

Green DuBois 2020 Annual Report

The Green DuBois task force was nipped in the bud this year, as many things were, by the COVID-19 pandemic. Just at the moment we were rolling out some exciting new events, everything shut down. Shortly afterward, the Conference Council declared a fallow year at DuBois Center to keep all guests and volunteers safe.

But, a few things have safely been accomplished since the last ISC annual meeting. Our beehives, installed in 2019, made it through their first winter and continue humming along. Also, a few socially-distanced volunteers successfully obtained some tree tissue samples to have tested for herbicidal residue. We have a deep concern that some of our older trees, particularly the large oaks, are being heavily impacted in the center of camp.

St. Paul UCC in Freeburg has steadily continued their work on the Deer Run Cabins, adding upgraded electricity, LED lights and ceiling fans, wider exterior doors and screens, and a few new windows. Accessible ramps are coming soon, too. The Deer Run cabins will soon be fully transformed into an environmental education space, a nature observation blind for photography and bird watching, and a day retreat space for writing, thinking, meditating and praying. These cabins will further all the Green DuBois goals in so many ways. Thank you, St. Paul volunteers, for your dedication to bringing this vision to life, even during a pandemic.

Lastly, Green DuBois team member Margie Lindhorst had planned some new gardens around the camp office to be installed in early spring. They were, of course, put on hold for many months after she had the plants ordered. She tended native wildflowers in pots all summer and was finally able to begin planting in the fall. Come next spring, watch for blooms and new signage around the shade garden in front of the office and the sun garden on the east side of the office by the road.

As we turn toward the prospect of a new year, Green DuBois will again start scheduling stewardship days for invasive species removal and other work projects. If safely possible to do so, we will reschedule some of those cancelled activities for next spring, in particular the much-anticipated nature photography retreat and a Conference-wide star gazing party.

The Green DuBois initiative was started in 2018, and it aims to highlight and protect our natural resources through three branches of work: 1) the flowering branch, where we show people what we have; 2) the woody branch, where we focus on active forest management and take care of what we've got; and 3) the leafy branch, where we expand our sustainable practices and lower our impact on the environment.

Submitted by
Jill Baker, Green DuBois Chair