

Laudato Si' Project

Newsletter

Restoring Our Natural Connection



***Mission:* To restore humanity's connection to the natural world through education, stewardship and recreation**



Winter 2018

Meet Our New Volunteer Educator

We are happy to welcome Steven Schwartz to our Laudato Si' Project team. Steven is a member of St. Theresa of Calcutta Parish in North Lake and an outdoor enthusiast.

Steven has an extensive background in natural resources. He received a Bachelors of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point where he studied wildlife ecology and wetland science. He is currently attending master's classes at the UWM School of Freshwater Sciences.

Steven has already volunteered for several LSP programs like our high school retreat for St. Catherine of Alexandria Students at Holy Hill, during which students participated in a morning of learning how to Live *Laudato Si'* and taking a faith-based ecology hike on the Ice Age Trail. He has volunteered doing



Steven leading a hike at Holy Hill for St. Catherine of Alexandria High School retreatants.

trail maintenance on the Ice Age Trail on several occasions. Steven will also lead some of our stewardship groups at various sites. We are blessed to have Steven join us.

-Joe Meyer, Executive Director

Laudato Si' Project

laudatosiproject@gmail.com

www.naturecatholic.org

5443 Shannon Road Hartford, WI 53027

262-308-6641

Kestrel and Bluebird Nestbox Initiative

The American Kestrel is North America's smallest falcon. It is about the size of a mourning dove and is usually seen when hunting from an electrical wire perch.

Unfortunately, it has declined nearly 50% over much of its range since the 1960's. Thankfully, kestrels readily nest in man-made boxes, making their recovery possible. Thanks to our volunteers, Laudato Si' Project is placing kestrel nest boxes on many southeastern Wisconsin properties.



Bluebirds are a favorite bird for many Wisconsin residents but several decades ago they suffered substantial declines due to nest site scarcity. Normally, a bluebird would use an old woodpecker cavity for a nest site but the number of large dead trees has declined. Luckily, bluebirds are easily attracted to bird houses.

This Spring, volunteers and Boy Scouts will be helping Laudato Si' Project put up over 3 dozen bird houses all over southeastern WI. Some of these sites include Schoenstatt Retreat Center, Daniel Boone Conservation League, Tall Pines Conservancy's Camp Quad Easement and Heiliger Huegel Ski Club. Many of our nest boxes are made from scrap lumber salvaged from construction sites.



Some of our Peterson Style Bluebird Boxes



Kestrel Nest Box



Exciting New Partnership

Wanakia Wildlife Rehabilitation Center



We are proud to begin our new partnership with Wanakia Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. The Richfield-based center takes in injured animals with the ultimate goal of being able to release them back into the wild.

Our partnership with Wanakia will allow us to offer live animal ecology programs to many of the schools and organizations we work with. Wanakia's current educational animals include a red-tailed hawk, screech owl, saw-whet owl, great horned owl, turkey vulture and opossum.

Mammal Monitoring

We think of small mammals hibernating in winter but many were active all winter. Laudato Si' Project is beginning some small mammal surveys using live traps in order to gain understanding of what lives in certain areas and how many. The goal is also to create programs open to the public so they can see many of these amazing critters up close. This also gives an opportunity to students interested in conservation work to see the ways in which research scientists monitor and study these animals. Our target species include: meadow vole, short-tailed shrew, meadow jumping mouse, woodland jumping mouse, deer mouse, 13-lined ground squirrel and flying squirrel.



Captured Meadow Vole

Sherman Live Trap



Lent with *Laudato Si'*

As we live Lent this season, we do so with the structure of the 3 pillars of lent; **Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving**. These actions of self-denial orient us toward the Creator who is the source of all life and true happiness. Many of our transgressions against God and one another stem from a distorted understanding of our place in this world. When we forget our rightful place as creature and not Creator, we focus only on ourselves and neglect our prayer life, our role as stewards of creation and service to one another. We can also use the **4 Cardinal Virtues** as a guide to reflection about our personal stewardship ethic.

Justice: What is owed my neighbor?
What is owed to generations yet to come? How are we going to hand on this Creation that we have been called to steward?

Temperance: How can we restrain our consumption and constant desire for more? How can we simplify our lives to make more room for God?



Prudence: What is the true cost of our actions? Is our conscience formed by our Faith? Do we guide our families and those around us to more sustainable choices and lifestyles? Do we give thanks for what we have been given?

Fortitude: Do we have the perseverance to live more simply and the courage to be counter-cultural? Do I have the strength to remain hopeful amidst the hardships and injustices in our world?

A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal.

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*



Congrats to New Eagle Scout Sam Reinbold



Pictured: Alex Reinbold, Joe Meyer, and Sam Reinbold

Sam Reinbold completed his Eagle Scout with Laudato Si' Project this past summer. His project completed the woodland nature trail at Schoenstatt Retreat Center in Waukesha. He cleared invasive species, mulched the trail, placed tree identification signs and installed a bench. His award ceremony was in February.

LSP 2 Year Anniversary

LSP Board of Directors

What a wonderful journey it has been. In these 2 years, we have accomplished: **162 hours** of educational programming, **986 volunteer hours** of stewardship work in WI and **62 hours** of recreational outings.

Our partnerships with schools, parishes and organizations are growing and all of this would not be possible without your prayers and support through membership.

Nate Lasnoski *Chairman*
Ryan Grusenski *Secretary*
Andy Schoofs *Treasurer*
John Azpell
Matt Vogel
Quentin Maxwell

Thank You!

Upcoming Events

****Dates are subject to change: call if interested or check facebook for up to date information*

March

Sat. March 17th: Bluebird and kestrel box installation at Daniel Boone.

Sat. March 24th: Bluebird nest box installation at Camp Quad.

April

Sun. April 15th: Sustainability displays at St. Gabriel Parish, Hubertus.

Earth Day Sat. 21st: Check out our Facebook page for ways to get involved.

June

Sat. June 2nd: Planting of Ralph Schoofs educational butterfly garden.

TBD: "Bioblitz", learn all the different ways scientist monitor animals/plants and take part hands-on.

By The Numbers: Winter Care for Our Common Home

Education

Laudato Si' Project has conducted **12 hours** of presentations, interpretive hikes and educational tours.

Stewardship

Laudato Si' Project has contributed **56 volunteer hours** in stewardship projects to better the ecological value of our world's outdoor places.

Recreation

Laudato Si' Project has sponsored **7 hours** of recreational outings to visit, explore and learn about our natural world.

Laudato Si' Project is a 501(c)3 tax deductible organization that depends on membership and donations to continue its vital mission. Thank You!