

## 2023 Dahlem Spring Newsletter

We love being immersed in the seasons and the weather at Dahlem. Sometimes the changes are slow and subtle. Sometimes it feels like the season is going backwards, even the crocuses in our beds retreat a little with the late snows. But if we keep watching we see the crocuses open back up, joined by the irises and soon the daffodils, maples and willows. If we listen, we hear the spring peepers croaking and the song birds creating a courtship chorus.



In the midst of clearing downed icy trees and branches we held our Maple Madness which provided a look into why we are able to harvest maple sap and how we make maple syrup. Thank you to all that volunteered for the event and those that came out to brave a chilly day. We were able to expand this program to more schools this year and share the magic of maple syrup.

We also had an opportunity to sample some delightful local chocolate sweets as well as food provided by Stoyanna's at our annual Chocolate Sensation event at the JSO Weatherwax Hall. The Chocolate Sensation was one of our most successful events ever thanks to our loyal sponsors at MACI, Richmond Brothers, Lammers Heating and Cooling, and JTV. Special thanks to the staff and volunteers that made this event possible and especially Kathryn Keersmaeker who has done a fabulous job of organizing this event for many years.



Volunteer Trail Leader Training is April 4, 9am-12 noon for adults interested to help lead outdoor school programs at Dahlem. Teachers from preschool through grade 5 are planning and registering their classes for spring field trips. We will review the lesson plans, equipment and take a short trail walk. Program themes include aquatic studies, birds, frogs & toads, signs of spring, who lives there, and trail hikes for observation and discussions.

Pretty soon we'll be catching frogs at the Night of the Amphibians on April 28, and learning about and looking for woodcock during the Woodcock Night Walk on April 13. Have you ever seen a woodcock? Our Naturalist is checking with our woodland friends to visit their favorite hiding spots.

The Dahlem Little Acorns Nature Preschool is headlong into spring taking their nature hikes and playing outdoors. Next year's classes are all but filled up and we have been able to expand the 4 yr. old music program through the spring with a generous donation. We have also completed our survey with parents who also let us know of the need to invest in a parking lot resurfacing and to refresh / expand a well-used playscape area.

Another sure sign of spring is the activity at the Ecology Farm on Wickwire Road where you'll find gardeners that spent the winter reading seed catalogues starting their early season vegetables. And in the apiary next door, you'll soon see new hives of bees from the Beginning Beekeeping class and groups of beekeepers in white suits learning the art and science of beekeeping.



Dahlem is known as a pollinator friendly nature area. We have over 30 acres of pollinator crop planted in the field at the corner of Wickwire and Browns Lake Road and have plans in place to work with NRCS grants to expand our pollinator crop acreage. We are delighted that the City of Jackson will be joining us in observing 'No Mow May' (backyards unmowed, front yard up to 8 inches high – plenty for pollinating plants). If we can leave our lawns unmowed until the beginning of June, collectively we can add hundreds of acres of food source forage for pollinators at a time of year when they are building up their numbers and food stores so they can survive next winter. We plan to have signage to identify what we are doing and why. I hope you will join us in supporting this initiative by creating your own pollinator friendly yard and by educating the community on the benefits of No Mow May and a pollinator friendly yard.

The Outdoor Adventure Summer Day Camp is always fun and those spots are filling up quickly. Check out [www.dahlemcenter.org/adventure-camp](http://www.dahlemcenter.org/adventure-camp) or call the office to reserve your spot! We are hiring seasonal summer camp counselors (18+ years old) who enjoy and have experience working with children and leading outdoor activities. Print the camp employment application form from the website and follow the instructions to apply.

Come join us for JCCD's Earth Day Celebration On April 22 in the Park from 1-4 pm at Sparks Foundation County Park, by the fishing pond and amphitheater. And mark your calendar for our favorite end of summer event at Dahlem - the Birds, Blooms and Butterflies Festival on August 12.

If you'd like to help spruce up the grounds, there's always plenty to do at the Dahlem Work Bee on May 6. Come on out and join us for a morning of weeding, wood splitting, rock piling or cleaning bird feeders. Lunch is provided. Please let us know if you can make it so that we can order lunch for you. Easy online registration is available.

Starting April 10 we will have a new Executive Director, Hannah Schauer! Hannah is an enthusiastic environmentalist with a degree in wildlife ecology and environmental education. Hannah served the state DNR and led the development of wildlife focused education and outreach programs. Hannah is excited to build upon the strong foundation of the Dahlem Conservancy to offer programs and opportunities for people to connect with nature.

It has been my honor and pleasure to serve Dahlem these past months as the interim Executive Director and will continue to serve on the board. Your support for Dahlem has been one of the most inspiring experiences of my life. We are in good hands with Hannah's appointment and brings a bright future to Dahlem.

Thank you,  
John Haynes  
Interim Executive Director