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For Immediate Release

“Bat Night” Returns to Wehr Nature Center

Franklin, WI (July 27, 2015) – “Bat Night,” an evening that brings together the fiction folklore, and facts about bats, is returning to Wehr Nature Center, Aug 14 and 15. The Nature Center is located in Whitnall Park, at 9701 W. College Ave.

Friday’s program, from 8-10 p.m., is designed for adults and children Grade 6 and up. Saturday’s program, from 7-9 p.m., is designed for families with younger children.

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 Emily Brown. 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 Brown in search of bats in Whitnall Park. The park is home to more than five species of bats. Brown 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.

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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, Aug. 12.

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

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