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For Immediate Release

“Bat Night” Returns to Wehr Nature Center

Franklin, WI (May 15, 2015) – “Bat Night,” an evening that brings together the fiction folklore, and facts about bats, is returning to Wehr Nature Center, Friday, June 12, from 8-10 p.m. The Nature Center is located in Whitnall Park, at 9701 W. College Ave.

Fear of and misconceptions about bats and rabies underscore the importance of learning more about these often misunderstood creatures.

The first part of the program is an indoor, interactive presentation by Wehr naturalist Howard Aprill. Topics include identifying common neighborhood bats, their value in controlling insect populations, and their work as pollinators. Also to be discussed is the race to save North American Bats from potential extinction from the disease, White Nose Syndrome.

After the indoor introduction, participants will join Aprill in search of bats in Whitnall Park. Whitnall Park is home to more than five species of bats. Aprill will demonstrate the latest technology to “hear” the ultrasonic echolocations produced by bats. Specialized detectors combine a system for recording the bat calls and a global positioning system (GPS). The recordings show different sound-wave patterns for different species of bats, and the GPS pinpoints a bat’s location.

Participants will also learn how they can protect bats by getting involved in citizen-science monitoring.

The program is designed for adults and for families with children age 12 and up.

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According to the Wisconsin DNR, white-nose syndrome is now affecting bats in five Wisconsin counties. In April 2014, the first confirmed cases were found in Grant County. Now bats in Crawford, Richland, Door, and Dane county have tested positive. In addition, the fungus that causes the disease has been confirmed in Iowa, Dodge, and Lafayette counties.

A 2011 Southern Illinois University study calculated that bats save the agricultural economy \$22.9 billion a year by eating crop-damaging insects and reducing the need for pesticides.

Admission for Milwaukee County Residents is \$7 per person; Non-Milwaukee County Residents, \$10 per person; and Members of Friends of Wehr, \$5 per person. Parking is \$3 per car.

Registration for the program is required by Wednesday, June 10.

The program will be repeated Friday, Aug. 14, from 8–10 p.m. A new “Bat Night for Families” will be added Saturday, Aug. 15, from 7–9 p.m., with all activities appropriate for children as young as 8 years old.

For more information call Wehr at (414) 425-8550 or go to countyparks.com.

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