



Invertebrate Insights

Final Report - Ideas to Action 2024

By Anna Lian, University of Wisconsin Parkside Library, July 2025

Number of people involved in or impacted by the project since Ideas to Action funding:

About 250 people were directly impacted and involved, but more than that will be impacted by the continued resources available for borrowing through the library and satellite events that utilize the equipment such as the digital microscopes. In addition, some of our events also included passive ways of participating that we were not able to gather data on.

Do you anticipate that your project will continue after Ideas to Action funding?

Yes. In the past, the Biology Department at UW Parkside has organized a Bioblitz event. However, this year, with the Ideas in Action funding, they were able to partner with the Parkside Library to expand the Bioblitz to include multiple events and invite community members to participate. Together we were able to host a week-long series of Bioblitz events rather than just one 24-hour event, and host two other events throughout the year relating to the Bioblitz. One was a science night talk and the other (Annotation Day) a behind the scenes look at the natural history collection housed at UW Parkside. Both these events were also open to the public and would not have been possible without the support of the WILS ideas in action funding.

In addition to the three main events, we were also able to use the funds to purchase collection supplies needed to improve the Natural History Collection at Parkside such as, a sturdy metal cabinet and drawers with glass lids for preserving insect specimens. We also purchase items made available for checkout to encourage patrons of the Parkside Library to explore the natural world around them. These items include three Ranger Packs, outdoor exploration packs filled with supplies to collect and study birds, insects, and plants, as well as digital microscopes, nets, pinning blocks, and pinning supplies for collecting and preserving insect specimens. In this way, the program will continue and have a lasting impact as more and more people are able to freely access useful equipment for outdoor exploration and hopefully participate in next year's Bioblitz.

Did your project encourage partnerships and collaborations with any community partners or other WiLS members? Who did you connect with during this process and how might you sustain those connections?

The project definitely encouraged partnership with other community organizations such as the Milwaukee Public Museum and other UW campuses. Scientists from around the state, and several other UW branches participated in the Annotation Day event including:

- John Dobyns, St. Norbert College – Spiders
- Peter Messer, affiliate Milwaukee Public Museum – Ground Beetles
- Jeff Dimick, Cadie Olson, and Kaira Kamke, UW-Stevens Point – aquatic insects
- Tom Klubertanz, UW-Whitewater, Rock County – aquatic insects, especially mayflies
- PJ Liesch, UW-Madison - various
- Craig Brabant, UW-Madison, – velvet ants, other hymenoptera
- Jon Bertolas, Milwaukee Public Museum – Lepidoptera
- Todd Levine, Carrol University – freshwater mussels
- Dan Young, UW-Madison – Beetles
- Mark Evans, affiliate Milwaukee Public Museum – various (mainly beetles)

The speaker from our science night event Kathryn Sullivan is a PhD. candidate doing her research as the Milwaukee Public Museum. The digital microscopes continue to be used by biology professor Jessica Orlofske when she hosts activities at the museum and in Petrified Springs Park, where she trains water action volunteers to collect invertebrates useful in monitoring the cleanliness of the water. She will also be using the digital microscopes in her Mater Naturalist workshop at Bong State Recreation Area coming up on July 22, and other future events.

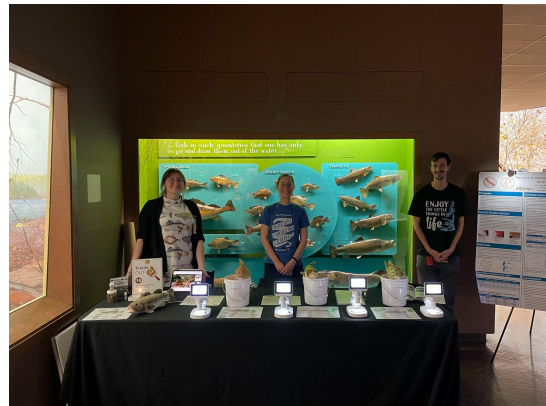
Thinking about your project, what was the most innovative part? What can you, or your community, do now that it couldn't before?

The most innovative part of the project was brining together the library and its patrons and the biology department and its resources and expertise. Now students and members of the public can check out materials such as the Ranger Packs, nets, microscopes, and collection equipment and use it to learn about the natural world. This also gives them a connection to UW Parkside, the events, initiatives, and ongoing research happening here by experts in the field. Another major innovative part of the project was the first ever Annotation Day. During this event, invertebrate experts all over the state gathered alongside students and community members to identify and document over 1,000 specimens in the UW Parkside Natural History Collection. After this event, participants of the event expressed an interest in doing something similar at their institutions.

How do you think other WiLS members could use what you learned and accomplished at their own organizations?

WiLS members can feel free to use and build off of any of the ideas from our project. We hope it helps people to think about what voices in their community might need a platform to share their expertise on a particular subject, particularly in the scientific community.

Project product(s):



Sample photos from UW Parkside Invertebrate Insights; see all photos and outputs below

[LibGuide](#) of photos from each of the main project events and information about material available for borrowing.

[Bioblitz web page](#) created to document all the nature observations.

[Pictures from the Annotation Day Event](#) (January 9th, 2025)

[Invertebrate Insights Bioblitz Pictures](#) (May 4-10, 2025 at Parkside)

[MPM Bioblitz](#) (June 27th-28th, 2025, Aldo Leopold Center, Baraboo, WI)

[MPM Inside Out](#) (April 11th, 2025, MPM Member event)

[WI Lakes and Rivers Convention](#) (Aquatic Invertebrate Taxonomy Workshop, March 26th, 2025, Stevens Point, WI)

[WAV Training](#) (Water Action Volunteer Training May 30th 2025, Petrifying Spring County Park, Kenosha, WI)