

THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED CONSERVATIONISTS

The October 7, 2026 meeting was held at Babe's at Vitense Grill and Bar. Thirty-five members attended.

ARC President Laurel Steffes called the meeting to order at noon. Linda Netzer requested that attendees arrive to all future meetings by 11:50 a.m., so she can finalize orders with the restaurant to assure lunch is served by 12:15 p.m.

A moment of silence was observed for friends and family who have passed, and for our troops serving in harm's way.

Financial Report

Treasurer Dick Steffes reported that there is \$1,038 in our account.

New Members and Guests

No new members or guests were introduced.

Schaefer's Employee Trust Fund Report

Bob reported core investments are at 5.69 and variable at 13.91 this month, down respectively from 7.25 and 14 last month. He attributed these numbers to the recent rise in interest rate.

Bob plans to determine what, if anything, the board is doing to address concerns regarding the future of Social Security.

Reminder that retirees need to be aware of any changes to their health insurance benefits during the current open enrollment period

New Business

- Laurel reported that she and Paul Heinen are working with former DNR Secretary Darrel Bazzell on a trip to Wisconsin. Experiencing a decline in health, he has expressed a desire to visit with former DNR colleagues.
- Scott Craven, retired UW Madison wildlife professor and extension specialist will speak at the November 4 luncheon at the Vintage Brewery.
- Seth Taft, Executive Director of the Friends of Wisconsin State Parks extended an invitation to attend the Wisconsin Conservation Funding Coalition (WCFC) Second Summit on October 26th at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Stevens Point. The coalition will discuss DNR fee increases.

"This summit will bring together coalition members, stakeholders, and interested individuals to share progress since our inaugural gathering and expand our base of support as we prepare for a collective call to action." If interested in attending, go to the event's website

<https://fundwiconservation.org/event/2ndsummit/>

- Brad Hicks, national correspondent for the PBS conservation program "This American Land" and executive director of the nonprofit Environment News Trust that produces the show is seeking someone with a conservation background to sit on the board of the nonprofit. They just released their 14th season to PBS, and produce shorter stories about conservation that get distributed to every NBC TV station in the country.

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<https://environmentnewstrust.com/>

Old Business

No old business

Deaths and Illnesses

No deaths or illnesses to report

Trips

John and Brenda Hagman traveled through Europe for a month.

Presentation

Tom Thoresen, who has served on the Dane County Parks Commission for 22 years, spoke to the group about the Dane County Park System. The largest county park system in the state, its 60 locations welcome about five million visitors a year. Offering outdoor activities year around, the system includes recreation parks, natural resource areas, forests, waterways, historical/cultural sites and wildlife areas. Access is available to regional bike/pedestrian trails and the Ice Age National Scenic Trail.