. Also, this past year, Deb Lox and Parker Chastain have both moved on in their careers from the DNR. We wish them all the best in their new roles!

A Busy, Dedicated Park Community

As I've gotten to know this place for the past 18 months, I'm constantly astounded at the great work being done here. Summerstage actors working in the heat, Nordic Specialists always seeming to be open, The Buckthorn Busters here 3 times a week and more, Angie prepping for Fright Hike, Mike working most weekends making buckthorn disappear, Dan's hours maintaining the ever-popular paved path, Melissa coordinating and improving the Hausmann Nature Center year after year, countless work days, making snow and ski events, running events, aerialists at the Lodge, Butterfly Garden in bloom, and even a visit from the Governor and all his staff… this place is always teeming with activity. I always feel lucky to be here and am never afraid to talk up this very special place.

A Personal Reflection

One anecdote I'll share- when I started the role, I shared that I ski and did the Prince Haakon at the Birkie once. So, when I started to train for my first Kortelopet, I was here a lot. I saw the community firsthand, and kind of joined in. Fast forward to Kilometer 28 of 30, I was in rough shape, just chugging along terrible snow on a frozen lake, hearing cowbells at the finish line downtown. Then, someone I didn't recognize said, "You're Mike from Lapham! I ski there!" and tried to engage me in conversation. It hit me there, on that frozen lake, that I was a small part of something bigger. Lapham Peak is a lot of things to a lot of people, and I am proud to help be a small part of its legacy.

