

southern wisconsin
BIRD ALLIANCE



formerly Madison Audubon

VALUES

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Southern Wisconsin Bird Alliance works to protect and improve habitat for birds and other wildlife through land acquisition and management, education, and advocacy.

The mission statement above is a formal way of saying that everything we do is for birds and the people who love them. Birds are amazing and bring so much joy and benefit to our lives! We acknowledge that everyone who loves birds wants to protect them for different reasons. To help advance our shared mission of bird conservation, we offer our organization's core values: Respect, Community, Curiosity, and Accountability. Diversity, equity, inclusion, and access are vital and powerful elements of the Southern Wisconsin Bird Alliance's (SoWBA) team approach, and are thus interwoven through each value listed here.

In order to have a meaningful conversation about values, we weave a love of nature and a respect for diversity, equity, inclusion, and access into all of our work. In our organization, *diversity* refers to the variety of ethnicities, races, sexual orientation, socioeconomic statuses, ages, and mobility challenges of our community. *Equity* means ensuring that everyone who wants to be involved knows how to participate. *Inclusion* means voices are heard, considered, and encouraged in planning, execution, and feedback. *Access* refers to proactively working to reduce barriers for community members that are often excluded due to race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, and more. Where historically marginalized communities are listed, the identities of the ethnicities are named by the communities themselves or as listed by the U.S. Census Bureau.

RESPECT... for nature | for people | for differences

SoWBAs primary guiding principle is a reverence for nature and recognition of its importance for all people. We appreciate and support the varied ways people respectfully engage with nature. We take time to listen to everyone, and we listen to understand and evolve.

What this means for us:

- We steward land professionally to provide high-quality native habitat for wildlife.
- We acknowledge that SoWBA sanctuaries are on the ancestral land of Wisconsin's tribal nations, particularly the Ho-Chunk Nation, and that they were forcibly removed from this land. We seek to build and grow partnerships with tribes in order to learn from each other, collaborate, and advance our shared work.
- We are curious about what makes people care about nature, and seek to recognize and remove barriers that prevent enjoyment of nature. We welcome all individuals who share these values, and foster people's natural curiosity.
- We know that conservation is a broad effort that is most sustainably and most ethically done in partnership with the full community.
- Our staff and board members show respect, compassion, and courtesy to each other, creating an inclusive and progressive culture that extends outward to the larger community.
- We honor and respect how people identify.

What this means for you:

- Our activities and sanctuaries are designed to welcome, enrich, and inspire people to take action.
- The land we steward will offer recreational opportunities, outdoor learning, ecosystem services, and other natural benefits.
- Your ideas and thoughts are valued.
- Your feedback in helping to make events, trips, and meetings more accessible and inclusive will be welcomed, heard, and considered.





COMMUNITY... natural community | birding community | social community

We seek effective and sustainable conservation of nature that engages and benefits an inclusive, joyful, and vibrant community of people. We affirm that nature is for everyone and diverse experiences and perspectives yield creative, inclusive, and enduring methods for conservation. We work to build lasting relationships with the full community, particularly with those who have been historically excluded.

What this means for us:

- We restore and protect our sanctuaries' natural communities and invite all to respectfully enjoy them.
- We foster spaces where everyone in our community is welcome, safe, and encouraged to be curious.
- We develop long-term, collaborative relationships with our local community of schools, teachers, neighborhood centers, volunteers, partners, and more.
- We seek proactive and authentic engagement with *all* communities of people, including but not limited to Black and African Americans, Native Americans and First Nations, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, Caribbean Islanders, Latino/a and Latinx, Asian, Middle Eastern, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+, and individuals from all socioeconomic levels.
- We use accessibility best practices in our communications to include all who wish to engage with the information we provide.
- We continue to diversify our organizational community through fair hiring practices, board recruitment, partnerships, and volunteer participation. We proactively and continuously work to overcome issues of access and equity faced by many communities.

What this means for you:

- A fun, supportive, and encouraging place for you in nature!
- An inclusive variety of programs and recreation for you to experience and enjoy.
- Opportunities for you to engage in land stewardship and conservation through volunteer work, citizen science projects, and advocacy for important conservation issues.
- Genuine and respectful relationships between you, SoWBA, and fellow conservationists.

CURIOSITY... in nature | in each other | in new approaches

SoWBA believes that continual learning and growth are required to anticipate and respond to conservation challenges. We incorporate sound science, expertise, strategic thinking, and community knowledge in our decision-making. By encouraging creativity and innovation, we support the curiosity of people of all ages and work to understand and embrace the varied ways people engage respectfully with nature.

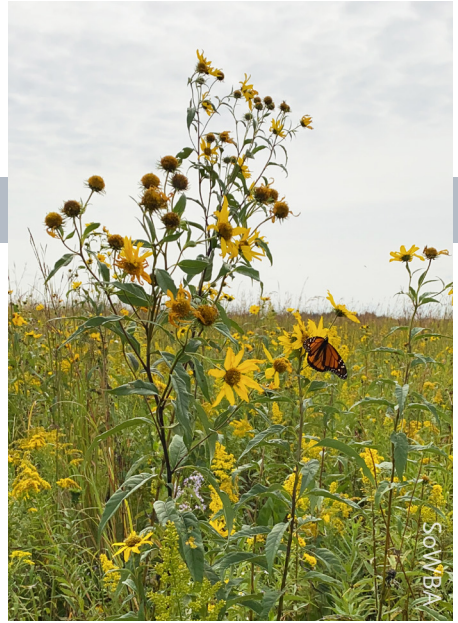
What this means for us:

- We seek the best available science and practices to inform our work. We are always curious about birds, nature, places, and people.
- We assess and improve our organization and how it impacts conservation and the community.
- We build new partnerships within our entire community.
- We provide enriching opportunities, mentorship, and resources for future educators, land stewards, and conservationists.
- We foster the professional curiosity of staff and board, encouraging them to explore and learn from our natural world.

What this means for you:

- Creative and immersive field trips and events designed to be fun, accessible and inclusive.
- An open invitation to visit and enjoy our protected natural places.
- Innovative, adaptive programs and communications.
- Experiences and resources that spark learning and joy in birds and conservation.





ACCOUNTABILITY... to our community | to our mission | to nature

We are a transparent, ethical, and effective organization committed to serving our mission, members, and community. Integrity is foundational to our shared work. As a nationally-accredited land trust, SoWBA operates with the highest standards for excellence, upholding public trust, and permanent land protection.

What this means for us:

- We do what we say we are going to do, and hold ourselves accountable.
- We practice the highest standards of governance, professionalism, financial management, and transparency.
- We promise respectful, responsible, and intentional stewardship of our resources which have been generously provided by donors, volunteers, grantors, and others.
- We listen to learn, grow, and innovate. We value constructive feedback that helps us meet and exceed our own high standards.
- We proactively and earnestly seek ways to improve and be more inclusive, equitable, and accessible for all who enjoy nature and birds.
- Our actions and partnerships advance policies, initiatives, and solutions that align with these values.

What this means for you:

- Reliable information on conservation issues and practices to advance our shared mission.
- Professionalism and integrity from SoWBA staff, board, and valued volunteers.
- Continuous and growth-oriented allyship with historically marginalized groups and people of all identities.
- Open access to our organizational policies, procedures, and financial documents.