

1000 ISLANDS ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

1000 ISLANDS COMMITTEE

City of Kaukauna

Nature Center Building

1000 Beaulieu Court, Kaukauna

Thursday, April 16, 2026, at 6:30 PM

MINUTES



Members Present White, Breitzman, Eggleston, Hietpas, Timmons, and VanBerkel

Not Present West, Manion, Jakel

Also Present Brad Garrity and Cassandra Kohls

Breitzman called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM. A quorum was present.

Public Appearances None

March 19, 2026, Committee Meeting Minutes

VanBerkel requested the following revision to the March 19, 2026, minutes:

- Under the Friends of 1000 Islands Report, add volunteer Kurt's last name "Dorow".

Eggleston moved to approve the minutes with this correction, seconded by Timmons. Motion carried.

March Financial Report

VanBerkel noted that the year-to-date percentage of budgeted amounts requires correction. The Committee voted to table the March Financial Report and revisit it at the next meeting. Motion by White, seconded by VanBerkel. Motion carried.

Correspondence None

Friends of 1000 Islands Report

The sap collection season has concluded, resulting in approximately 12 gallons of maple syrup—sufficient to meet the Friends' needs. This year, the reverse osmosis system was upgraded from two small filters (120) to one larger filter (400). Plans are in place to further upgrade the system in 2027 by adding an additional large filter to increase processing speed and reduce cooking time. The Committee discussed the potential future establishment of a maple stand and a piped sap system in the Upper Woods.

Planning is underway for the Nature's Images Art & Craft Fair scheduled for May 17.

The Pancake and Porkie Breakfast generated \$900 less in profit compared to last year. Billion Nature Center also reported lower attendance at their breakfast event. Overall, this year's event ran smoothly, with no lines forming for breakfast. Hietpas assisted in the kitchen, and Kurt Dorow helped with sap cooking.

March Naturalist Report

Garrity reported that co-op student, Lilah Novak, has been volunteering and performing excellent work. A total of 40 applications were received for the Naturalist Intern position. From those, 12 phone interviews and three in-person interviews were conducted. Garrity announced that Payton Chevalier was selected and has accepted the position, with a planned start date prior to Memorial Day. Garrity thanked the City Council for approving an increase in the intern wage. The intern position was restructured to be less education-focused and to provide more hands-on experience working within the Conservancy Zone.

The Bird City USA application has been submitted and is currently awaiting approval. Bird City designation reflects the City's commitment to supporting bird populations through initiatives such as observance of Migratory Bird Day, native plantings, issuing a proclamation, and public education. Kaukauna has maintained "High Flyer" status for four consecutive years.

Jennie Rumbac has resigned from the 1000 Islands Committee.

Garrity, along with Library staff, participated in Hoot Con, sharing information about planting a Three Sisters garden at 1000 Islands.

A total of 188 animals were surrendered during the J&R Aquatics exotic pet surrender event. Eggleston asked about the surrendered animals, and Garrity explained they are rehabilitated and rehomed. Per Nature Center procedures, only native species may be kept as resident animals at 1000 Islands. Garrity reported efforts are underway to acquire a milk snake to add to the resident animal collection.

The Last Light Hike was rescheduled to a Monday evening and is estimated to have drawn approximately 150 participants, with additional visitors likely enjoying the trails that night.

The Goat Team met, and White developed a new t-shirt design. Pautz collaborated with PBS *Wisconsin Life* on a feature about the Nature Center and goat program, scheduled to air on June 9.

Garrity extended thanks to sponsors, volunteers, and Friends of 1000 Islands members for their support of the Pancake and Porkie Breakfast.

Ron VanderVeldon hosted a well-attended book signing; Nature Center building rental fees were waived for the event. His book is available for purchase in the Nature Center gift shop and on Amazon for \$20.

Garrity, Gonnering, and Hietpas collected the majority of the maple sap this season. Maple syrup sales have been strong in the gift shop.

Danah Stumpf approached 1000 Islands regarding the installation of a new battery collection box at the Nature Center.

Garrity thanked Jennie and Mike Eggleston for donating a trailer to the Nature Center.

The Committee reviewed the first quarter usage report.

Sub-Committee Meetings

Admin-Finance Sub-Committee - No meeting.

Education Sub-Committee

Garrity presented an overview of the upcoming summer educational programming. The Education Sub-Committee discussed volunteer staffing needs to support large field trip groups. Timmons requested dates for the larger group visits, which Garrity will provide. Programming is currently filled through August. Garrity also reported plans to pursue a master's degree with a focus on community conservation.

Building and Grounds Sub-Committee – No meeting.

Old Business

Vestibule plans were shared with the Committee. Garrity stated Council approved the project to go for bid and plans will be shared on an online contractor website. The project will conclude by October 2026. Estimated completion will take a few weeks from the start of construction. Probable cost analysis of \$36,600. The Capital Improvement Plan had costs estimated up to \$60,000. VanBerkel asked about the texture of the flooring and if it would be easy to clean. Garrity will take that into consideration during the conversation with the contractors.

New Business None

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Good for the Center None

Next Committee Meeting

The next Committee Meeting will be on Thursday, May 21, 2026, at 6:30 PM in the Nature Center building.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Hietpas moved to adjourn the April 16, 2026, Committee Meeting at 7:28 PM. Seconded by VanBerkel. Motion carried.

Cassandra Kohls