The Leading Edge

Newsworthy Comments

Charlie Conrardy

Charlie is the first Maywood Advisory Board Member to receive our new Emeritus Award, there will, no doubt, be others. This honor celebrates retired board members allowing them to retain their titles.

Charlie joined the Maywood Board as the representative of the Sheboygan County Chamber of Commerce. That experience brought the knowledge of how inclement weather works along with the associated networking opportunities. Charlie’s involvement with other organizations in the community also brought knowledge of other foundations and nonprofits. Because of his broad experience and people skills, he helped connect us with board members who could fit specific roles. Giving Maywood a board with a diverse representation of our community. Charlie, like so many of our volunteers, made an effort to attend meetings whenever he could and always contributed to them in effective ways. From the Maywood Staff, the Maywood Advisory Board, and all our volunteers, I wish to thank Charlie for his active participation in helping make Maywood a gem in our community.

Maywood Annual Meeting

Like all the other social gatherings these days, our annual meeting has been canceled. The when and the how of getting us together again must wait until we can congregate and feel safe. Unfortunately, none of us know when that will be.

Other Maywood Meetings

I can tell you our committee meetings and Advisory Board meetings have continued using Zoom. We have had two Advisory Board meetings with 25 to 30 participants, which is a fine turnout. My laptop looks like the old TV show, Hollywood Squares, with all those faces. All the Maywood officers are staying in their positions through 2020. Donna Wendlandt, Pete Pittner, Paul Pickhardt, Joe Kerlin and I make up the search committee for Maywood’s new director, and have been reviewing the job description with the goal of posting the position in early November.

Maywood is a board with a diverse representation of our community. Charlie, like so many of our volunteers, made an effort to attend meetings whenever he could and always contributed to them in effective ways. From the Maywood Staff, the Maywood Advisory Board, and all our volunteers, I wish to thank Charlie for his active participation in helping make Maywood a gem in our community.

Earth Miles 4 Maywood

As a reminder, please support our virtual fund-raiser in any way you can. Because of this virus business, we are putting all our efforts into this one event. Dave, Barb and especially Angie have had to learn how to plan and execute a virtual event. They have done an outstanding job in organizing this, but learn how to plan and execute a virtual event. They

The Leading Edge

Fall 2020

Eco EDGES Vol. 37, No. 3

Ellwood H. May Environmental Park
Association of Sheboygan County, Inc.
3615 Mueller Road
Sheboygan, WI 53083-2610
920-459-3906
maywood@sheboyganwi.gov

GoMaywood.org

Association/Trust
President: Ed Abell
Park Director: David Kuckuk
Trust Administrator: Angie Doell
Volunteer Coordinator: Barb Toric

Environmental Park Staff
Park Curator: Chad Prinsing

Our Mission
To foster environmental stewardship through educational and outdoor experiences that connect our community with the natural world.

It’s time to get outdoors, enjoy your favorite activities, and support Maywood! This September, we’re hosting a virtual fundraiser – Earth Miles 4 Maywood. With current social distancing requirements and safety concerns, hosting our traditional Earth Ride wasn’t an option. But it was an opportunity to expand our full fundraiser! This year you can run, walk, bike, pedal, paddle or enjoy any other self-propelled activity while you support Maywood.

As a participant you will choose the distance, route, days, and times to participate. You can even do a combination of activities to reach your goal. There are a variety of mileage options from 10 miles to 500 miles. Our popular Iron Raccoon route from the Earth Ride is now the 140.6 mile Iron Raccoon Challenge. There’s also a set your own goal option if you have a distance with special meaning to you.

This year’s $30 registration fee includes a dry-fit t-shirt. You can pick-up your shirt at Maywood or opt to have it mailed to you. There’s also the option to raise pledges to help support email and social media. We also have pledge forms available on our website and in the Ecology Center.

Kids 12 and younger can participate in the event for free. This makes Earth Miles 4 Maywood a great option for families who want to participate together.

The Maywood Earth Ride was the biggest fundraiser for our park. It provided valuable funds for our programs and park projects. While we haven’t been able to host in-person programs this year, our staff has been working to create self-guided hikes and digital content. We hope many of you will consider joining our virtual event to help us meet our funding needs for 2020.

Whether you opt for 10 miles or 500 miles, you will help Maywood provide more nature connections in our community.

Families have experienced a renewed kinship with the natural world and each other. Now that families have been turning to outdoor spaces to socially distance, we’ve seen a significant number of people exploring trails, photographing nature and themselves in nature, seeking quiet solitude, and finding a natural form of entertainment for their children. Kids especially have a natural sense of curiosity enabling them to quickly zero-in on catterpillars, ants, butterflies, dragonflies, and much more. Even though kids might quickly ask the “what is it?” question, parents merely need to show some interest to keep their child engaged in his or her investigations. The questions asked by their kids can be further examined later, thereby making our Maywood experience a fun finding mission. Some of the kids I’ve encountered have been fascinated by mud and water. Not whose track is in the mud, or who is swimming in the water, but simply the cause and effect of stepping in one. Nature lessons don’t always need to be in-depth and scientific. Sometimes a parent and child can find great entertainment in seeing what happens upon leaping into a puddle.

Despite all of the activity planning for our summer camps programs, there seems to be very few things that kids enjoy more than tree climbing at Maywood. My office window provides an excellent vantage point to see the total fascination kids have for being in trees. I have witnessed at least a dozen kids sitting in a tree eating their lunches. While practicing their arboreal skills they are usually talking, laughing, and socializing all without any sort of electronic device.

There are a few families that visit Maywood where one or both parents are hypnotized by their technology. However, I can assure the disease of natural discovery is contagious and sooner or later their child will find something so incredible the adults will become captivated. The same moment strength the parent’s child bond and forms the connection with the natural world. Nothing could come closer to meeting our mission than that.

To make Maywood memories and natural discoveries, see the article inside on self-guided adventures. Then bring your loved ones to Maywood for some quality time with nature.
Effect of COVID-19 on Maywood operations

Despite the hardships brought on by the Covid-19 crisis, Maywood was able to navigate our way through with our volunteers and staff. Little did we know that they would be the first in a string of Maywood dominoes to tumble. Immediately following the cancellation of our March school programs and Flapjack Day, we closed our doors to the public for the safety of our volunteers and staff. Maywood staff quickly adapted to work from home, learning new ways to conduct business. The word went around from being an inattentive virus to a style of digital meeting, and we began to explore methods for conducting programs virtually. In April, plans for the largest Maywood celebration, called Earth Day, were cancelled. Instead, the team at Maywood decided to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day quickly dwindled to a tree planting project, which had to be restructured to prevent a large group gathering. As coronavirus was beginning its run, we decided to close our doors to the public for the safety of our volunteers and staff. Maywood’s busiest month of programs for the public and schools. It is also when our bicycle training rides begin, setting the stage for the annual Earth Ride in September. All of these plans and more went to waste! Not only was this May the quietest this property has experienced since the late 1970s, but it was also the first step. Next was to minimize available indoor space, and even insistent that camps come prepared to be outdoors in rain. At this writing, new mask wearing mandates were issued to all City facilities, which may once again require last minute procedural adjustments.

In looking at the global trends of coronavirus and how most industrial countries have mitigated the virus compared to the U.S., it appears we will be combating this virus for some time to come. So far, we have not scheduled any public programs in order to do our part in slowing the virus. Our Ecology Center lobby is the only part of the building open to the public, with hours of operation reduced to Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The Reception Desk has been protected with plexi-glass shields and all of our staff and volunteers will be wearing masks. Although our current situation and the financial repercussions can be daunting and discouraging, please know that we are doing our part to protect our volunteers and staff. Maywood has served as a weekly source of inspiration to make a difference in state and local bird conservation! Love the fun and education of birding in a group? Maywood is excited to announce our first time participating in The Great Wisconsin Birdathon! Maywood volunteer and birder, Jennifer Rutten will be leading our team, named Magnificent Maywood Merlins, in identifying bird species at Maywood. The team will spend a few hours in the morning Sunday, October 4th, before you birding Maywood’s property during Fall migration. This event is a fundraiser and both teams and individuals can raise donations. The best part? Total funds raised for the October 4th Maywood Birdathon will be split between The Natural History Center’s OWLS program. Join us in welcoming Maywood’s new volunteer coordinator, Barb Sorcic. Since starting June 8, Barb has been learning the ropes of the reception desk, ecology store, and volunteer coordination, and has taken an active role in preparing the Ecology Center lobby for reopening. Barb has been a Maywood volunteer for several years and participated in our OWLS program. Barb spent 30 years in healthcare administration retiring last year from Fort HealthCare in Fort Atkinson. Barb enjoys hiking and has visited many of the national parks in the western United States. She worked in Estes Park, Colorado for 12 years, which gave her the opportunity to hike many of the trails in Rocky Mountain National Park as well. When not hiking with her dog Maxi, Barb enjoys quilting and gardening. Welcome, Barb!
Great Wisconsin Birdathon has been extended

Birdbathers will be split between The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin Birdathon is the largest fundraiser for bird conservation in the world raising funds to support priority bird conservation projects. This year more than ever, as the Birdathon will be extended to run from April 15 – October 15. While funds raised will continue to support bird conservation in Wisconsin, this year we are focusing on a more important goal: connection. This year we encourage you to use the Birdathon as a tool: an inspiration - to reconnect with birds, connect with local spaces, and most importantly connect (safely) with family and friends while raising awareness and funds. Why is Wisconsin important of Wisconsin birds. With your support, the Great Wisconsin Birdathon has raised over $60 million dollars since 2012, and has engaged thousands of individuals in conserving Wisconsin’s birds.

Jennifer Rutten

Kakaw! Calling all birders to help with bird count Oct. 4

Are you a birder? Like feeding and observing your backyard birds? Find yourself walking the Madison trails with bins and checklist in tow? Inspired to make a difference in state and local bird conservation? Love the fun and education of birding in a group? Maywood is excited to announce our first time participating in The Great Wisconsin Birdathon! Maywood volunteer and birder, Jennifer Rutten will be leading our team, named Maywood Merlins, in identifying bird species at Maywood. The team will spend a few hours in the morning Sunday, October 4 birding Maywood’s property during Fall migration. This event is a fundraiser and both teams and individuals can raise donations. The best part? Total funds raised for the October 4 Maywood Birdathon will be split between The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin to increase bird conservation, monitoring efforts and launch new bird initiatives for 2021. To join the team, visit WIBirdathon.org, click on “birdathon teams” at the top, then scroll down and click on Magnificent Madison Merlins. For more information, email Jennifer Rutten at jun.bon2000@yahoo.com.

Meet Barb Sorcic, Maywood’s new volunteer coordinator

Join us in welcoming Maywood’s new volunteer coordinator, Barb Sorcic. Since starting June 8, Barb has been learning the ropes of the reception desk, ecology store, and volunteer coordination, and has taken an active role in preparing the Ecology Center lobby for reopening. Barb has been a Maywood volunteer for several years and participates in our OWLS program. Barb spent 30 years in healthcare administration retiring last year from Fort HealthCare in Fort Atkinson. Barb enjoys hiking and has visited many of the national parks in the western United States. She worked in Estes Park, Colorado for 12 years, which gave her the opportunity to hike many of the trails in Rocky Mountain National Park as well. When not hiking with her dog Maxi, Barb enjoys quilting and gardening. Welcome, Barb!”

Check the GoMaywood.org for self-guided adventures through Maywood

Throughout the summer I’ve attempted to engage our OWLS (Older, Wiser, Livelier, Scholars) in outdoor exploration of Maywood through self-guided adventures. The prairie has simply been magical this summer with a vibrant crop of colorful and unusual plants, which has served as a weekly source of investigation and intrigue. Given the many positive comments I’ve received from our OWLS, I will now be expanding our weekly self-guided nature hikes to all ages. Posted on our webpage and social media sources, the public will be able to follow mapped locations to specific items in nature that may provide a nature lesson, or simply answer the question, “What is it?” With a reduction in programming due to coronavirus, I’ve been able to commit more time to the exploration of Maywood’s 135 acres. This has been beneficial for the purposes of developing a new master site plan, planning for basalt removal, and discovering the fruits of all the work invested in restoring the plant communities of Maywood. Parts of the prairie are now about 35 years old. Even though there are still some areas where invasive species continue their territorial battle with the natives, these well-established native plants are winning the battle. Since families have been forced from crowded public spaces and into the outdoors, we hope to provide self-guided hikes as a safe fun, family alternative. So, the plan is to prepare a hike route with “must see” items for adults and kids to check out. These hikes will be posted mid-week so families will have another weekend outing at Maywood to look forward to. As with the OWLS, our on-site or internet investigation of clues provided may be required to gain the meaning of the hike. So, this fall your opportunity to be a nature detective, and discover the many natural wonders right in our backyard. The best part is that it is free, however your donations are very much appreciated now, more than ever.
Effect of COVID-19 on Maywood operations

Fall 2020

Needless to say, I don’t know if any of us have ever experienced anything like we’re going through right now. Maywood is certainly not exempt from the business impact that the world is facing. In mid-March, when a coronavirus was beginning its run across the nation, we at Maywood realized how quickly plans would need to be reconsidered. As with many places across the world, we were faced with our first major decisions regarding the school programs and Flapjack Day, both of which have been a mainstay at Maywood since the early 1980s. Little did we know that they would be the first in a string of Maywood dominoes to tumble.

Immediately following the cancelation of our March school programs and Flapjack Day, we closed our doors to the public for the safety of our volunteers and staff. Maywood staff quickly adapted to work from home, learning new ways to conduct business. The word zoom went from being an intranet-like verb to an all part of digital meeting, and we began to explore methods for conducting programs virtually. In April, plans for the largest Maywood celebration to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day quickly dwindled to a tree-planting project, which had to be restructured to prevent a large group gathering.

May is Maywood’s busiest month of programs for the public and schools. It is also when our bicycle training rides begin, setting the stage for the annual Earth Ride in September. All of these programs were cancelled, making this May thequietest this property has experienced since the late 1970s when the area was a different entity. Our next goal was to use it to develop a plan for summer camp programs. Greatly reducing the number of campers was the first step. Next was to minimize available indoor space, and even insulating that camps come prepared to be outdoors in rain. At this writing, new mask wearing mandates were issued to all City facilities, which may impact the dogs and schools. It also is when our volunteer coordination, and has been learning the ropes of the reception desk, ecology store, and the public, with hours of operation reduced to Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The Reception Desk has been protected with plexi-glass shields and all of our staff and volunteers will be wearing masks.

Although our current situation and the financial repercussions can be a bit daunting and discouraging, please know that we are doing our part to help keep Maywood visitors safe. The good news is still that there are infinite natural wonders at Maywood to discover and that our trails and 135 acres are one of the safest places to be. The best part is that it is free, however your donations are very much appreciated now, more than ever.

Meet Barb Soric, Maywood’s new volunteer coordinator

Fall 2020

Join us in welcoming Maywood’s new volunteer coordinator, Barb Soric. Since starting June 8, Barb has been learning the ropes of the reception desk, ecology store, and volunteer coordination, and has taken an active role in preparing the Ecology Center lobby for reopening. Barb has been a Maywood volunteer for several years and participated in our OWLS program. Barb spent 30 years in healthcare administration retiring last year from Fort HealthCare in Fort Atkinson. Barb enjoys hiking and has visited many of the national parks in the western United States. She worked in Estes Park, Colorado for 12 years, which gave her the opportunity to hike many of the trails in Rocky Mountain National Park as well. When not hiking with her dog Maxi, Barb enjoys quilting and gardening. Welcome, Barb!

Great Wisconsin Birdathon has been extended

Fall 2020

Birds are valuable and need our help. The Natural Resources Foundation’s Great Wisconsin Birdathon is the largest fundraiser for bird conservation in the state. Each spring with the goal of finding as many birds as possible, the birdathon unites hundreds of bird enthusiasts each spring with the goal of finding as many birds as possible, the birdathon unites hundreds of bird enthusiasts each spring with the goal of finding as many birds as possible, the birdathon unites hundreds of bird enthusiasts each spring with the goal of finding as many birds as possible, the birdathon unites hundreds of bird enthusiasts each spring with the goal of finding as many birds as possible. The birdathon has raised millions of dollars since 2012, and has engaged thousands of individuals in conserving Wisconsin’s birds.

By Dave Kuckuk

Fall 2019

Check the GoMaywood.org for self-guided adventures through Maywood.

Throughout the summer I’ve attempted to engage our OWLS (Older, Wiser, Livelier, Scholars) in outdoor exploration of Maywood through a series of weekly birdathons. The prairie has simply been magical this summer with a vibrant crop of colorful and unusual plants, which has served as a weekly source of investigation and intrigue. Given the many positive comments I’ve received from our OWLS, I will now be expanding our weekly self-guided nature hikes to all ages. Posted on our webpage and social media sources, the public will be able to follow mapped locations to specific items in nature that may not be easily visible to the naked eye, nature leisure, or simply answer the question, “What is it?”

With a reduction in programming due to coronavirus, I’ve been able to commit more time to the exploration of Maywood’s 135 acres. This has been beneficial for the purposes of developing a new master site plan, planning for future projects, and discovering the fruits of all the work invested in restoring the plant communities of Maywood. Parts of the prairie are now about 35 years old. Even though there are still some areas where invasive species continue their rivalry with the natives, these well-established native plants are winning the battle.

Since families have been forced from crowded public spaces and into the outdoors, we hope to provide self-guided hikes as a safe fun, family alternative. So, the plan is to prepare a hike route with “must see” items for adults and kids to check out. These hikes will be posted about mid-Spring so families will have another weekend outing at Maywood to look forward to. Just as with the OWLS, our on-site or internet investigation of clues provided may be required to get the most out of the hike.

So, this fall your opportunity to be a nature detective, and discover the many natural wonders right in our own backyard. The best part is that it is free, however your donations are very much appreciated now, more than ever.
Design your own Earth ride, run, walk or paddle

It’s time to get outdoors, enjoy your favorite activities, and support Maywood! This September, we’re hosting a virtual fundraiser – Earth Miles 4 Maywood. With current social distancing requirements and safety concerns, hosting our traditional Earth Ride wasn’t an option. But it was an opportunity to expand our fall fundraiser. This year you can run, walk, hike, pedal, paddle or enjoy any other self-propelled activity while you support Maywood.

As a participant you will choose the distance, route, days, and times to participate. You can even do a combination of activities to reach your goal. There are a variety of mileage options from 10 miles to 500 miles. Our popular Iron Raccoon route from the Earth Ride is now the 140.6 mile Iron Raccoon Challenge. There’s also a set your own goal option if you have a distance with special meaning to you.

This year’s $35 registration fee includes a dry-fy t-shirt. You can pick up your shirt at Maywood or opt to have it mailed to you. There’s also the option to raise pledges to help support Maywood even more. Those who register through RunSignup can create an online fundraising page to collect pledges. If you raise $100 or more in pledges through the online fundraising option, your registration fee will be refunded. It’s easy to share your pledge link with family and friends through email and social media. We also have pledge forms available on our website and in the Ecology Center.

Families have experienced a renewed kinship with the natural world and each other. Now that families have been turning to outdoor spaces to socially distance, we’ve seen a significant number of people exploring our trails, photographing nature and themselves in nature, seeking quiet solitude, and finding a natural form of entertainment for their children. Kids especially have a natural sense of curiosity that can be further examined by their kids can be further examined by their kids. Angie Doell

As a participant you will choose the distance, route, days, and times to participate. You can even do a combination of activities to reach your goal. There are a variety of mileage options from 10 miles to 500 miles. Our popular Iron Raccoon route from the Earth Ride is now the 140.6 mile Iron Raccoon Challenge. There’s also a set your own goal option if you have a distance with special meaning to you.

This year’s $35 registration fee includes a dry-fy t-shirt. You can pick up your shirt at Maywood or opt to have it mailed to you. There’s also the option to raise pledges to help support Maywood even more. Those who register through RunSignup can create an online fundraising page to collect pledges. If you raise $100 or more in pledges through the online fundraising option, your registration fee will be refunded. It’s easy to share your pledge link with family and friends through email and social media. We also have pledge forms available on our website and in the Ecology Center.

Families have experienced a renewed kinship with the natural world and each other. Now that families have been turning to outdoor spaces to socially distance, we’ve seen a significant number of people exploring our trails, photographing nature and themselves in nature, seeking quiet solitude, and finding a natural form of entertainment for their children. Kids especially have a natural sense of curiosity that can be further examined by their kids can be further examined by their kids. Angie Doell

Families have experienced a renewed kinship with the natural world and each other. Now that families have been turning to outdoor spaces to socially distance, we’ve seen a significant number of people exploring our trails, photographing nature and themselves in nature, seeking quiet solitude, and finding a natural form of entertainment for their children. Kids especially have a natural sense of curiosity that can be further examined by their kids can be further examined by their kids. Angie Doell

As a participant you will choose the distance, route, days, and times to participate. You can even do a combination of activities to reach your goal. There are a variety of mileage options from 10 miles to 500 miles. Our popular Iron Raccoon route from the Earth Ride is now the 140.6 mile Iron Raccoon Challenge. There’s also a set your own goal option if you have a distance with special meaning to you.

This year’s $35 registration fee includes a dry-fy t-shirt. You can pick up your shirt at Maywood or opt to have it mailed to you. There’s also the option to raise pledges to help support Maywood even more. Those who register through RunSignup can create an online fundraising page to collect pledges. If you raise $100 or more in pledges through the online fundraising option, your registration fee will be refunded. It’s easy to share your pledge link with family and friends through email and social media. We also have pledge forms available on our website and in the Ecology Center.

Families have experienced a renewed kinship with the natural world and each other. Now that families have been turning to outdoor spaces to socially distance, we’ve seen a significant number of people exploring our trails, photographing nature and themselves in nature, seeking quiet solitude, and finding a natural form of entertainment for their children. Kids especially have a natural sense of curiosity that can be further examined by their kids can be further examined by their kids. Angie Doell

As a participant you will choose the distance, route, days, and times to participate. You can even do a combination of activities to reach your goal. There are a variety of mileage options from 10 miles to 500 miles. Our popular Iron Raccoon route from the Earth Ride is now the 140.6 mile Iron Raccoon Challenge. There’s also a set your own goal option if you have a distance with special meaning to you.

This year’s $35 registration fee includes a dry-fy t-shirt. You can pick up your shirt at Maywood or opt to have it mailed to you. There’s also the option to raise pledges to help support Maywood even more. Those who register through RunSignup can create an online fundraising page to collect pledges. If you raise $100 or more in pledges through the online fundraising option, your registration fee will be refunded. It’s easy to share your pledge link with family and friends through email and social media. We also have pledge forms available on our website and in the Ecology Center.

Families have experienced a renewed kinship with the natural world and each other. Now that families have been turning to outdoor spaces to socially distance, we’ve seen a significant number of people exploring our trails, photographing nature and themselves in nature, seeking quiet solitude, and finding a natural form of entertainment for their children. Kids especially have a natural sense of curiosity that can be further examined by their kids can be further examined by their kids. Angie Doell
Design your own Earth ride, run, walk or paddle

It’s time to get outdoors, enjoy your favorite activities, and support Maywood! This September, we’re hosting a virtual fundraiser – Earth Miles 4 Maywood. With current social distancing requirements and safety concerns, hosting our traditional Earth Ride wasn’t an option. But it was an opportunity to expand our full fundraiser. This year you can run, walk, hike, pedal, paddle or enjoy any other self-propelled activity while you support Maywood.

As a participant you will choose the distance, route, days, and times to participate. You can even do a combination of activities to reach your goal. There are a variety of mileage options from 10 miles to 500 miles. Our popular Iron Raccoon route from 3615 Mueller Road in Sheboygan, WI is a 14.6 mile route from Raccoon Pond. If you choose this option, you can set your own goal option if you have a distance with special meaning to you.

This year’s $30 registration fee includes a dry-fit t-shirt. You can pick up your shirt at Maywood or opt to have it mailed to you. There’s also the option to raise pledges to help support Maywood even more. Those who register through RunSignUp can create an online fundraising page to collect pledges. If you raise $100 or more in pledges through the online fundraising option, your registration fee will be refunded. It’s easy to share your pledge link with family and friends through email and social media. We also have pledge forms available on our website and in the Ecology Center.

Kids 12 and younger can participate in the event for free. This makes Earth Miles 4 Maywood a great option for families who want to participate together.

The Maywood Earth Ride was the biggest fundraiser for our park. It provided valuable funds for our programs and park projects. While we haven’t been offering as many in-person programs this year, our staff have been working to create self-guided hikes and digital content. We hope many of you will consider joining our virtual event to help us meet our funding needs for 2020.

Whether you opt for 10 miles or 500 miles, you will help Maywood provide more nature connections in our community.

Angie Doell

Families have experienced a renewed kinship with the natural world and each other. Now that families have been turning to outdoor spaces to socially distance, we’ve seen a significant number of people exploring our trails, photographing nature and themselves in nature, seeking quiet solitude, and finding a natural form of entertainment for their children. Kids especially have a natural sense of curiosity enabling them to quickly zero-in on the cause and effect of stepping in either mud or swimming in the water, but simply the act of jumping into a puddle.

Despite all of the activity planning for our summer camp programs, there seems to be very few things that kids enjoy more than tree climbing at Maywood. My office window provides an excellent vantage point to see the total fascination kids have for being in trees. I have witnessed at least a dozen kids sitting in a tree eating their lunches. While practicing their arboreal skills they are usually talking, laughing, and socializing all without any sort of electronic device.

There are a few families that visit Maywood where one or both parents are hypnotized by their phones. However, I can assure you the disease of natural discovery is contagious and sooner or later their child will find something so incredible the adults will become captivated. The moment at which the parent will first find nature so captivating that they too will become hypnotized by their phone is only a matter of time.

Dave Kuckuk