



# 2020

ANNUAL REPORT

## wisconsin SCIENCE FESTIVAL? CURIOSITY UNLEASHED.





## *Dear Friends,*

The 10th annual Wisconsin Science Festival did not go as we initially planned. Instead, we improvised, along with many other science festivals throughout the country. Thanks to the support and creativity of hundreds of people across Wisconsin representing businesses, schools, universities, museums, parks and more, we found a way to connect with even more people than last year through a broad range of activities.

The challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic led, as many challenges do, to several innovations. Some of the new formats that debuted at this year's festival are likely to become mainstays. From the inaugural Wisconsin Science Festival BioBlitz, which engaged hundreds of citizen scientists around the state, to the first Wisconsin Science Festival drive-in movies, we came together with curious people from across Wisconsin to observe, experiment, discuss and celebrate science safely and enthusiastically.

In many ways, the events of this year underscore more than ever the role that science plays in our lives and what can happen when science is disregarded. From the development of new drugs and vaccines to quantum computing and artificial intelligence to new medical imaging technologies to the search for black holes, we talked about it at this year's festival and learned more about ourselves and each other in the process while placing a premium on staying safe. We bridged social distance while maintaining physical distance.

Despite these unforeseen challenges, thanks to all of you, we reached more people than ever before. An estimated **43,000 people** participated in online and physically distanced events in **35 Wisconsin counties**. Working with more than **six dozen organizers** we collectively hosted more than **130 unique events**, two-thirds of which directly engaged STEM professionals. This broad-based participation underscores the importance that Wisconsinites from across the state place in science and the organizations that support science.

The Wisconsin Science Festival will enter its second decade with next year's event, planned for October 21-24, 2021. Let's hope that we are once again able to convene in person in the hundreds of venues that host science across our state.

Yours in curiosity,

**Laura Heisler**

Director, Wisconsin Science Festival

Director of Programming, Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation

Director of Outreach, Morgridge Institute for Research



# About the Wisconsin Science Festival

The Wisconsin Science Festival is a statewide celebration of science, technology, engineering, art and math. With events encompassing hands-on science exhibitions, demonstrations, performances, pub nights, workshops and more, the festival truly offers something for everyone. We aim to inspire and engage everyone in the enterprise of science and discovery; to cultivate curiosity; to communicate the power of knowledge and creativity to change our world view; to promote innovation and to cultivate the next generation of global citizens. As a grassroots movement of enthusiasts throughout the state, the Wisconsin Science Festival is presented by a growing coalition of Wisconsin's science and arts communities each fall.





# AT A GLANCE

# 2020



1 Weekend



133  
Events



43,000 Attendees



103,480  
website page views

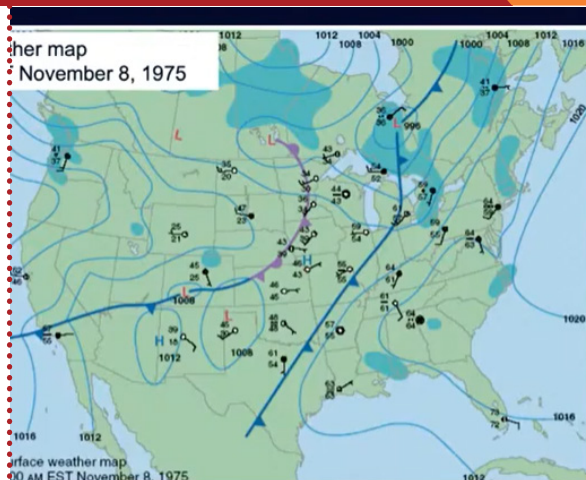


20  
SPONSORS



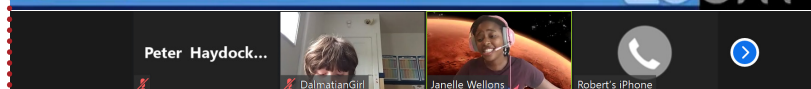
35

counties

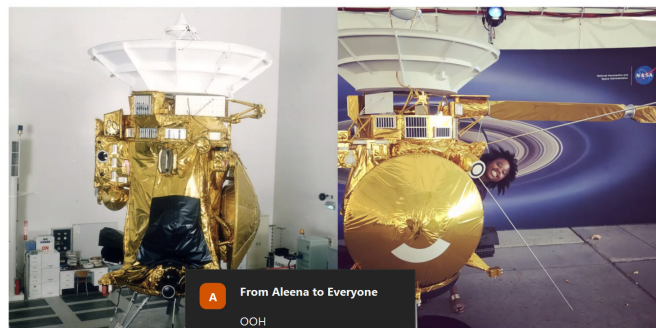


"Good ship and crew was a bone to be chewed  
the gales of November came early..."

zoom



## Cassini Mission to Saturn



100+  
STEM professionals





# SPONSORS

# 2020

The Wisconsin Science Festival would not be possible without the financial and in-kind contributions of our sponsors and partners. From providing funding to hosting events and serving as volunteers, thank you for making this annual Wisconsin tradition possible.

## GOLD SPONSORS



## SILVER SPONSORS



## BRONZE SPONSORS



## COPPER SPONSORS



## KRYPTON SPONSORS



## PRODUCERS



## PARTNER



*Thank you!*





# #WiSciFest Press

**2.6 million**

impressions via mobile, online, radio, TV and print advertising

**21 news outlets**

reaching more than 3 million news and media website viewers

#WiSciFest webpages were viewed over

**100,000 times** the week of the festival



W I S C O N S I N  
**SCIENCE FESTIVAL?**  
C U R I O U S I T Y U N L E A S H E D .



## Treinen Farm

That weekend we had over 4,700 people visit the farm and learn about Water Bears. We were surprised how many people knew about these amazing, resilient and super cute creatures. The best part was asking the group if they knew about Water Bears and having the young kids say YES! and then start rattling off all the cool facts while their parents looked on in amazement. Brian, age 9, from Madison LOVES moss piglets. "I love that they can survive acid, and space and everything!" Kristin from Reedsburg said, "No WAY! Your maze is a WATER BEAR!?! I am totally geeking out! Tardigrades are my all time favorite organism. Did you know they are extremophiles?"

## Gearbox Labs

Gearbox Labs has participated in two Wisconsin Science Festivals and found great success in reaching and growing its audiences. By having WSF as a unifying program available and validating our efforts, Gearbox Labs was able to reach more students than the same face-to-face, but standalone programs run last year. Both of our partners (Mead Public Library and Wisconsin Association for Talented and Gifted) reported record participation in programs with Gearbox Labs under the WSF banner. We also were able to attract national caliber speakers from Milwaukee School of Engineering and NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory to add further value to the programs. Our social media engagement on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook also shows over 60 likes and 12,000 international engagement views from world-class science and engineering based companies growing our international outreach.

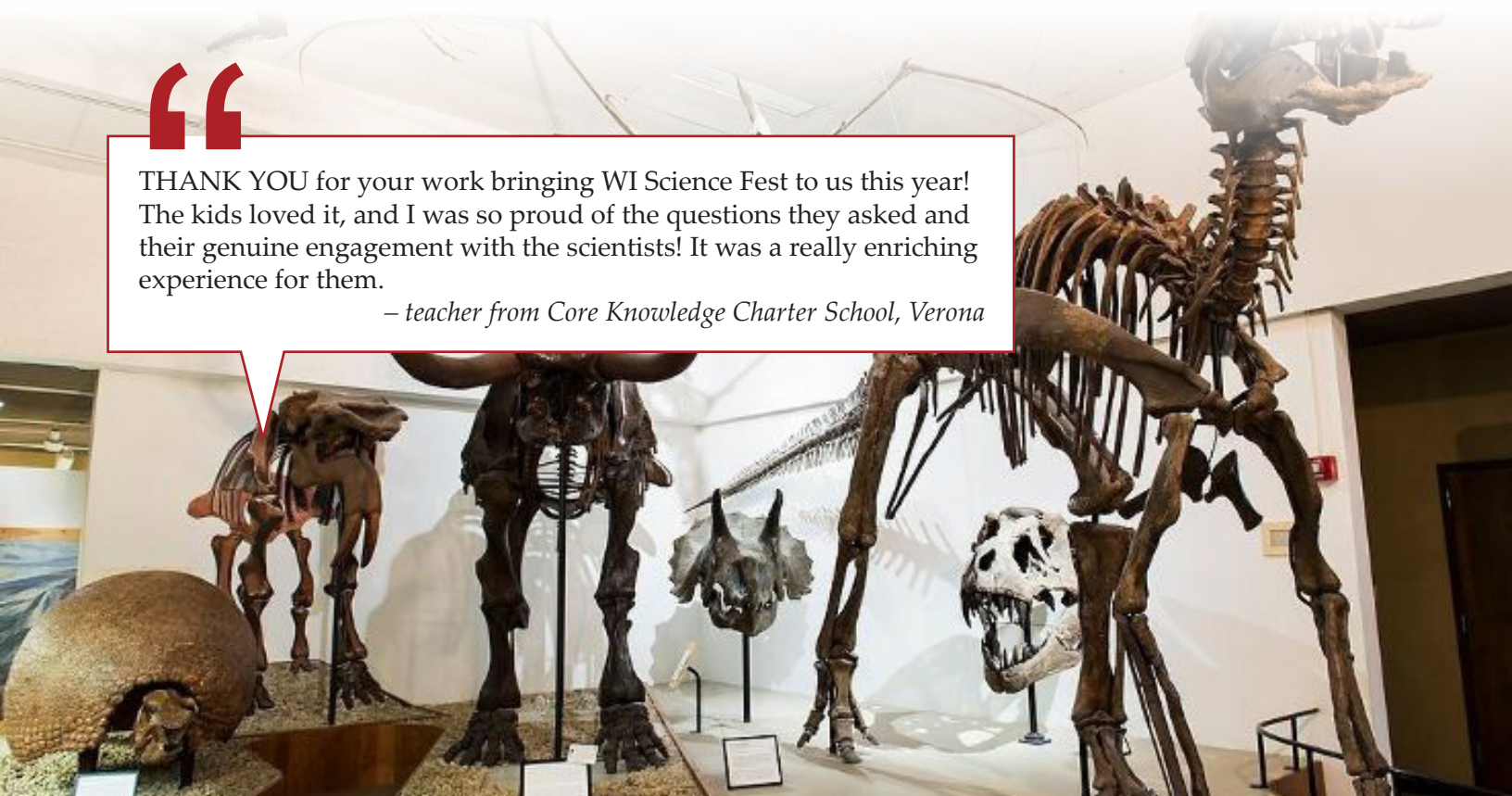
## Minocqua Public Library (Raptors and Readers event)

A father and daughter participating (despite the fact that it was outside and it decided to SNOW!) came all bundled up and the father said the daughter had been looking forward to the event since she found out! A local news reporter also came and took photos of the event, which showed up on the front page of the paper.

“

THANK YOU for your work bringing WI Science Fest to us this year! The kids loved it, and I was so proud of the questions they asked and their genuine engagement with the scientists! It was a really enriching experience for them.

– teacher from Core Knowledge Charter School, Verona





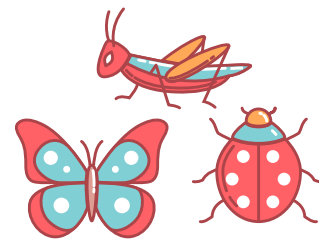
## BioBlitz

The first-ever Wisconsin Science Festival BioBlitz took place over 100 hours from sunrise on the first day of the festival until sunset on the last day with individuals across the state trying to find as many living things as they could, bringing people together in a physically distant way to explore our environment and build community.

Participants recorded and shared their observations through a free and user-friendly online platform accessed by people throughout the world. During the festival, school groups engaged online with naturalists from our partners at the Aldo Leopold Nature Center and scientists from UW-Madison about the connections between the land and the lab. Additionally, nature centers and conservation spaces across the state were highlighted as locations to explore, especially at Upham Woods Outdoor Learning Center, who hosted physically distanced field trips and experiences.



**1,368**  
total observations



**625**  
species





## My Story in Science

Our 2020 field trips options included a brand new theme: "My Story in STEM: So Far."

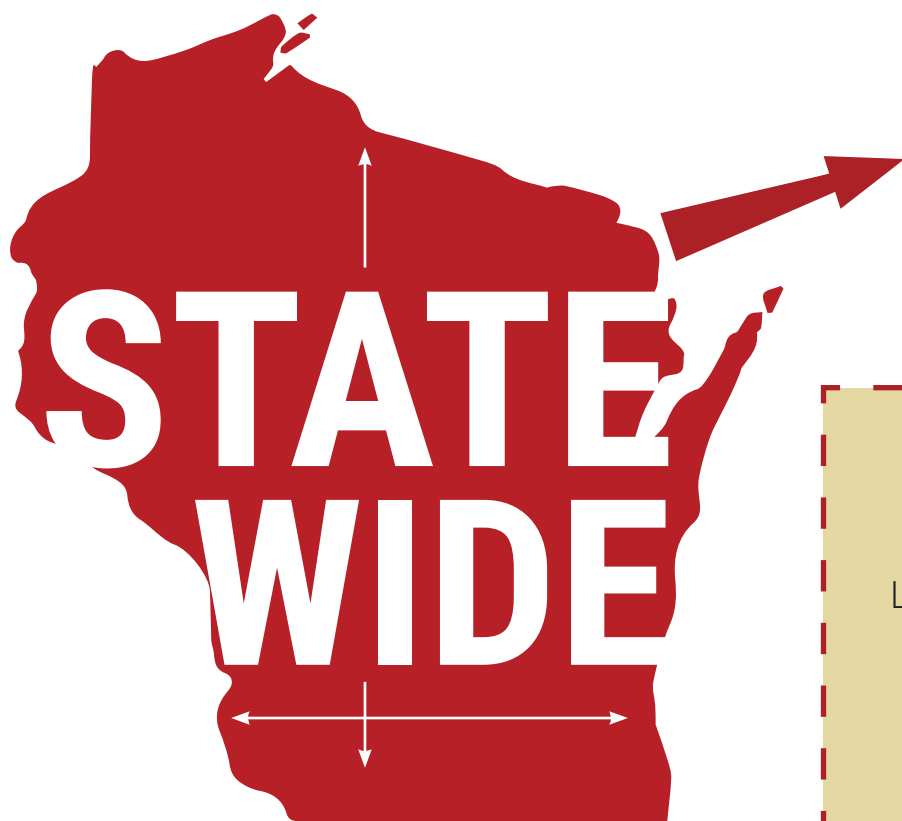
While building partnerships with organizations on campus, we are fortunate to recruit a diverse background of college students and researchers willing to share their experience as being underrepresented in STEM education. For this experience, we meshed these adults with youth in the surrounding area to share ideas and give students the opportunity to ask questions as they have interest in STEM for their future.

For 45 minutes participants shared ideas ranging from STEM identity to the researchers' favorite color. This created an open environment to have common conversation.

The field trip was featured in the Wisconsin State Journal with anecdotes from both UW-Madison presenters and youth attendees speaking about how critical the experience was to them.







133  
EVENTS



Events in...

35

Counties

18

Libraries

5

UW System  
Campuses



97% of organizers say that  
the festival is useful for  
their organization



## Drive-In Movies at the Madison Mallards Duck Pond

Lights, camera, action...cars? In an effort to create an opportunity for our participants to gather safely and feel connected to others with similar interests, the Wisconsin Science Festival and Wisconsin Institute for Discovery collaborated with the Madison Mallards baseball organization to host a fun line-up of three FREE drive-in movie experiences.

On a crisp but comfortable Friday night, cars lined up in the outfield of the Madison Mallards baseball diamond to enjoy a double feature of *Hidden Figures* and *Apollo 13*. These movies paired nicely with the NASA at the Movies panel discussion that took place on Saturday and featured special effects experts who worked on these films and other major motion pictures. The third film was held on a rainy Sunday evening but just as the stadium lights went out for the film, the clouds parted and attendees had a chance to view a beautiful documentary called *Picture a Scientist*. This film focuses on the journey of women scientists and provides new perspectives on how to make science itself more diverse, equitable and open to all.

The three films had a total of 458 attendees. Each vehicle received a Wisconsin Science Festival pint glass and the chance to win great prizes from local area businesses. Overall, attendees had a very positive experience and the event format proved to be successful and opened up new possibilities for future science festival events!



“

We attended 'Apollo 13' and it was SO MUCH FUN. What a treat to be able to get out and see a movie in a unique environment.

“

We watched 'Picture A Scientist' last night, and my daughters were fired up! This was a really nice opportunity for us all!







## WISCONSIN SCIENCE FESTIVAL? CURIOSITY UNLEASHED.

### Top Ten Reasons to Host a **Wisconsin Science Festival** Event

1. Connect with new audiences virtually or in-person
2. Build bridges between STEM role models and the community
3. Create unique experiences for school visits
4. Work with scientists honing their communication skills
5. Show off your work!
6. Experiment and try something new
7. Learn how other organizations are connecting with their communities
8. Raise the profile of STEM throughout Wisconsin by participating in this statewide movement
9. Showcase the intersection of science and the arts
10. Inspire curiosity in our fellow citizens!





From the local leaders who host events to the STEM professionals who share their passion for discovery and the volunteers who make it all happen, the Wisconsin Science Festival is ultimately powered by people. We are thrilled at the level of support that communities throughout Wisconsin lend to the festival and the hard work that they put in to creating sparks of curiosity in their audience.

In the world of virtual events, we have continued to offer Wisconsin Science Festival programming past the four traditional days. In estimating our attendance, we assumed youth views would include a parent/guardian attendee and adult audiences to be on average 1 1/2 people.

## FESTIVAL TOTALS

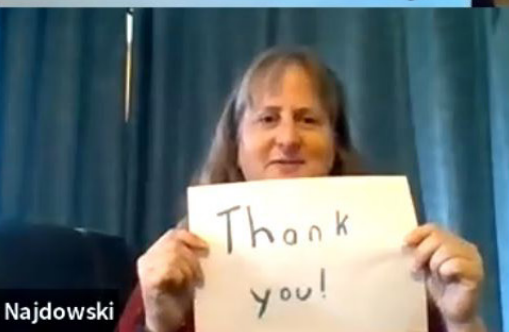
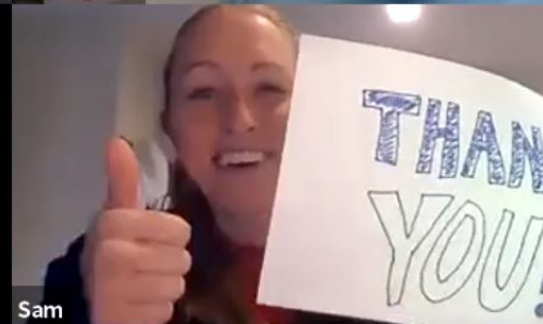
**Festival weekend: 5,941**



**Two weeks out: 16,748**



**One month out: 43,190**



## STEERING COMMITTEE

**George Tzougros**

WSF co-founder  
Wisconsin Arts Board

**Sarah Miller**

Wisconsin Institute for Discovery

**Brian Mattmiller**

Morgridge Institute for Research

**Kevin Anderson**

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

**Michael Harryman**

PBS-Wisconsin

**Mike Harrison**

BioForward

**Jeffrey Potter**

Wisconsin Public Radio

**Fran Puleo**

UW-Madison Badger Talks

**Eric Wilcots**

Chair of the steering committee, Dean,  
UW-Madison College of Letters and Sciences

**Arjun Sanga**

WiSys

**Sam Ridders**

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

**Ginger Ann Contreras**

Wisconsin Institute for Discovery

**Rick Reyer**

Wisconsin Public Radio

**Kate Hewson**

UW-Madison Division of the Arts

**Chris Najdowski**

Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation

**Bret Owsley**

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

**Karl Martin**

Dean, UW Extension

---

## FESTIVAL OPERATIONS

**Wisconsin Science Festival****Laura Heisler**

Festival Director

**Coordinators**

Samantha Mulrooney

Dan Murphy

Morgan Olson

Travis Tangen

Val Blair

Jo Withers

Jerrold Buckner

Becky Balistreri

Shauna Baranczyk

**Communications**

Jacqui Fuller

Brian Mattmiller

Chris Najdowski

Jim Mayfield

Jeanan Yasiri Moe

Sally Younger

---

## ADDITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**Tiffany Kenney**, Director

**Michelle Morrison**, Programming Coordinator

**Madison's Central Business Improvement District**



## STATEWIDE PARTICIPATING SITES

Building for Kids Children's Museum  
Carbone Cancer Center  
Center for Sustainable Nanotechnology  
Children's Museum of Green Bay  
Colossal Fossils  
The Corner Table Podcast  
DeForest Public Library  
Door County Maritime Museum  
Dupont  
E.D. Locke Public Library  
Ellsworth Public Library  
Friends of Cherokee Marsh  
Gearbox Labs  
Henry Vilas Zoo  
Illumina  
International Crane Foundation  
Kaukauna Public Library  
Kenosha Public Library  
Klondike Cheese Company  
L.D. Fargo Public Library  
Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum  
Logic Puzzle Museum  
Marathon County Public Library  
Matheson Memorial Library  
Mead Public Library  
MilliporeSigma  
Minocqua Public Library  
Mukwonago Community Library

Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies  
New Berlin Public Library  
Northwoods Cooperative Weed Management Area  
Pauline Haass Public Library Children's Department  
Pewaukee Public Library  
Promega Corporation  
Retzer Nature Center  
Science Is Fun and the Joy of Learning  
Science to Street Art  
Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts  
Sherman & Ruth Weiss Community Library  
Superior Public Museums  
Treinen Farm Corn Maze & Pumpkin Patch  
UW Arboretum  
UW-Eau Claire at Barron County  
UW Geology Museum  
UW-Madison  
UW-Milwaukee  
UW Space Place  
UW-Stevens Point  
UW-Whitewater  
Upham Woods Outdoor Learning Center  
The Urban Wine Collective  
WATG  
Weis Earth Science Museum  
Welty Environmental Center  
Wilberg Memorial Public Library of Osceola  
Wisconsin Book Festival

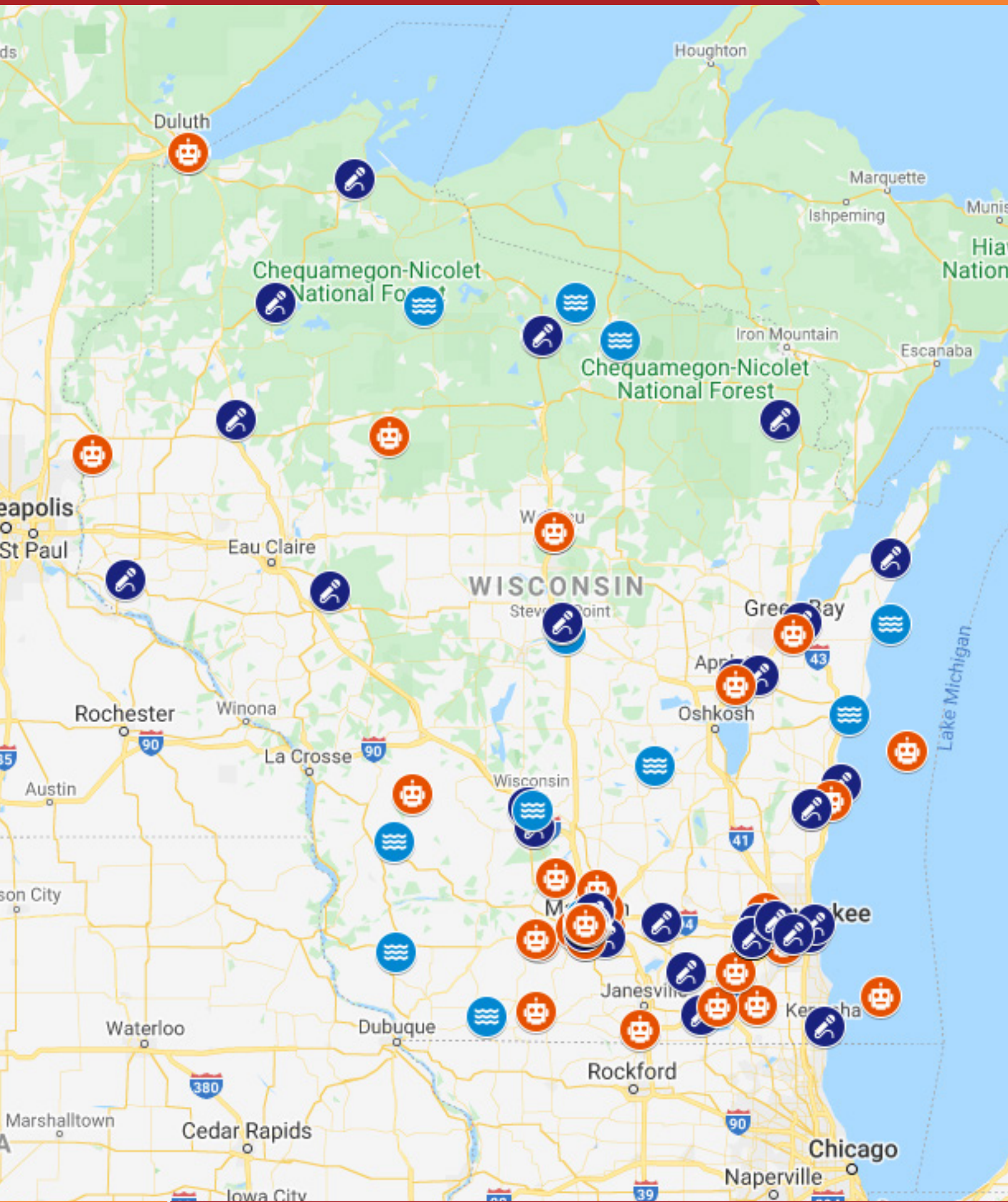
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey  
Wisconsin Immunization Neighborhood  
Zoological Society of Milwaukee





# STATEWIDE SITES

2020





Save  
*the*  
Date



October 21-24, 2021