INSIDE

BACK TO THE FUTURE: HUNTING FOR LOCAL SUSTAINABLE FOOD

WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES

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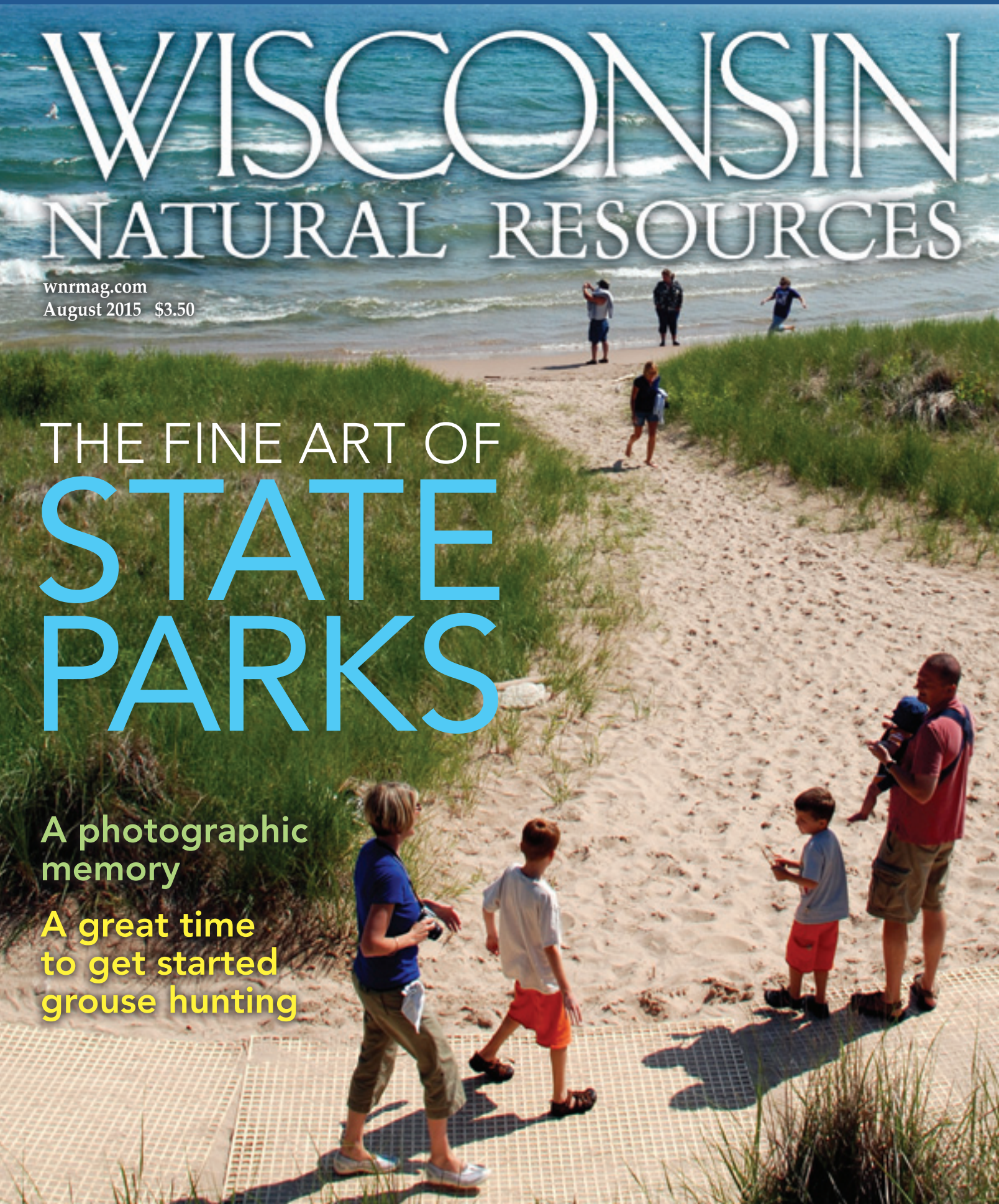
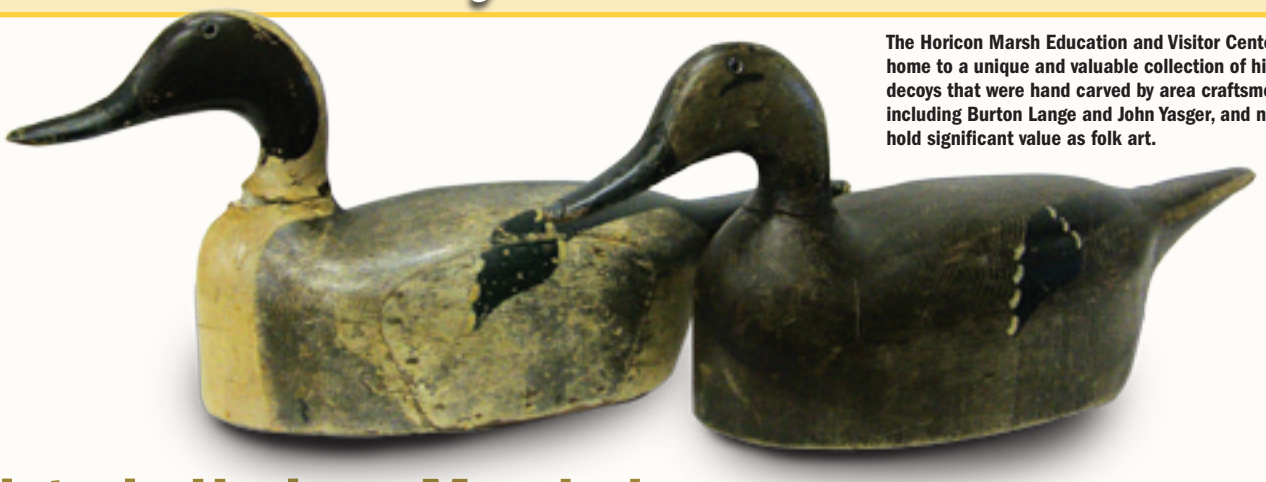


THE FINE ART OF STATE PARKS

A photographic memory

A great time to get started grouse hunting

Back in the day



The Horicon Marsh Education and Visitor Center is home to a unique and valuable collection of historic decoys that were hand carved by area craftsmen, including Burton Lange and John Yasger, and now hold significant value as folk art.

PAUL SAMERDYKE

Historic Horicon Marsh decoy collection set to draw flocks of visitors.

Jennifer Sereno

You won't find Burton Lange's historic Horicon Marsh decoys out on the water bringing down the birds these days.

If you get lucky, you might find a few of the hand-carved, wooden waterfowl on a premier auction website, pictured next to other prized antiques.

But your best bet to see some of these rare and valuable hand-carved duck decoys is to head to Horicon, where the Horicon Marsh Education and Visitor Center serves as home to a remarkable collection of hunting equipment from a bygone era that highlights the wetland's importance as a gathering place for hunters and the hunted through the ages.

"The decoys themselves are beautiful examples of craftsmanship but they also symbolize an important period in the marsh's history, when citizen-led restoration efforts began to bring large numbers of waterfowl back to the marsh," says Bret Owsley, Horicon area supervisor for the Department of Natural Resources. "We have quite a few decoys by Burton Lange and John Yasger, two preeminent carvers from the area during the 1930s and '40s. Some of the pieces on display were used by Louis 'Curley' Radke, who led the campaign to have the marsh acquired by the public and restored."

Perhaps the most valuable pieces in the collection are decoys by Burton Lange, which today may fetch $1,000 or more at auction. Lange, a Horicon native and World War I veteran who lived from 1896 to 1967, was a foreman at what became John Deere Horicon Works and carved the decoys in his attic — he didn't have a garage. Lange served as a state director for the Izaak Walton League, a national conservation organization that Radke introduced into the area as he began work to restore the marsh in the 1920s.

Mark Kakatsch, vice president of the Friends of Horicon Marsh Education and Visitor Center and a wingshooting instructor, says Lange was noted for his ability to create convincing puddle duck decoys including mallards, black ducks and pintails. These birds began returning to the marsh in large numbers after attempts to introduce agriculture into the marsh were abandoned and a new dam was constructed to permanently raise water levels in 1934.

Decoy makers of the time used everything from old cork salvaged out of iceboxes to old cedar posts or poles, yet using a variety of humble materials, Lange's work stood out.

"Every good carver back in those days would create a basic design with a stencil on a thin piece of wood or a thick piece of hide," Kakatsch says. "They would lay that pattern out on a block of wood or some cork and begin the manufacturing process. At the time, you would also have other, less skilled carvers copying the patterns of the best craftsmen. If you look at a Lange decoy, you don't see the kind of feather detail you would see on one of today's stylized art pieces but they do look sleek."

Continued on page 29 ⟶

PAUL SAMERDYKE

Some of the local carvers were quite famous in their day and their work symbolized the prestige of the Horicon hunting grounds.

WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES

DOOR COUNTY VISITOR BUREAU

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SUBMITTED BY FRANK WYWIALOWSKI

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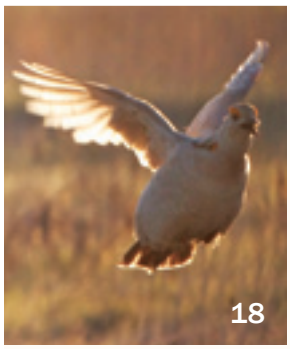
TIM BARTON



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FRONT COVER: The beach walkway at Whitefish Dunes State Park includes a plastic grid system which is accessible for wheelchairs and makes walking on the sand easier.
DOOR COUNTY VISITOR BUREAU

BACK COVER: Blazing star and gray goldenrod bring late summer color to a dry prairie perched above the Mississippi River at the Maiden Rock Bluff State Natural Area in Pepin County. INSET: Butterfly milkweed *(Asclepias tuberosa)*. To order a guidebook to State Natural Areas for $18 (postage paid), send a check or money order payable to "Endangered Resources Fund — Guidebook" to: DNR, Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707. For more information about the SNA Program, visit dnr.wi.gov and search "SNA."
BACK COVER PHOTOS BY THOMAS A. MEYER

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A hunter safety instructor teaches a group of youth the proper method for crossing a fence with a firearm. The photo was taken in Washington County in 1969.

Children pile in the back of a pickup truck to go fishing for panfish planted the same day by the Wisconsin Conservation Department. Children under 14 only were permitted to fish in the city-maintained pond in Portage, Wis. during the summer of 1950.

DEAN TVEDT

Chock-full of grainy goodness

DNR HISTORIC IMAGES LIVE AGAIN ONLINE.

THINKSTOCK®

A little girl dips smelt from the Menominee River in Marinette, Wis. in spring of 1938.

DOROTHY FERGUSON

O.G. Grant sells the first Wisconsin fishing license to John Graas (son of Frank Graas) in Madison. According to the calendar on the wall behind them, the year was 1933.

STABER W. REESE

A warden "plants" fish (a process now called "stocking") in Princeton, Wis. in 1941.

DNR FILE

STABER W. REESE

Natasha Kassulke

I've always liked this quote by Pulitzer Prize winning author Eudora Welty: "A good snapshot stops a moment from running away."

Time truly does seem to stand still as you thumb through the thousands of historic images that comprise the Department of Natural Resources' photo collection. It's a state treasure that spans from the early 1900s through the 1970s.

Until recently, many of these photos were locked in a room in DNR's Madison office. I know that because I'm one of only a few who knows where the key to the room is kept.

But earlier this year, the Department of Natural Resources announced that it had — in a partnership with the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center — digitized 500 historic images, making them available to the public online, with plans to digitize a total of 2,200 black and white images by May 2016.

Since releasing the first batch of photos it has been a pleasure hearing from people who have recognized family members in photos and even shared some of their own photos with us.

The first batch attracted a lot of media interest and included a Who's Who of famous recreationists who visited Wisconsin and our own home state conservationists, including Gypsy Rose Lee rowing a rubber boat, General Dwight D. Eisenhower fishing, Aldo Leopold addressing the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, Gov. Warren Knowles coyote hunting and Boston Red Sox baseball star Ted Williams handling a tame deer.

A new batch of 500 just added to the collection includes photos from fisheries management (fish hatcheries, propagation, lake rehabilitation projects and rough fish control), wildlife management (deer browse, winter feeding, Chambers Island deer reduction project) and lots of wardens and warden activities. There are also several aerial photos of Madison taken from the 1930s through 60s, photos of fishing and hunting violations, and of course a couple more of General Eisenhower and Ted Williams.

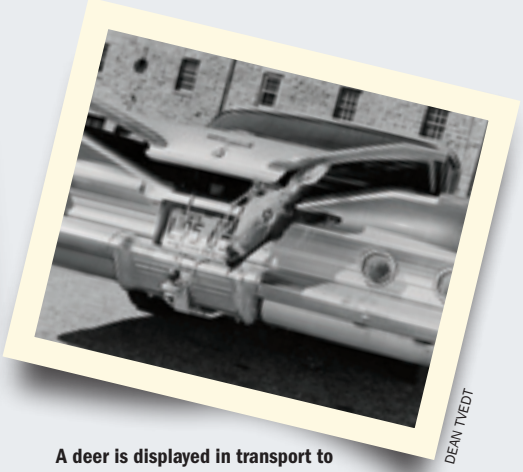
The fashion — including trendy fishing footwear and one piece bathing suits of the time — will make you laugh. But you also might find some familiarity in the looks on the faces of children including the one featured here of the first fishing license sold in the state.

Many of the photos have dates (mostly the year), locations and some caption information. They are "retro" and likely to appeal to classic car lovers — there are several photos showing classy cars covered in deer carcasses — and a crowd that has come to love the coiffures on the television drama, "Mad Men."

Old state park photos just cry

STABER W. REESE

Wisconsin Conservation Department photographer Dean Tvedt takes a movie of a pheasant near a hedgerow in Dane County in 1955.



DEAN TVEDT

A deer is displayed in transport to a registration station. This photo was taken in 1960 in Madison.

EUGENE SANBORN

A Packard car in 1938, loaded with illegal deer confiscated by a warden in Poynette, Wis.

DNR FILE

Duck hunters holding their harvests in Packwaukee, Wis. in 1910. From left to right: Niels Johnson, Dana Sandall, a member of the McDermott family, and E.G. Trumpf. The photo was taken in front of McDermott's Place, a local restaurant.

out, challenging us to return to the same spot and try taking a photo there today. There are photos of prairie chicken hunting — proof that Wisconsin once had a season, the Hodag Snowmobile Marathon, scuba divers, ski jumping, regattas, children dipping for smelt and so much more. There are even photos of early DNR photographers in the field.

"These photos are treasures that should be shared with the public," said DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp when the project was launched. "Just like old family photos, for years they've been stashed in the basement of the State Natural Resources Building waiting for somebody to put them in an album. This project makes them a click away to anybody who wants to see them."

Aside from their historical value, they show how life and places in Wisconsin have changed, and in some cases, how they have stayed the same. The photos were taken by photographers and other staff of the Wisconsin Conservation Department (1930s to 1960s) and Department of Natural Resources (1960s to present).

Traditional conservation duties were the focus of the early Conservation Department and the prevalence of those kinds of images reflects that emphasis. The agency began in 1885 with three fish wardens, and gradually grew with the addition of four game wardens (1887), a forestry department (1903) and a state park board (1907). Pollution control responsibilities were added in 1967 when Wisconsin's executive branch was reorganized and the Department of Natural Resources was created by combining the Conservation Department with the Department of Resource Development.

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To find the images go to uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/wi/dnrphotos/.

Natasha Kassulke is editor of Wisconsin Natural Resources *magazine. A special thanks to Kathryn A. Kahler, editorial writer for the magazine, for contributing to the story and for taking on the time-consuming task of culling and tagging the photo collection for digitizing.*

The fine art of state parks

DNR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS LEAVE THEIR MARK.

A wooded campsite in Perrot State Park. Landscape architects design features that are practical and aesthetically pleasing, and that will blend into the surrounding landscape.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

Joseph Warren and Therese Gripentrog

Why do we visit state parks? They are some of the most beautiful places in the state for sure. But what would our parks be without their winding, scenic entry drives, the meandering trails to panoramic vistas, campsites within pine and hardwood groves or shaded picnic areas on picturesque lakeshores? Without those features, would we appreciate these places as much as we do?

Roads, trails, campsites, picnic areas, boardwalks, beaches, boat launches, visitor centers — all are carefully planned and designed to give us an experience that we've come to expect at our parks — and for that experience, a landscape architect may be responsible.

In fact, it was a landscape architect who was responsible for the development of our first state parks. In his report to the State Park Board in 1909, renowned landscape architect John Nolen wrote eloquently about the justification of parks and drafted a plan that would create the Wisconsin State Park System.

A brief history

Nolen's report was instrumental in getting the state park system off the ground. In the late 1950s, another jolt to the system came when the state authorized $35 million for park funding over a 10-year period.

Bob Espeseth, one of the department's pioneering landscape architects, was authorized to create and lead the first park planning section in the Wisconsin Conservation Department. The section started small — with four offices and a large drafting room rented in the front of a beer distribution building — before moving on to larger state office space.

"The money really got us going. There had not been a formal master plan design process. We established a focus and long-range goals," says Espeseth.

In 1958 Governor Gaylord Nelson asked for a study of acquisition and development projects for the state park system. That same year, the National Park System was conducting a study of the Great Lakes shoreline. Espeseth accompanied the NPS on their work in Wisconsin.

"We flew the shoreline by helicopter to spot areas for recreation, which resulted in a lot of those places becoming parks. We pinpointed Big Bay and Apostle Islands on Lake Superior and Rock Island, Newport, Whitefish Dunes, Harrington Beach on Lake Michigan," says Espeseth.

"Next we flew the interstate system [I-90/94] to pick areas that would relatively fit with interstate highway travel, so people would be able to easily pull off the interstate and stop at parks," says Espeseth. "Some of the parks that resulted from those surveys were Willow River, Buckhorn, additions to the Black River State Forest, and expansions of Rocky Arbor and Lake Kegonsa."

State park planners and landscape architects also worked to preserve the rich heritage of the facilities designed and constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

"Some CCC plans never got developed and we worked off some of those to modify and update them," says Espeseth. "They had beautiful plans. Some we even had framed."

Nineteen new properties were added over 10 years. The rails to trails program, the Ice Age Trail and the Ice Age Scientific Reserve were also just getting started. At one point there were 13 landscape architects on staff.

Espeseth left in 1967 but hired many landscape architects and planners who would go on to long careers with the Department of Natural Resources.

Jim Treichel, one of those hired by Espeseth explains, "There was positive interest in making the park system bigger and better and we had quality people to do it."

What do DNR landscape architects do?

When asked what landscape architecture is, most people may think of garden or golf course design, but the field of landscape architecture is much broader and diversified. It's not landscaping — it's "architecture of the outdoors."

Landscape architects need to understand horticulture, but must also have a strong understanding of physical topography, geology, climate, wildlife, ecology, soils and construction methods, and human psychology. Site suitability and how to incorporate functional designs into the site are also factors that landscape architects consider when planning designs.

DNR landscape architects work not just on state parks, but on projects for all state properties — forests, flowages, wildlife areas, riverways, fisheries and natural areas — and work as part of a team with engineers, planners, property managers and other staff to develop goals for the property and ensure de-

velopment of the property is following aesthetic, practical and culturally viable design principles.

"Engineers will look at the building quality to make sure it stands up. Landscape architects look at the building quality, but also its use and appearance to make sure it looks good," says Treichel.

"We joke with each other, but LAs are the chain link between the engineers' work and what people see at the parks, the aesthetics," explains Glen Clickner, DNR engineering and construction management section chief.

In talking with Espeseth, Treichel, many of the former DNR landscape architects (David Aslakson, Lyle Hannahs, Leif Hubbard, Dennis Kulhanek, Steve Lewis, Bill Moorman, Susan Oshman, Mike Ries, Dan Rogers and Pam Schuler) and current department LAs (Ken Brokaw, Ann Freiwald and Ken Keeley), it becomes apparent that design principles haven't changed in the last 60-some years.

Explains Rogers, "Has the decision making process changed? No. There may be an easier way to do a design, but we still treat a wetland the same way."

"We're still trying to create outdoor space while maintaining the natural setting," says Oshman.

"What landscape architects try to do is to design a site that fits into the landscape and allows for the least amount of destruction," says Kulhanek.

One way landscape architects reach that goal is to walk the property and become intimately familiar with it.

"Al Ehly (former state parks director) would always tell us 'If you have your work caught up, go out and walk your property and get to know it well,'" says Rogers.

"I learned when I first started working here that the DNR guys would park miles away so they could walk into the property and get a feel for it," says Freiwald. "We'd go to a site. Leave and come back. It's during the second visit when you really start to see your ideas taking shape."

"Understanding a specific area was our job. When you went out, you'd always come back thinking about it, thinking how to refine plans," says Aslakson. "You also wanted to know what you were looking at and talking about with people. If you didn't, it was embarrassing."

"It's hard to articulate, but we look at a landscape with a special lens," says Brokaw. "Our training in architectural design, art history, biology, allows us to see the property differently."

An example of a conceptual site plan. Proposed park development is shown in relation to the property's topography and natural features.

DNR FILE

A paved, accessible trail in Mirror Lake State Park. DNR landscape architects, planners and engineers work to design accessible features such as trails, fishing piers, cabins, buildings and more.

Designing the parks

Nolen summed up the purpose of parks well in his report to the State Park Board: "In the case of parks … the main purposes are the preservation and enhancement of natural beauty and the provision for recreation."

To provide recreation there needs to be facilities for people to use, such as buildings, trails, roads, parking lots, walkways, campgrounds, basically anything that's developed.

For landscape architects and planners, providing uniformity to the amenities in the state parks and forests was important. Many of the landscape architects worked in the field across Wisconsin, and having some standards provided an outline for the general function of property facilities while still allowing the unique flavor of each property to shine. Not all parks were developed in the same way.

"Many of us participated in authoring the department 'Design Standards Handbook' which influenced all of the designs we did and is a large legacy of the group," explains Hannahs.

"Being decentralized allowed us to

become more familiar with the property and the users," says Ries. "Being part of the committees to develop the design standards was a great opportunity to be collaborative and exchange ideas."

"We looked at developing different types of parks — a natural park, day use park, overnight park or historic park — and we'd put properties under those categories," says Treichel.

One example of the difference is in Door County.

"Newport State Park was a great landscape to keep more rustic for a different experience. It wasn't exactly a mirror image of Peninsula State Park, but with the lakeshore curving around it we could still include trails, campsites and a beach," says Moorman.

Getting local support and the public involved for park properties proved to be another important aspect of planning and design, and continues to be today.

"The rest of the department was not doing public meetings. It was really something the planning section of parks started for master planning projects," says Treichel.

Says Rogers, "People will tell you amazing things about your project. I learned more my first year on the job than in four years in college."

Planners and designers must take all these factors into consideration, carefully examining a property's natural communities to find a balance between the public's recreation requests with what's best for the land.

Explains Moorman, "When we're planning it's important to take local interests into consideration, but we must also think long-term, hundreds of years down the road. Parks could be here forever."

The changing (recreation) landscape

While the principles of landscape architecture have been the same since the term was coined by Frederick Law Olmstead over 100 years ago, the way people recreate has evolved.

"Camping has changed. The size of RVs and length of the camping seasons has changed. Campers want more flush toilets and electrical sites," says Aslakson.

"Machines have changed and you have to adapt to users," says Hannahs. "Snowmobiles used to travel 25 mph, now it's a lot more than that."

The Americans with Disabilities Act was another turning point for recreation facility design.

"ADA changed designs tremendously," says Ries.

KEN BROKAW

JOSEPH WARREN

Several former and current DNR landscape architects met at Devil's Lake State Park to offer insight on their profession and the work they do. Many received their degrees through the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Pictured left to right: Mike Ries, David Aslakson, Leif Hubbard, Bill Moorman, Dan Rogers, Pam Schuler, Lyle Hannahs, Ken Brokaw, co-author Therese Gripentrog, Ann Freiwald.

Ries conducted a statewide meeting for landscape architects and planners so they could get a feel for what it's like to be in a wheelchair. For half of the day the landscape architects would have to get around the park in a wheelchair.

Says Rogers, "Nothing has ever given me the feel for designing something, more than when I had to use a wheelchair for a length of time."

Today, connecting people with nature is also more important than ever as Americans are spending less and less time recreating outdoors.

"A call to action for the National Park Service centennial in 2016 is to try to get people out into the parks. When we plan the Ice Age Trail we try to bring it through communities so it connects with people. If people don't know about it, and use it, they don't love it and they won't vote for it," says Schuler, who started with the Department of Natural Resources and now works for the National Park Service.

Blending science and art

One thing that's always been the same for landscape architects is making a park visit a quality experience. It's not just about getting from point A to B.

"We're trying to create an experience. It's kind of a magical thing to do," says Schuler. "We hope the landscape fades into the background and the experience becomes part of them, for visitors to think 'I love to come to this place because this is the feeling I have,' rather than simply seeing the place."

It's an art to accomplish that. If something is not designed well, it won't be sustainable, it won't be able to be maintained and it won't be used. And if something's not aesthetically pleasing, people won't come back.

Says Hubbard, "How do you blend roadsides into the surrounding landscape? The challenge is to make it look like it has always been there. It's about bringing art and science together."

Landscape architects will say that challenge and the work itself is its own reward.

"Getting people into the parks, using them. Land ethics. These are things we all share and are really unique to landscape architects," says Brokaw. "We care about the properties we work on and have a deep commitment to them. It's a lot more to us than just a job."

"Sometimes when I'd be working on the Lower Wisconsin Riverway I'd have to pinch myself. I'd think, 'I can't believe I get paid to do this,'" says Aslakson. "There's a state natural area that's going to be there forever. It makes you feel good."

What's also most rewarding is seeing a project from conception through to completion, and seeing people using the facilities and enjoying themselves.

And for many park visitors, they may not realize why that is.

As Freiwald puts it, "If we've done our job right, no one will know we were here."

Joseph Warren is associate editor of Wisconsin Natural Resources *magazine. Therese Gripentrog is a DNR landscape architect working out of Milwaukee.*

The start of the hunt, the start of a tradition

DON'T WAIT TO GET STARTED GROUSE HUNTING.

ERIC VERBETEN

Eric Verbeten

My first shot was a miss, but the second found its target. In that moment, I successfully hunted my first ruffed grouse in Wisconsin's Northwoods, transforming me from a shotgun-toting novice, dressed in blaze orange, into a true grouse hunter. That moment marked the beginning of a lifelong passion for me. To this day, I don't remember what was louder, the gunshot or the roaring cheer from my friend as he watched on — witnessing me make personal history.

Three years before that moment, I had never seen a grouse, heard a grouse or knew what one looked like. And now, I can't wait for the start of the season in September. What started as a hobby, quickly turned into a passion for the woods, the hunt and the tradition.

I owe my thanks to my friend Dan who dragged me along on grouse walks to introduce me to the sport. Despite my doubts, he taught me the fundamentals. His die-hard attitude got me out early and home late — walking more miles through difficult terrain than I ever thought possible. His passion for the sport was contagious and it drove me forward despite the difficulty of the early years. The first two were fruitless and sometimes frustrating. Missed shots were common and the feeling of being outwitted by a bird took its toll. But we kept on until I finally had my moment, something I will not forget.

I asked myself why it took so long for my first bird. Eventually, I found the answer, but it wasn't what I expected. I realized there was no set timeline for learning how to hunt, and success isn't defined by the number of birds you bag in a day. The hunting part is only a piece of the greater whole. The excitement, the adrenaline and the gunfire don't overshadow the many joys found

The author after hunting his first ruffed grouse in the northwoods of Wisconsin.

DAN ROSENOW

in the walk, time spent with friends and the journey to improve skills. Even if you see nothing in a day, you connect with nature and you feel the satisfaction of well-earned exhaustion.

Early on, I found my time in the woods satisfying and relaxing, but that quickly turned into a need — a need that could only be quelled by more time spent on the trail.

Grouse season runs from mid-September until the end of January in Wisconsin. The season can be broken up into three sub-seasons: early, late and winter. Usually, opening weekend in the early season is a mixed bag of results, with rare moments of hunting success and many missed chances due to the birds escaping through a thicket of dense vegetation.

Opening weekend is more or less a ceremonial outing for Dan and me. We are less concerned about the hunting conditions or being successful, we're just glad to be back in the wild, doing what we love.

It isn't until late October when the hunting gets really good. The cool morning air mixed with warm sun has to be one of the best combinations for long walks with crunching leaves underfoot. The best days are the calm, cool and sunny days. The worst are windy ones, which put grouse on alert and make them prone to flush sooner, and often out of range. I have had luck hunting grouse in all types of weather, but the windy days remain the most difficult and unpredictable.

Winter brings its own set of challenges and joys. The stillness of a snow-covered forest is powerful, and is best enjoyed with frequent stops to take it all in. Trudging through the powder proves to be more work than expected, so aid-

HERBERT LANGE

The ruffed grouse is the most common grouse species found in Wisconsin. It gets its name from the dark-colored neck ruff found on both males and females.

GET TO KNOW RUFFED GROUSE

The ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus)* is a chicken-sized bird that is shy and wary, spending the majority of its life alone and hiding from predators, according to Gary Zimmer of the Ruffed Grouse Society. The ruffed grouse is the only grouse in North America from the genus *Bonasa* with its closest relatives being the Eurasian hazel grouse and the black-breasted hazel grouse of China. The ruffed grouse gets its name from the dark-colored neck ruff found on both males and females, though it is much more pronounced on the males. Three other members of the grouse family (but from a different genus) found in Wisconsin include the greater prairie chicken, sharp-tailed grouse and spruce grouse.

Zimmer explains that there are many challenges facing the grouse hunter, the biggest being a bird that is elusive and very good at avoiding you. When a ruffed grouse makes its escape, it has one goal, and that's putting as much distance and foliage between you and it. Grouse can reach speeds up to 50 mph and they do this with the help of a strong set of muscles to flap their wings at blinding speeds. Ruffed grouse use their wings for both flying and courtship. In courtship, the male bird rotates his wing forward, creating rapid air movements. Numerous small muscles of the wing and shoulder pull the wing forward or backward rotating the humerus, allowing the bird to raise or lower the leading edge of the wing. This ability is unique to ruffed grouse and aids in maneuverability during flight. Ruffed grouse however, do not have the stamina for sustained flight. Typical flights are only for relatively short distances, 300 to 500 feet once flushed.

The sound of a grouse flush is difficult to describe (and up for debate), but it could be likened to the sound of distant, rumbling thunder. Sometimes, you don't hear the bird, you feel it. As you walk, you learn to step in rhythm so you can hear a flush against the backdrop of synced footsteps. The roar of a flushing grouse can be startling. But through experience, you learn to channel that surprise into an automatic echo-locating-instinct, honing in on the sound as it flees. All of this happens within a short moment, and if you are lucky, you see a glimpse of your fleeting target for a second.

Despite the challenge, the good news is newcomers don't need a lot of equipment to get started. At its most basic, a good pair of hiking boots, a shotgun and some blaze orange are all you need. But like any sport, expenses can go up quickly with each item. There is a wide range of options for outdoor and upland apparel, but in the end it comes down to hunter preference.

Having a hunting dog is a great way to improve your chances of finding grouse. However, a dog is not necessary. Their noses are invaluable at sniffing out grouse that would otherwise sit still and let you walk by. Nature has equipped the ruffed grouse with superb camouflage, a pattern of feather coloration throughout its body that makes it nearly impossible to locate unless it moves. But a lurking dog pressures the bird to make a dash for safety, giving you the chance to see it.

ing me in my journey are a good pair of snowshoes, which help negotiate the jagged terrain below and provide a platform to step from.

As I crunch my way through unmarked pathways I keep watch on the pine trees, since they are the only real tree cover left in the woods for grouse to hide. Another hiding place is surprisingly, in a snow roost. Grouse will burrow under the surface to stay warm and get out of the wind. I have never flushed a grouse out of a snow roost, but I have heard it's a spectacle to see and hear.

BRITTANY WILLIAMS

The author and his dog, Carter, set out on one last winter hunt, ending the 2014-15 season.

ERIC VERBETEN

Dan Rosenow, who introduced the author to the sport, takes in an early season hunt in Forest County.

As I reflect back on my six years as a grouse hunter, I wonder why I hadn't started sooner? The sport has become an integral part of my life and has opened up doors to many other outdoor sports like fishing, hiking and other types of hunting. I eagerly await my seventh season because little-by-little, I improve with each year. Mastery is unachievable, but I prefer it that way. Ruffed grouse hunting will always be a challenging pursuit, but I can think of no better way to spend a fall day.

Eric Verbeten writes for DNR's Office of Communications and the Bureau of Science Services.

WHERE TO HUNT

Birds can be found in nearly every part of the state, but they tend to be more concentrated in the northern third of Wisconsin, according to the Ruffed Grouse Society. These birds spend nearly their entire life in dense, young forest cover so thick that it is tough for predators, like humans, to walk through let alone swing the barrel of a gun. Ruffed grouse are often found where trees like aspen or paper birch are regenerating as a result of a timber harvest, tornado or wildfire. Once these young trees are 4 to 5 years old, grouse will start using them for cover.

Ruffed grouse are territorial. Once a young male sets up a territory during the first fall of his life, he protects it rigorously, keeping all other males outside his chosen home. Male grouse will drum throughout the snowless season attracting females in the spring but also announcing to other males, especially in the fall, that this territory is taken. Any intruder that does not heed this message is met at the "property" line and a confrontation occurs. In most cases the intruder is forced away to find another vacant spot to set up his own territory.

>>> FOR MORE INFORMATION ON GROUSE HUNTING, WHERE TO HUNT AND THE SEASONS, VISIT:

dnr.wi.gov and search keyword "grouse"

Wastewater collection lagoons get a new life

FALL RIVER PROJECT IS FAVORABLE FOR NATURE WALKS AND WATERFOWL.

A variety of waterfowl have settled in at the project site, formerly wastewater retention ponds.

Story by Jessica Montez and photos by Natasha Kassulke

Nestled between Beaver Dam and Madison, the far-from-sleepy village of Fall River recently converted its wastewater treatment system from settling ponds to a connection with the city of Columbus wastewater system, and restored the abandoned collection ponds into a natural area, welcoming both residents and wildlife alike.

Fall River, not to be confused with Fall River, Mass., was in fact named after the infamous town, when New Englander Alfred A. Brayton decided to call the new territory his home in 1845. The village of Fall River was founded near two small creeks that meet to form the Crawfish River, a small tributary to the larger Rock River flowing through south central Wisconsin. Lazy Lake Dam located on the east end of the village was constructed as a waterpower source and a means for continued development of the village.

Over a century later, in 1967, the treatment lagoon system was constructed to pump local wastewater to collection ponds just outside of town. As the village grew, the need for a better system was imminent. Due to its geographical location, flooding became a seasonal struggle. With heavy snow and rainfalls producing disastrous floods in the spring, the village of Fall River began to assess the outdated pump system and quickly realized changes needed to be made.

"It wasn't pumping efficiently during flooding in the spring and there would be water in the system for days," recalls Fall River Director of Public Works Craig Schultz.

Charlie Pritchard lives nearby and enjoys walking his dog, Murphy, a 1-year-old Bouvier des Flandres, around the ponds.

Although the proposal was made in 2007, the wastewater project was not fully completed until recently. For initial funding of the project, the village applied grants they received from the United States Department of Agriculture and the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the 2008 Midwest flooding.

Schultz oversaw most of the wastewater project, which meant contracting professional services for assessment and construction bids, negotiations with the city of Columbus and preparation of a wastewater facility plan for the village. In addition to facilitating the conversion, it was necessary for the village to implement legal cleanup procedures of the abandoned sewer lagoons.

By state law, any plans for wastewater treatment facilities must be reviewed and approved by the Department of Natural Resources. The department regulates wastewater discharges into groundwater and surface water, so Doris Thiele, the DNR's regional wastewater engineer was consulted for the project. Schultz had some concerns with meeting the conversion criteria, such as making sure the metal, nutrient, pollutant and contaminant levels remaining in the lagoons were low enough to enable them to safely remove the sludge for land applications.

"Some of the challenges were getting all the numbers, data and other preliminary information before beginning the project, otherwise the actual conversion went pretty smooth," Schultz recalls.

After a facility plan was prepared, the project was proposed to village members, with mostly positive responses.

"A lot of people recognized the need for an updated system but with some negative feedback at the cost of the project," Schultz says.

The site is considered a model for wetland mitigation and restoration and offers a place to hike, picnic and watch wildlife.

If the gate is open, visitors can drive near the ponds. When the gate is closed, however, there is a bit of a hike from the road to the site.

Two main projects were proposed and prepared. The first was to regionalize the Fall River sewer system by shutting off the old lift station to the lagoons and turning on the new lift station that would begin pumping to the Columbus collection system. The second was to replace the sewer main laterals located on the lower side of Main Street on the east side of town that were running to the village park on the west side. The lateral project would prevent unwanted infiltration of groundwater and surface water from being pumped to Columbus. Construction of both projects began in 2011 and was completed in 2012 with the help of a mild winter.

After Thiele assessed the lagoons, she saw the potential for yet another conversion — restoring the collection lagoons into a natural area. Thiele consulted Eric Lobner, a DNR wildlife biologist and Fall River resident, to discuss the possibilities.

"To be honest, this is the first time I was ever aware of it [conversion of a wastewater lagoon into a habitat area for wildlife]," explains Lobner. "Historically, the area where the lagoons are located was a wetland."

It was such a natural fit that Thiele and Lobner met with Schultz and other members of the village board to further discuss the idea.

Lobner noticed large concentrations of waterfowl, such as Canada geese, sandhill cranes, coots and a variety of ducks using the ponds especially during migration. The birds were attracted to the available vegetation, such as bidens, arrowhead and smartweed. These plants are good wetland indicator species and are highly sought after by waterfowl due to the seeds they produce — a preferred food source for migrating birds.

Of the three collection ponds (or cells), two contained a good mix of vegetation and required minimal work to restore.

Lobner suggested some changes to the third cell that would increase waterfowl usage.

"Previously, the third cell was flat, almost like a bathtub," he says. "Waterfowl prefer wetland habitat that contains a 50/50 mix of open water and emergent vegetation. As a result, there was a need to make some significant changes to the topography in order to create areas with shallow water that would promote the growth of the plant species that were present in the other two cells. That's kind of standard in wildlife management. If we could create that condition, it would work out perfect."

But there is more work ahead, as the site will require regular maintenance. Schultz and Lobner agreed that incorporating hiking trails and an easement would make it more accessible to residents and the general public. Developing an aesthetic, yet strategic theme, to entice certain species of waterfowl would be necessary to prevent high concentrations of birds that could be a nuisance to the community.

Ponds that do not have a mix of emergent vegetation and are primarily open water can have a tendency to attract high concentrations of geese that can become a nuisance within a community if not managed properly. Lobner made suggestions for continued management of the wildlife area, such as revegetation of food sources made available throughout the year to help maintain birds.

"Trying to provide different elements of the entire life cycle on an annual basis, ultimately will be great for these birds during migration as well as during the nesting season," Lobner says.

Schultz and Lobner are enthusiastic about the prospect of further developing the wildlife area and providing residents with an opportunity to get outside and enjoy and appreciate wildlife almost right in their backyard.

Fall River is a model for wetland mitigation, restoration and preservation.

"It's taking a site and repurposing it for a positive result and I don't think we really even started to see the benefits yet," Lobner says. "Certainly it's a great opportunity for residents."

Jessica Montez is an editorial intern with Wisconsin Natural Resources *magazine. She lives in Fall River, Wis.*

Six decades of deer hunting

MORE MEMORIES THAN DEER BUT THAT'S OK.

Frank Wywialowski

The author as a boy with his first buck in 1952.

PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY FRANK WYWIALOWSKI

The author with his antlerless deer harvested in 2013.

I was born and raised on a dairy farm north of Armstrong Creek, Wis. and believe it or not, I was the eighth child in a family of 17 children. Two of my younger siblings were twin sisters. All of my siblings learned how to work both with others and alone with some time for fun things, when time allowed.

At a young age, our parents taught us to be patient, persistent and always work to our full ability, which helped us to do well at school, with our hobbies and later in life. And most, but not all 17 of us, also took an interest in fishing and hunting with our dad, usually on Sundays.

Prior to opening day each year, our dad would help us sight-in our deer rifles. There were many rocks located near the bottom of a hog-back ridge that ran north to south through the pastureland of our farm. Instead of going to a rifle range, my father deemed us safe and ready to hunt after we managed to hit twice in succession a rock in that ridge.

I remember the first year that I hunted. It was with great anticipation and I spent most of the day wondering what was being shot at in the distance as I never saw or heard a deer on opening day. Later in the season, at a distance, I saw what I thought was a bear going through a briar patch. When it came out into the open, though, I confirmed it was a stray black horse and that was the extent of my excitement for the season. An older brother, on the other hand, did bag a nice buck that year.

The second year that I went deer hunting, our dad decided that we should hunt farther from home in the Nicolet National Forest. The fact we had to travel required that we wake up earlier to help with the milking chores before we could head to the forest. I recall that it was a calm, crisp morning with slight ground cover of snow. After seeing a pair of blue jays and a raven earlier that day, I shot my first buck at 10:30 a.m. on Nov. 22, 1952. I will never forget how fast it happened, and I was thankful to dad for deciding to change our deer hunting location.

Fifteen years later, on a rather stormy opening day when I could hardly see the low flying snow geese heading in a southerly direction, I began to wonder, "What am I doing out in these weather conditions?" Shortly after 8 a.m., the first deer came into view. I shot. It was a beautiful 8-point buck that field dressed at 210 pounds and I welcomed help to drag it out! It ended up being my "Biggest Buck" to date and was bagged on Nov. 18, 1967 near the Chequamegon National Forest.

After a fellow hunter, about 20 years older than me, died from a heart condition while hunting, I decided to hunt closer to home. Since then, I've shot most of my bucks near Baraboo in the scenic upper bluffs area just off Man Mound Road.

Although I've seen fewer deer locally in recent years, I was still lucky enough to harvest an antlerless deer on Nov. 26, 2013.

After six decades in the field I can still say that I enjoy going deer hunting. And when I do, I reminisce about the many good past years along with my dedicated, hard-working, loving, encouraging parents who helped me in so many ways. Although I've missed a couple of opening days over the many years, and I've sadly also lost five siblings in that time, I'm very thankful for having very good health and for places to hunt.

So much has changed since my dad first took me hunting 60-some years ago. Prior to my going deer hunting, dad retired his team of horses that were used to "break" new land, for a new tractor, then a used pickup truck and the list goes on. Most changes are for the better, while some are harder for me to accept. One such change is the going out of business of W.B. Place & Co. which made many a pair of fleece lined buckskin gloves and "choppers" that made great gifts years ago. Now gone but not forgotten.

Frank Wywialowski writes from Beloit, Wis.

There's no better place to hunt turkeys

A New Year's turkey in 2011 with the author's hunting companion, Vic, a Vizsla (Hungarian pointer).

TIM BARTON

TAKE THE WISCONSIN SLAM CHALLENGE.

Tim Barton

Vic, my turkey dog, a Vizsla (member of the pointer group), and I begin our fall hunting adventure together, typically setting up where Vic scattered a flock of turkeys. Vic can usually be found lying next to my left leg with the look of happiness only a dog can express at a glance. As the scattered turkeys start their lost "kee kee" whistles looking for each other in order to regroup, we know that's my cue to start lost yelping, or as some call it, assembly calling. In the case of scattered gobblers, coarse yelps and aggressive purrs can bring them back in to the gun.

I love it when the woods are filled with the sounds of turkeys whistling and yelping at each other and at us. Vic and I then become part of the flock, talking back and forth. As the conversation continues, Vic stiffens on a laying point towards the direction of the approaching turkeys. My gun will be up at the ready. There are two tags in my pocket and with a couple of gunshots I'll be hoping to validate those.

Turkeys are not just another upland bird to be flushed and shot. You can certainly do that; it's legal. However, to a traditional turkey hunter like me, gobblers are special birds that require finesse to tag. After all, what other upland game bird can be called in?

And there is no better place to hunt turkeys than in Wisconsin. The combination of seasons, habitat and the fact I can take my dog along in the summer, fall and winter make it turkey hunting heaven.

The Wisconsin Slam

Summer turkey? Wait you can't shoot turkeys in the summer. There is only a spring and fall season, right?

Most people think Wisconsin has two turkey hunting seasons; spring (April and May) and fall (mid-September through late December — though closed during the nine-day gun deer season).

But if you check the calendar, the fall turkey season dates overlap the official calendar dates of summer and winter. Summer officially runs about June 21 to Sept. 22, allowing one to bag a summer turkey in the fall season, and winter officially starts around Dec. 22, giving Wisconsin fall turkey hunters a 10-day opportunity to shoot a "winter" turkey.

It was about eight years ago when it dawned on me that Wisconsin hunters can shoot a turkey during each of the four calendar seasons: spring, summer, fall and winter.

Think of it as the "Wisconsin Slam" — taking a turkey in each season. Who do you know who has accomplished this? No trophies are awarded and there is no official recognition. It's all about the personal satisfaction a turkey hunter, who understands turkeys and their year-round behavior, gets from this distinction.

Bar none, Wisconsin is a unique wild turkey hunting state, offering thousands of tags over the counter that in some units do not sell out by season's end.

Why pursue a Wisconsin Slam?

The Wisconsin Slam is fun motivation to get out turkey hunting during a time when you might be distracted with

something else to do or hunt. The "summer" and "winter" turkeys are harder to bag and offer a fun challenge. The vegetation is thick in the summer making the turkeys more difficult to find. Winter season is the opposite — there is no vegetation so the turkeys are easier to find, but that means it is also easier for the turkeys to see the hunter and his dog.

This is a uniquely Wisconsin hunting opportunity that so many are overlooking. The spring season is the most popular but I'd like to see more hunters take advantage of hunting turkeys during the four seasons of the year. Need more incentive? Summer, fall and winter turkeys are more tender and taste much better than the spring gobblers who are the survivors of winter starvation.

Not only can you complete a Wisconsin Slam, but the state offers a variety of hunting flavors.

Want to chase turkeys in miles of forests? Head to the northern big woods. Want to try mountain turkey hunting? Wisconsin doesn't have any "real" mountains, but western Wisconsin does have some mighty steep bluffs. Marshland and river bottoms across the state can provide hunting with the feel of southern swamp turkeys, minus the large reptiles. Don't forget to try southern Wisconsin for some prairie turkey hunting.

I'd argue that no other state offers such myriad turkey hunting opportunities.

Turkey dogs

Another important dimension to Wisconsin's wild turkey hunting happened when turkey dogs were legalized for the fall turkey hunt season starting in 2011. It is widely believed that hunting turkeys with dogs is a new method, however, using turkey dogs in North America is one of the original turkey hunting methods that dates back to the founding of Jamestown in 1607. A small contingent of turkey hunters are now bringing the sport of turkey dogging back. I am one of those hunters.

Vic, the turkey dog, on setup.

TIM BARTON

In spring, gobblers advertise their location by gobbling. In fall, this is not normally the case which makes finding the turkeys more challenging. Thus, a turkey dog really comes in handy during the fall season. A turkey dog's job is to find the turkey flocks, then flush them in different directions while barking or yipping to let his master know where the action is. When turkeys scatter in different directions it is easier for the hunter to call the turkeys back together while initiating setup with his dog at the point of the break.

Hunting with a dog in the fall brings excitement that makes spring hunting seem tame by comparison. When turkeys respond for gathering they do so with gusto, gobbling, purring, kee kees, yelps — you name the call and they do it. Many times a group of gobblers will not only gobble and purr, they'll fight with each other as they come back.

Hunting with a turkey dog also extends the time of contact and interaction with wild turkeys. The first contact is when the dog is flushing or breaking up the turkey flock. This is particularly rewarding for the hunter who enjoys the flush of wild birds. The second contact occurs when the turkey answers your call. Yes, turkeys talk to you. Then of course, hopefully, the interaction brings the turkeys in close to you and your dog. A trembling dog close by your side adds to the excitement of the incoming birds as you know you have trained this dog with the skills required. It's fun to share the excitement and there's no better place to do it.

Tim Barton writes from Pepin, Wis. and blogs about hunting at charlieelk.com.

A successful hunt in 2012.

WALKER WOLDSTAD

WISCONSIN'S TURKEY MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Wisconsin Wild Turkey Management Plan, a coordinated effort between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, key stakeholder groups and the public, is available on the DNR website. Visit dnr.wi.gov and search "turkey management."

The Wild Turkey Management Plan will guide decisions regarding the allocation of turkey permits, the structure of spring and fall hunting seasons, the use of Wild Turkey Stamp funds, and many other aspects of turkey management in the state through 2025. The current plan reflects recent scientific research and changes in turkey distribution and hunting techniques. The management plan was guided in part by input received at 12 meetings held statewide in 2012, as well as an online survey.

A rare, rare chicken

BUENA VISTA MARSH TURNS OUT BRUNETTES AND A BLOND.

A leucistic greater prairie chicken. Leucism is an abnormal plumage condition caused by a genetic mutation that prevents pigment from being properly deposited on a bird's feathers.

Story and photos by Hans G. Schabel

Prairie chickens once boomed both vocally and in terms of sheer numbers throughout the vast grasslands from southern Canada to Texas. Within a few decades, however, overhunting and the conversion of native prairie into agriculture, roads and cities, brought these magnificent birds to near extinction. As a matter of fact, one of three subspecies, the heath hen, did become extinct during the 1930s.

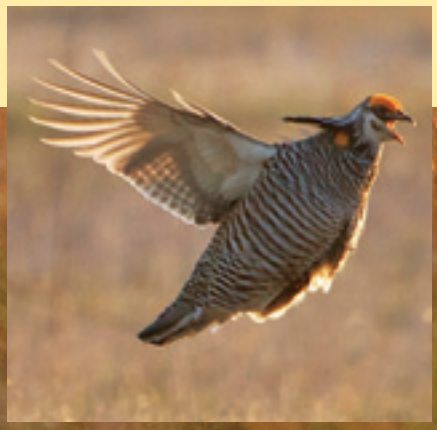
Even today, following decades of conservation efforts in several provinces and states, the remaining prairie chicken populations hang on precariously in isolated pockets. In Wisconsin this includes a relatively stable stronghold of the greater prairie chicken in the Buena Vista Marsh south of Stevens Point. Every April, avid birders flock from near and far to attend the prairie chicken festival in the Golden Sands, hoping to see this rare bird perform its quirky early-morning ritual dance on traditional, communal mating grounds called leks or booming grounds.

Hidden in blinds near these short-grass dance floors, visitors can watch the spirited displays up close, as the cocks pull all their visual and vocal registers to impress the hens. To make themselves look bigger, the birds fluff their feathers, spread and drag their wings, flip up their fanned tail and erect two bundles of long feathers, the pinnae, horn-like from behind their head. Bowing low, cackling and whooping noisily, the show peaks with a crescendo of foot stomping and eerie, moaning booms resonating from the pumped up, bright orange-purple air sacs along the neck.

After this exercise has warmed up the party in the early morning chill, pairs of cocks square up for battle to defend their territories or even capture prime real estate. Facing each other, they crouch low before leaping high into the air to gain the upper hand, while flapping their wings and trying to kick their opponent or attract the attention of hens. All the while, "the ladies" stroll among their suitors seeming nonchalant and disinterested, as they size up promising mates, which invariably are cocks dominating inner territories on the lek. Once a hen has made a decision, she invites her prince for action in the early morning sun.

Just witnessing an assembly of these rare creatures on their mating grounds is a birder's dream come true. And to see one that is out of the ordinary makes the experience even sweeter. That is what happened when, in April 2012, a leucistic prairie chicken showed up on one of the leks on the Buena Vista Marsh. This bird was mostly white, with an irregular mottling of light brown throughout, while its air sacs and eyebrows were the normal bright orange. Unlike albinos,

Male greater prairie chickens erect their pinnae to impress the hens.



While leucism can be unusual for a birder to see, according to bird expert Melissa Mayntz in her column "Bird Leucism" (birding.about.com), "Birds with the condition face special challenges in the wild. Lighter plumage may rob the birds of protective camouflage and make them more vulnerable to predators." She adds, "Because plumage colors play an important role in courtship rituals, birds with leucism may be unable to find strong, healthy mates."

where a genetic mutation totally suppresses pigment formation, leucistic, and piebald specimens experience only a partial loss of melanin in some or parts of their feathers. While albinism is extremely rare in birds, leucism has been observed in many species, from ostrich and penguins to hummingbirds. Even so, it is still a rare phenomenon, especially for the prairie chicken.

Irrespective of his seductive booming and belligerent demeanor, the blond bird apparently did not succeed in asserting himself in 2012. As a "bird of another feather" he seemed relegated to the fringe of the lek and was not observed to mate. Surprisingly, he did make another showing in 2013, obviously having overcome his seeming vulnerability for predators. With careful management, at least his brown-barred brothers are likely to assure that crisp spring mornings in Central Wisconsin will continue to resonate with the wild booming of their sonorous love song, even though they are no longer booming in terms of former abundance.

Hans G. Schabel is professor emeritus of Natural Resources at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

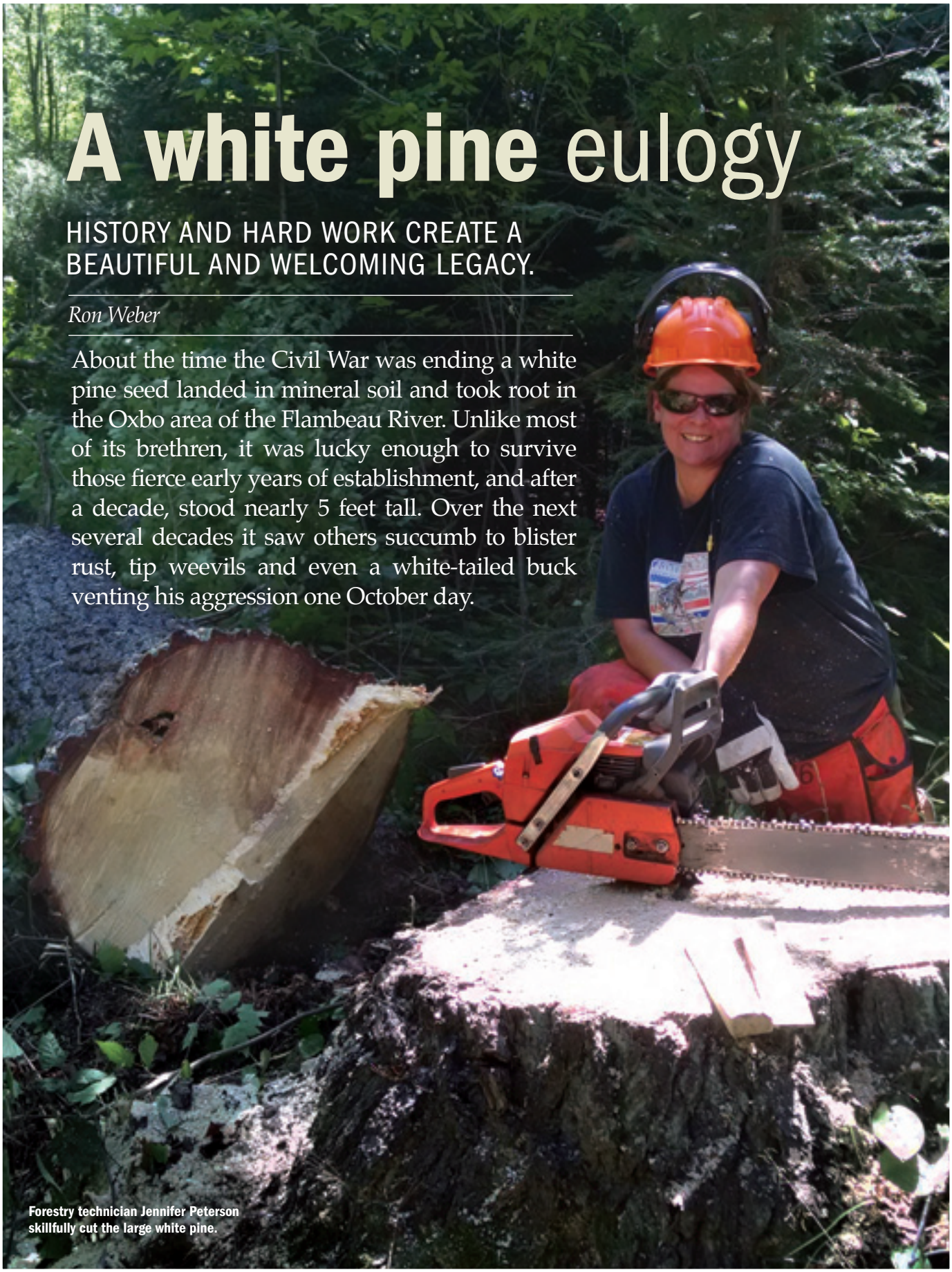
Mark your calendar for the Central Wisconsin Greater Prairie Chicken Festival in April, 2016. Bookmark pcf.goldensandsrcd.org/ for more information closer to the festival.

A white pine eulogy

HISTORY AND HARD WORK CREATE A BEAUTIFUL AND WELCOMING LEGACY.

Ron Weber

About the time the Civil War was ending a white pine seed landed in mineral soil and took root in the Oxbo area of the Flambeau River. Unlike most of its brethren, it was lucky enough to survive those fierce early years of establishment, and after a decade, stood nearly 5 feet tall. Over the next several decades it saw others succumb to blister rust, tip weevils and even a white-tailed buck venting his aggression one October day.



Forestry technician Jennifer Peterson skillfully cut the large white pine.

ROY GILGE

As the United States prepared to enter "the war to end all wars" the pine, now a slim 50 years old, was filling the void left vacant after the logging era of the late 1800s. As time passed, it continued to send its leader skyward, and like many older beings, started to add girth to its trunk. By the end of the next World War, the 80-year-old pine had secured its place in the canopy with the other survivors of its generation.

As the tree celebrated its 100th birthday, the United States wrestled with a variety of social issues, another war and the realization that a better life at the cost of the future of our environment may be too high a price to pay. The pine stood steadfast as a fierce wind blew through on July 4, 1977, changing the face of the forest in a swath across northern Wisconsin. For nearly 150 years the pine had survived winds, droughts, disease and insects. But like for all things, there is a season.

The end for the big pine came in August 2014 when an ATV trail project was being planned. Though no one wanted to see the tree cut, it was deemed necessary for the project completion. Forestry technician Jennifer Peterson notched the tree, and with the skillful use of wedges, was able to safely fell the tree. Forestry technician Roy Gilge was on standby with the excavator bucket to help push the tree over but it was not needed.

Three 12-foot logs were brought to Red Oak Lumber in Spooner to be sawed and dried into the 3-inch thick slabs which would be used to construct the countertop for the service counter, a coffee table and benches for the shower facility of the new Flambeau River State Forest headquarters. The slabs were then sent to the Flambeau Correctional Camp for an initial sanding.

In January 2015, Peterson was tasked with designing and building the countertop, table and benches. Though an experienced and accomplished woodworker, the countertop project was a little daunting at first. The tree, which in life was shaped by natural forces and circumstance, would now be shaped by human hands into a curved 20-foot-long countertop.

With care and precision, measuring twice and cutting once, Peterson fashioned the pieces into the correct lengths complete with mitered ends as needed. Due to the thickness of the wood, an initial cut was done with a circular saw and the last half inch was cut with a hand saw. Each piece was sanded smooth and the edges rounded. The pieces were then fit together, with additional sanding required to get the mitered joints tightly fit. Since the slabs were quite large, Peterson was often helped as needed by various staff members in lifting, holding and measuring the pieces.

When all the pieces were ready to be put together, Peterson, with the help of Flambeau staff member Curtiss Lindner, drilled and chiseled each mitered end for the anchors to draw the joints tight. Once all the pieces were joined, next came the challenging task of lifting the countertop in one piece and placing it in its new home. Six staff members arranged themselves around the countertop and like pall bearers at a funeral, carefully lifted and set the pine countertop onto its final resting place.

Peterson was aided by Flambeau staff member Diane Stowell to finish the project using Envirotex, a pour-on epoxy material which is equal to 50 coats of varnish. This work was done after hours when no people were in the building to avoid disturbance and dust. With meticulous care, the finish was applied and bubbles removed. The end result is a lasting thing of beauty, a real testament to nature, human know-how and as Leopold wrote, "the unity of the hodgepodge of events called history."

Most eulogies are written or spoken. The eulogy for this 150-year-old white pine will instead be seen by countless people over the next 100 years as they visit the Flambeau River State Forest headquarters. Maybe they will even take the time to count the rings evident on the end of the countertop and be reminded that throughout history, when humans work thoughtfully with nature, they can accomplish beautiful things.

Ron Weber writes from Weyerhaeuser, Wis.

The finished countertop is a lasting legacy of the Oxbo pine.

JUDY FREEMAN

Providing a helping hand to private woodland owners

Members of the Women of WWOA group learning to measure tree height.

WISCONSIN'S PRIVATE WOODLAND OWNERS WORK ON A LOCAL LEVEL.

Caleb Klima

Steve Ring and his father had an opportunity. In 1993, a member of their hunting club put up for sale a 175-acre woodlot in Outagamie County consisting of mixed hardwoods and excellent hunting. They were both familiar with the land, successfully hunting there since the late 1960s. They took a chance and bought the property. According to Steve, "Dad was to manage the forest and I was to maintain the equipment. Over time Dad would teach me what he knew."

A year and a half later Steve's father unexpectedly passed away and Steve was left alone with the land.

"I knew nothing about sustainable forestry. My Dad was very knowledgeable and I relied on that. I was on my own," he recalls.

Debbie Schroeder-Fisher had her priorities. She was busy with a career in finances and raising a family in Appleton, but her mother needed more support taking care of their family's 440-acre woodlands in Shawano County. The woods were a significant part of their family farm that her father managed two decades earlier. After he passed,

Schroeder-Fisher, along with her sister and mother, were responsible for the land. As her mother aged it became too much for her, and the property was slowly transferred to Schroeder-Fisher and her sister.

"I was always interested in managing the woods, but I had a full-time job and was busy raising a family," she recalls. "Now I knew I had to make the right decisions."

Wisconsin's private woodland owners

Throughout Wisconsin there are stories like Steve Ring's and Debbie Schroeder-Fisher's — people who are busy raising families and building careers — but in one way or another are also responsible for the health of woodlands. Some bought their land for a weekend retreat, others for their own hunting 40. The reasons are as varied as the people who own them. In fact, most of Wisconsin's woods are owned by people like them. According to the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Inventory and Analysis Program, about 9.1 million acres, or 57 percent, of Wisconsin's roughly 17 million acres of forestland are owned by 352,000 families, and the number is increasing every year.

There is a wide variety of management styles for these lands. Some owners prefer a hands-off approach, assuming that nature knows best. Others, agreeing with Wisconsin's noted conservationist Aldo Leopold, hold a strong conviction of individual responsibility for the health of the land. Regardless of the style, many landowners simply do not have the knowledge or experience necessary to manage their woods, or even understand why it is so important to do so.

Schroeder-Fisher expands on her story. "We were lucky to have good advice from both local DNR foresters and independent forestry consultants through the years. Then in 2012, my consulting forester surprised me with a gift membership to the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association. I had never heard of them before. I decided to check it out and attend one of their events, and I'm glad I did."

Ring echoes a similar tale, "I heard of this WWOA group, but I didn't really know how important they were. Then my logger invited me to attend a local WWOA chapter field day and it was a great experience. I met many friendly woodland owners who had a lot of collective experience and were willing to share with us. It provided me with many ideas for my woods."

The Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association is an educational nonprofit organization dedicated to helping landowners learn sustainable forestry practices and find the resources they need.

NANCY BOZEK

A University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Natural Resources lecturer teaching a lesson on tree measurements with the Women of WWOA.

NANCY BOZEK

The story of WWOA reaches far back in Wisconsin history, and is a descendent of the same lineage that brought us Leopold's Land Ethic, forestry tax policies, and a national admiration for our greatest natural asset, our forestland.

The WWOA tale

By the early 20th century most of Wisconsin's historic 22 million acres of forestland were gone, either through logging, forest fires or agricultural conversion. Many state leaders understood the importance and necessity of regenerating our woods. Wisconsin was one of the first states to pass a constitutional amendment allowing for differential taxation on forestland. That same year, in 1927, the Forest Crop Law (FCL) was passed, which allowed tax deferments on woodlands until tree harvesting. These early efforts were mainly focused on large woodland holdings, which subsequently benefited the large woodlands greatly. Many smaller private woodlands, however, were slowly degrading, while their ownership levels were continuously growing.

By the 1950s the need for more outreach and support to smaller private woodland owners was palpable. In 1954 the Woodland Tax Law (WTL) provided a tax incentive for smaller woodland parcels (in 1985 FCL and WTL were sublimated into the Managed Forest Law). A year earlier in 1953, at the Wisconsin Silver Anniversary Forestry Conference, an idea was conceived for forming an association of woodland owners. At the conference A.E. Swanke, then President of Tigerton Lumber Company, surmised what the goal of such an organization could be.

"We need to educate the woodlot owners on the importance of their part in the overall picture (of a sustainable local forest economy)," Swanke proclaimed. "The owner will discover that by practicing good forestry he will become a very integral part of a well-rounded community."

The idea incubated until 1976 when the DNR Bureau of Forestry (now Division of Forestry) applied for, and was awarded grants from the U.S. Forest Service for the purpose of forming a statewide forest landowners association to improve the management and development of privately-owned forestland. The Department of Natural Resources partnered with the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Forestry to help start the new organization. By 1979, the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association was formed and a year later WWOA

A consulting forester discusses the capacity of the site to grow healthy northern hardwoods at a WWOA Wolf River Chapter Field Day.

NANCY BOZEK

was designated an independent nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.

Opening doors

Today, WWOA consists of over 2,000 members across the state and has 11 chapters covering Wisconsin to provide services on a local level. The organization is governed by an 11-member board of directors and most of their programs are volunteer-driven. Every year WWOA and its chapters sponsor workshops, conferences and field days, providing a forum for landowners to share experiences, knowledge and contacts.

WWOA also produces an award-winning quarterly magazine called *Wisconsin Woodlands*, has members on state and regional boards and commissions to represent private woodland owners' interests, and provides annual scholarships to help educate the next generation of woodland owners. WWOA's purpose is to be a resource for woodland owners and instill a strong commitment to sustainable forest management.

Luckily, Ring already had the commitment; he just lacked the knowledge and experience. His WWOA membership filled the gap.

"If I never went to that first field day

An instructor provides a demonstration of a portable sawmill at a WWOA annual meeting.

NANCY BOZEK

I don't know what I would have done," Ring recalls. "WWOA has opened a lot of doors for me. I became a lifetime member almost immediately. You learn that there are many other woodland owners out there that also have a love of the land and want to do what's best for it. They're out there testing ideas and through WWOA you have the opportunity to visit their land and see it for yourself. You learn about what a forest totally encompasses, not just trees, but the air, soil, water and wildlife."

Schroeder-Fisher's experience with WWOA started at a WWOA annual meeting where she was able to meet people from across the state and learn ideas she never even thought of.

"I never heard of deer exclosures before, I think that's a really interesting experiment," she notes.

Then, she was invited to attend a meeting for the Women of WWOA, a new group formed in 2014, which really drew her interest.

"It's really neat to be with other women who enjoy the outdoors. We all get the chance to learn together and have a lot of fun," she says.

The Women of WWOA was formed to provide women landowners educational opportunities and networking in a supportive environment.

WWOA's success with educating landowners on sustainable forestry is a result of its unique educational style. WWOA relies on sharing experiences and bridging social networks, with an emphasis on adult learning that is both interactive and participatory. WWOA regularly invites natural resource professionals to share their skills and knowledge at events, thus providing a vital link for connecting woodland owners and resource professionals.

Furthermore, at WWOA field days, participants often tour properties so the landowner can show what forestry practices they implement, and the less experienced can see how the practices work over time. Field days can also include chainsaw safety training, demonstrations of forestry equipment, advice for creating wildlife habitat, lessons on tree identification and measurements, erosion control methods, firewise techniques and many other topics related to caring for and enjoying private woodlands.

Gaining confidence, sharing success

Schroeder-Fisher is slowly building comfort as a woodland owner.

Debbie Schroeder-Fisher (second from left) helps lead a winter tour with fellow WWOA members along the Red River which winds through their woodlands.

SUBMITTED BY DEBBIE SCHROEDER-FISHER

"I'm not an expert by any means," she says, "but I'm learning more all the time, gaining confidence, and making many friends. I feel a lot better knowing I have WWOA as a resource."

Today, she is spending more time with her family at their property than she ever imagined.

"I always thought we'd visit several weekends a year, but now we're going up there all the time! It's a great way to bring our family together. My husband hunts turkey and deer on the property. I really enjoy snowshoeing and hiking. Nowadays my sister and I even take a tree identification book with us and are doing our best to learn what's out there."

She also shared one aspect of her WWOA membership she really appreciates.

"Estate planning, it's really important to have those conversations, however hard they may be at times," she says.

WWOA events are not just about learning forest management; they often touch on other subjects that are helpful for landowners including estate planning, taxes and legal issues and outdoor recreation.

Today, Schroeder-Fisher is also giving back to WWOA. She is a member of the Women of WWOA steering committee which plans events and provides leadership for the group. Her advice to new woodland owners or those wishing to learn more, is to join the association and go to a chapter field day. "You can choose your own level of engagement. Believe me, I know how busy life gets — just set a few priorities at a time, take some action steps, and then draw your conclusions," she says.

Ring's experience managing woodlands has come full circle. Twenty years ago he was inexperienced and nervous about his capabilities. Today, he is on the other side of the spectrum. He regularly hosts field days, opens his land for technical college classes, and provides many tours through his woods via horse and sled while sharing his management practices. He also regularly hosts family reunions on the property to bond and create lasting memories. Ring's service with WWOA grew just as much as his forest management abilities. He served as the Wolf River Chapter president and is currently serving on the WWOA Board of Directors.

Ring would like to invite any woodland owner out there, whether they own a few acres or hundreds, to check out a WWOA event.

"Get to know what other landowners are doing and think about the health of your woods," he says. "The biggest thing is to be proactive, to try and protect your woods as much as possible."

Recently, Ring worked with three local foresters to identify at-risk trees on his land, with an emphasis on ash trees due to the spread of the emerald ash borer.

"Things like that I wouldn't know unless I went to field days and learned from others," he says. "I believe it's important to seek advice from as many sources as you can."

Caleb Klima served the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association (WWOA) through the Volunteer Wisconsin AmeriCorps national service program.

>>> **To learn more about WWOA and events in your area, visit the WWOA website at wisconsinwoodlands.org. You can also contact WWOA directly at 715-346-4798 or email wwoa@uwsp.edu.**

Readers Write

DON SCHAEFFER

WHITE OPOSSUM SPOTTING
While hiking in the Kettle Moraine State Forest we came upon this fellow who climbed a few feet up this tree as we approached. With his thick white fur, he was undoubtedly the best looking opossum I've ever seen. If it wasn't for his dark eyes we would have thought he was an albino.

Don Schaeffer
Wauwatosa, Wis.

WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES MAGAZINE IN THE CLASSROOM
For a few years I've been thinking that some articles from *Wisconsin Natural Resources* magazine would be great to use with my 4th and 5th grade students, be it for the descriptive writing or the science connections. Well, today I gave it a try. I needed an article to use to teach note taking. I flipped through a handy back issue from August 2011 and spied Kathryn Kahler's article about newts and decided to use it. As I read the first paragraphs to students, I was worried that the vocabulary and concepts would be beyond them. But as I asked them to read and eventually respond to key ideas we might write down for our note taking practice, I was pleasantly surprised to notice that the level of engagement and understanding was particularly high, notably by male students who aren't commonly involved in our discussions! I even had a student share that his mom is part of related research with regenerative medicine. I just wanted to share appreciation from this young reader group as well as from an educator who loves connecting students with writing that means something for them.

Marcia Dressel
Osceola, Wis.

TRADING GROUSE FOR TURKEY... OR WAS IT MUSKIE?
We enjoyed reading the "Trading ruffed grouse for wild turkey" article by R.J Longwitz, in the February issue. 2015 will mark the 60th year we have journeyed to our summer cabin on Boulder Lake outside of Boulder Junction. During a number of those years, we lived in Missouri and were aware of the introduction of the Missouri turkey into Wisconsin. It was interesting to track their migration north. We would stop one year at a southern rest stop along I-39 and see some birds in the fields beyond the rest stop property. Then, a few years later, they appeared at the next rest stop north and so on right up to the far north. In the past 5 years, we regularly see wild turkeys in the Boulder Junction area. Our neighbor even took a picture of one just outside our cabin two years ago. The part of the story that was news to us was that Wisconsin traded Missouri the turkey for ruffed grouse. All these years, we understood that Wisconsin traded Missouri musky fingerlings for them to introduce into a number of their lakes. The most successful introduction we understood was into Lake Pom de Terre in southwestern Missouri. Would you help us out with understanding if the musky story is true, and if there were the muskies in addition to the grouse? Thank you.

Connie and Jake Moelk
Boulder Junction, Wis.

David Neuswanger, retired DNR fisheries team supervisor, in Hayward responds: *All of Missouri's muskellunge during the early days of the program came from the Linesville Fish Culture Station at Lake Pymatuning, Pa. They would collect and fertilize the eggs at Linesville, then ship the fertilized eggs to Blind Pony Hatchery in Missouri to be hatched, reared and stocked into 8,000-acre Lake Pomme de Terre as fall fingerlings. By spring of 1992, I estimated that half those age-10 fish were still alive in the lake — males averaging 36 inches and females averaging 42 inches. As those fish matured, Wisconsin DNR Fish Manager Dennis Scholl provided me with Wisconsin fyke net specifications, which allowed us to circumvent a problem that had long plagued the biologists at Pomme de Terre — that of capturing enough wild adult broodstock to rear our own fish and end our dependency on fertilized eggs or fry from Pennsylvania. Using Wisconsin-style fyke nets, we were highly successful in capturing our own broodstock muskellunge in Hazel Creek Lake from 1989 onward.*

CAITLYN RIZZO

RARE SCARLET TANAGER
We have just seen a scarlet tanager. No question of what it was. It was my granddaughter Caitlyn Rizzo that took the picture of it. I have lived in Kenosha all my life and never seen one. They put out oranges for orioles and this scarlet tanager has been coming to feed on them.

Chuck and Caitlyn Rizzo
Kenosha, Wis.

WILLIAM AGGER

A BATTLE, A VICTOR, AN IMPRINT
During a late winter cross-country ski through Mississippi River bottom backwaters, I was treated with a bald eagle extravaganza. From above the bluff tops, two adults began to "dog fight." After interlocking talons, they cartwheeled earthward, disappearing beyond a stand of silver maples. The apparent victor quickly climbed back into view, but the other did not. Curious, I skied towards the "crash site," only to see the second eagle take to wing. At the point of impact, there was this nearly perfect "eagle snow angel." The imperfections on the right wing and beyond the beak are claw hop spots, made after the bird recovered and took to the air.

William Agger
La Crosse, Wis.

TERRY HELLER

WASPS CONGREGATE ON MILWEED PLANTS
I'd like to share my photo.

Terry Heller
Black River Falls, Wis.

CHAD CAMPBELL

PHEASANT HUNTING BY SUNRISE
Hoss, and his owner Chad Campbell, hunt pheasants in the fall of 2014. The pair looks forward to the pheasant season all year long.

Chad Campbell
Winneconne, Wis.

JIM EVENSTAD

BOBCAT BASKING IN THE SUN IN THE COLD OF WINTER
I saw this lynx (I believe it is anyway) walk across our drive on a warm sunny day this past spring. I did not get a pic of it walking, but its hind end was higher than its front. Also, color was solid, not mottled. It sat apparently sunning itself and did not flinch when I stepped out to get this pic. Anyway, is this a lynx?

Jim Evenstad
Hayward, Wis.

This is a beautiful bobcat! What a great photo. White on the tip of the tail is characteristic of bobcat; lynx have all black tails. Also lynx feet would be proportionally larger as they have giant feet they use as snowshoes to walk on the top of snow. While most bobcats have some spotting, not all do, and you can see faint barring on the legs, which is typical of bobcat. This is a pale, handsome bobcat.

WES MARTIN

TURKEYS SPARRING
I wanted to share my photos of turkeys sparring in western Wisconsin.

Wes Martin
Trempealeau, Wis.

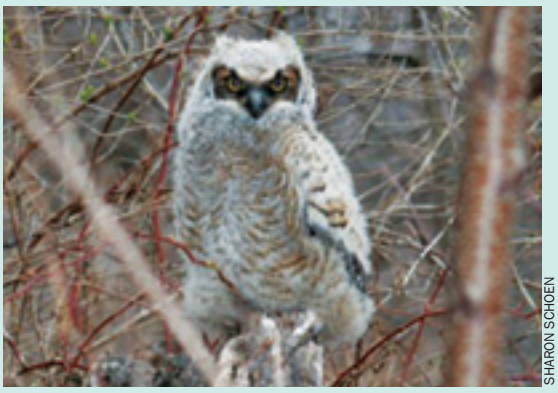
CANOE ARTICLES SPARK JOY AND ACTIVITY
I'm a senior citizen and have lived my entire life in the Merton area. I enjoy *Wisconsin Natural Resources* magazine and especially liked the February 2015 edition, as my wife and I like to kayak and canoe. I recently spent an evening reading the two articles about kayaking the Tomahawk River and canoeing the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. I got out my Gazetteer and arm-chaired my way down the water with these authors. It was a most pleasant trip on a cold February night.

Ron Rellatz
Merton, Wis.

OWLETS IN THE DAYLIGHT
On Easter we spotted an owlet near our home. I managed to get a couple pictures. I feel we are really lucky to have seen this, not something you run across every day.

Sharon Schoen
Union Grove, Wis.

SHARON SCHOEN



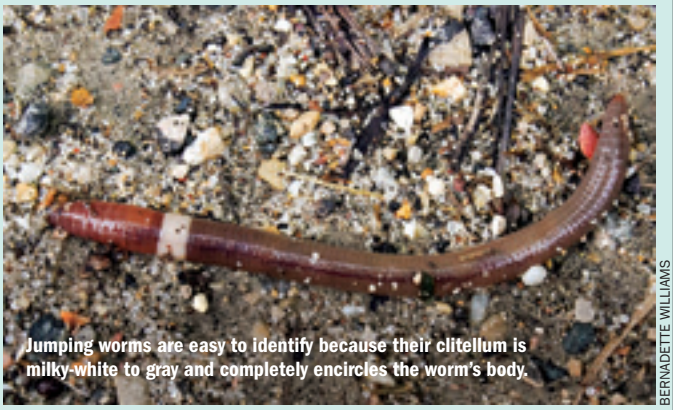
SHARON SCHOEN

ANNETTE SCHRAB CLARK

EASTERN PHOEBE TAKES BREAK FROM SPRING MATING RITUALS

I took the photo right outside off my deck which is about 14 feet up from the ground, so I see the birds in the midst of the trees. It was midday and the birds seemed to be mating with them chasing one another. I managed to catch one still long enough for this photo.

Annette Schrab Clark
Reeseville, Wis.



BERNADETTE WILLIAMS

Jumping worms are easy to identify because their clitellum is milky-white to gray and completely encircles the worm's body.

The article (" Jumping worms: There's a new creepy-crawly in Wisconsin," June 2015) states under the section "problems caused by earthworms" that all worms are harmful to the forest floor. Is this true for garden soils?

John Hauser
Sherwood, Wis.

Co-author Bernadette Williams, conservation biologist in the DNR Forest Health Program, responds: *No, the earthworms in your garden are not something you should be overly concerned about. Heavily disturbed urban areas like backyard gardens are most frequently inhabited by nonnative European earthworms; many of which have been introduced accidentally or intentionally through multiple means to turn, aerate and fertilize your soil. Vegetable and flower gardens can benefit by the presence of worms because you're growing an annual crop and the worms are doing what they do best, recycling organic matter. When it comes to jumping worms we don't know what the long-term impacts will be to our backyard gardens or our forests. What we do know is that they are a new invader to our state but one we want you to be on the lookout for.*

COMMENT ON A STORY?

Send your letters to: Readers Write, WNR magazine, P.O. Box 7191, Madison, WI 53707. Or email letters to dnrmagazine@wisconsin.gov. Limit letters to 250 words and include your name and the community from which you are writing.

PARTLY ALBINO BIRD IN DARLINGTON

My friend and I were looking out the window of her ground floor apartment in Darlington and watched a strange bird flitting around a small evergreen tree. It was about the size of a cat bird; with dark gray to black coloring, but it had a completely white head; like a bald eagle. I can't find it in any of my bird books. Is it possible it was partly albino? We watched it for several minutes before it flew away. Unfortunately, we didn't have a camera, but we hope you might be able to identify it for us.

Anthony Wand
Monroe, Wis.

Anthony, thanks for your letter. We love getting hand-written notes from our readers. Unfortunately, without a picture we can't be certain of the species. Our birding experts do agree with your original interpretation — it most likely was a partly albino (leucistic) bird. It doesn't sound like anything else that we have in Wisconsin.

ELECTRIC HORNETS, WOODPECKER LIVE IN HARMONY

KENNETH AND KAREN PETERS

KENNETH AND KAREN PETERS

Living in Marquette County near Montello, I am used to seeing nature take its interesting course. In September, my daughter Karen said I should look at the electric meter. I was surprised to find the meter was entirely covered by a huge hornets nest. The meter box was also partially covered. The nest was 18 inches long, 13 inches wide and 9 inches deep. The inhabitants were bald-faced hornets and judging by the traffic flow, there were probably several hundred occupying the nest. Adams Columbia Electric Co-op no longer has meter readers, so the colony was not disturbed all summer. Across the yard was another fascinating sight — a pileated woodpecker making a huge hole in a tree not far away. In 3 days, the hole was over 3 feet long, 6 inches wide and 7 inches deep. A week later, the big bird returned to enlarge its prior work another foot up and made another smaller hole above the big one. The bird was looking for insects that were living in the dead tree. I plan on having the top of the tree trimmed off with the dead branches and leave the remaining tree standing in the hope that he will return to work on the rest of the trunk. Unfortunately, we had a wind storm during the fall that broke off a branch of the tree and part of the small hole broke off with it. Sadly, my father passed away this year. Being a veteran in WWII and the Korean War, he was very fascinated by the outdoors and nature and would have loved to see the woodpecker at work. My dad always had numerous flower beds and he always fed his birds. The pileated woodpecker did come back and started a new hole under the long one. I was able to tell him about the bird the day before he passed, and he had a big smile on his face. The woodpecker is still working on the same hole today.

Kenneth Peters
Montello, Wis.

SANDHILL WILDLIFE AREA – HOME OF THE BISON

The "Bison and butterflies" article (April 2015) reminded me that I have not been to the Sandhill Wildlife Area since the mid-70s, when I was a student at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. My wife, then a teacher in Wisconsin Rapids, and I used to bike the roads and cross-country ski there. A sign by the pasture indicated that bison were present then but we never saw them during our five years of going there. For readers who may be interested in the history of Sandhill, I suggest the book *Live Arrival Guaranteed: A Sandhill Memoir,* by Hazel Grange (Lost River Press, Inc. 1996, first printing). She and her husband, Wallace Byron Grange, bought the land in parcels during the Depression and turned it into a successful game farm (hence, the origin of the tall fences, by the way), then sold it to the Wisconsin Conservation Commission in 1961, at the signing ceremony in Madison with Gov. Gaylord Nelson and Conservation Director Lester Voigt. Anyway, this book was written from an interesting perspective with a touch of humor as well. One will not find it to be a dry, boring read.

Kurt Sroka
Somerset, Wis. (aka squirrel haven)

SUBMITTED BY JAMES SHIELY

SPRING FISHING REPORT ADDITION

Hello, I'm writing because the spring 2015 Fishing Report neglected to mention Pierce County which borders the St. Croix River. The St. Croix River is a fantastic fishery, particularly for smallmouth bass, northern pike, walleyes and muskies. Several years ago I caught a 44-inch, 24-pound northern pike on the St. Croix, near Prescott. I've also caught several 45-inch muskies on it. It's a wild and scenic river which makes it a joy to fish, and I wanted to share it with you.

James Shiely
Prescott, Wis.

ROBIN BEHAVIOR EXPLAINED

Several weeks ago we noticed a robin beginning to build a nest on our eaves within about 3 feet of our big picture window in our living room. Everything was fine and we looked forward to watching their progress, but within a couple of days I heard noises and observed the bird fly up to our window with grass in its beak and claw and peck at the window. This was repeated over and over, morning, afternoon and night. I cut out some bird shapes and put them on the window but the bird persisted. I hung a large 18-inch wingspan bright red tin cardinal in front of the window and found the bird landing on the wing of the cardinal knocking the cardinal into the window. So, I bought a falcon and hung it in front of the window but heard pecking sounds. The robin had landed on the head of the falcon and was pecking at the window. I gave up and I just tolerated the sounds morning and evening. The nest was never completed, and after a week, the daily sounds stopped. I sure hope that they found a nesting spot.

Jean Hamersky
Green Bay, Wis.

In short, the bird took its reflection as a threat and was attacking the "intruders" in defense of its nesting territory.

NO ACCESS TO THE WEB?

Don't have access to a link we mention in a story? Let us know when you want to follow a link we list. We'll do what we can to get you a copy of the material if it is available free of charge and is relatively short in length.

Back in the day

Historic Horicon Marsh decoy collection set to draw flocks of visitors.

Continued from page 2

The ducks — and the decoys — of Horicon Marsh caught the attention of hunters nationwide and many came to the marsh in search of a memorable outdoor experience. They typically left well satisfied and often took a few decoys and locally-made duck calls back home.

"In those days, hopping on a train and going someplace to hunt for a month at a time was not unusual and it was through the work of some of these dedicated hunters that enforceable regulations began taking hold including the 1934 federal Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act," Kakatsch says.

JENNIFER WIRTH

Mark Kakatsch with historic marsh skis and push paddles.

Meanwhile, innovation in hunting methods and equipment continued around Horicon Marsh. Since very few hunters had access to boats with motors until after World War II, many used homemade skiffs and long push paddles to navigate out in search of a workable location. Some of the local carvers also created long, wide marsh skis that helped hunters glide over the reeds.

Thanks to support from the Friends of Horicon Marsh Education and Visitor Center, as well as relatives of some of the most famous carvers from the area, examples of the early marsh skis, skiffs, push paddles and decoys can be seen as part of the new Explorium, which opens to the public starting Aug. 22.

To learn more, visit dnr.wi.gov and search "Horicon Marsh."

Jennifer Sereno works in DNR's Office of Communications.

>>> IF YOU GO

Historic decoys, hand-carved duck calls and other antique hunting equipment are on display at the new Explorium, part of the Horicon Marsh Education and Visitor Center. The Explorium opens Aug. 22 and features a variety of museum-quality exhibits and interactive displays.

Traveler

The good old days of Wisconsin come to life.

Story and photos by Sylvia Lim

Imagine if you could travel back in time to visit people who lived in the 19th century. What might life look like? Old World Wisconsin offers a time travel experience to satisfy your curiosity. You can enjoy a live demonstration of traditional farming, visit the historic site of an early church, watch wool processing and see a Wisconsin blacksmith demonstrating iron-crafting skills. It's a great way to explore Wisconsin's good old days.

Today, Old World Wisconsin's historic farm and village buildings comprise the world's largest museum dedicated to the history of rural life. Old World Wisconsin was opened in 1976 and the museum's more than 60 historic structures range from ethnic farmsteads with furnished houses and rural outbuildings, to a crossroads village with its traditional small-town institutions. The site brings to life the experiences of the Germans, Finns, Danes, Norwegians, African-Americans and Poles who settled in Wisconsin in the 1870s. Costumed historical interpreters demonstrate and explain artisan crafts and old-time activities for visitors.

Crossroads Village

A variety of trades and professions are represented in Old World Wisconsin's rural village. These include farmers, shoemakers, wagon makers, shopkeepers, innkeepers, blacksmiths and laundresses. Visitors can chat with interpreters of these different trades and professions and get a taste of the working life of the 1870s.

One of the most important professions in the village was the blacksmith. The local blacksmith would create gates, grilles, railings, light fixtures, furniture, sculptures, cooking utensils, weapons and all sorts of other useful items by forging the metal and using tools to hammer, bend or cut. Blacksmiths worked in dim light because they had to be able to see the bright color of the hot metal. Direct sunlight would obscure the glow.

Learning about blacksmithing is fun. After an interpreter demonstrates the basics, visitors are encouraged to try their hand at creating a simple object out of metal.

Discover the soul of early Wisconsin by visiting St. Peter's Church. Here you will learn what church services were like for the early European immigrants. The church itself was built by German pilgrims. The ornaments inside the church are the original ones and give a tangible sense of how the immigrants expressed their spiritual beliefs.

Housework

Old World Wisconsin also shows how daily life in the past could be simple and complicated at the same time. It was simple because our ancestors lived without modern conveniences and electronic devices. There was no television or internet to advertise products and influence decision-making. People

The museum's more than 60 historic structures range from ethnic farmsteads with furnished houses and rural outbuildings, to a crossroads village with its traditional small-town institutions.

Piece-by-piece, workers painstakingly dismantled the old structures. They numbered bricks, boards and logs, and moved them to the site of Old World Wisconsin.

Old World Wisconsin's historic farm and village buildings comprise the world's largest museum dedicated to the history of rural life.

traveled by horse rather than car.

But it was also complicated because it took a long time to do basic tasks such as cooking. Unlike modern times, when an electric or gas stove can be turned on just by turning a knob or flipping a switch, a coal- or wood-burning stove was difficult to use. Since there was no thermostat to show the temperature, a housewife would need to keep an eye on the stove at all times. Whenever the fire began to die down, she would have to add more fuel to adjust the heat.

Another long, complicated process was wool-refining. Wool processing was really important because warm clothing was needed by the early settlers to survive winter. A housewife used a manual spinning wheel to convert the wool into yarn. She used her left hand to hold the fiber and her feet to turn the wheel to spin it. The whole process could take several hours.

Traditional farming

In the 19th century, farm animals played a significant role in economic life. At Old World Wisconsin there are several different individual farms representing different immigrant nationalities and eras: Finnish farms from 1897 and 1915, a Danish farm from 1890, German farms from 1860 to 1880 and a Norwegian farm.

As you walk past the farms, you can enjoy the view of green meadows full of animals and small cottages dotting the landscape. Animals kept on the farms include cows, horses, chickens and pigs. Chickens, visitors learn, were particularly valuable because they provided meat and eggs, the most important sources of protein. Dairy cows provided another nutritious protein source. A lot of attention was also paid to pigs. According to publications on immigration during the 19th century, many German immigrants became pork butchers.

So next time modern life, with all its noise and distractions, makes you want to skip town, why not head to Old World Wisconsin for fresh air, serene meadows and a taste of farm life? You can slow down and enjoy the simplicity of the old ways that sustained the state's immigrants when they first came to this country. It's like walking into a Wisconsin wonderland.

Sylvia Lim was an editorial intern with Wisconsin Natural Resources *magazine while studying journalism in Wisconsin. She lives in Indonesia.*

>>> FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about Old World Wisconsin, including special events, visit oldworldwisconsin.wisconsinhistory.org. Old World Wisconsin is certified as a Travel Green Wisconsin site.

LOCATION: Old World Wisconsin is located 1.5 miles south of Eagle in Waukesha County. The main entrance is about one mile north of the postal address on Highway 67 (W372 S9727 Highway 67, PO Box 69, Eagle, WI 53119).

PHONE: 262-594-6301

HOURS:
Summer hours run through Sept. 7 (open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Fall hours run Sept. 10 through Oct. 31. (open Thursday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

ADMISSION:
Adults (ages 13-64) – $19
Children (ages 4-12) – $10
Seniors (65 and older) – $16
Family pass (Up to 2 adults and all children up to age 17) – $50
Active military – free

What's cooking?

CELEBRATE A TASTY CAMPFIRE FAVORITE

Sticky and gooey is just the way we like it. The National Confectioners Association sponsors National S'mores Day on Aug. 10 to pay homage to the tasty snack consisting of layers of roasted marshmallow and chocolate bar sandwiched between two pieces of graham cracker.

According to nationaldaycalendar.com, the origin of the S'more is credited to entrepreneur Alex Barnum, however the first recorded version of the recipe can be found in the 1927 publication of "Tramping and Trailing with the Girl Scouts." Earlier recipes referred to the name "Some Mores" but it was eventually shortened to "S'mores." Today there are many variations of the simple campfire recipe.

Tasteofhome.com offers the S'more Bars Recipe that you can make at home.

Ingredients:
½ cup butter, softened
¾ cup sugar
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1⅓ cups all-purpose flour
¾ cup graham cracker crumbs
1 teaspoon baking powder
⅛ teaspoon salt
5 milk chocolate candy bars (1.55 ounces each)
1 cup marshmallow crème

Directions:
In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla. Combine the flour, cracker crumbs, baking powder and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture. Set aside ½ cup for topping.

Press remaining mixture into a greased 9-inch square baking pan. Place candy bars over the crust; spread with marshmallow crème. Crumble remaining graham cracker mixture over top.

Bake at 350 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on a wire rack. Cut into bars. Store in an airtight container. Yields about 1½ dozen bars.

SUSAN SENATORI

Wisconsin, naturally

MAIDEN ROCK BLUFF STATE NATURAL AREA

Thomas A. Meyer
State Natural Areas Program

Notable: Plying the waters of the Mississippi River by canoe 200 years ago would have beheld a landscape quite different than that of today. The west-facing bluffs on what would become the "Wisconsin" side of the river were dominated by soaring, dolomite-capped sandstone cliffs and treeless grasslands — dry prairies — that ran from the bluff tops down to the savannas and floodplain forests at their feet. Settlement of the region by European immigrants brought a halt to the periodic fires that kept this bluff-side landscape open and sparsely timbered. The slopes quickly succeeded to forest, and in short order, most of the Mississippi River bluff prairies and their sun-loving plants were shaded out and lost. Most, but not all. At Maiden Rock Bluff State Natural Area, remnants of dry prairie and oak savanna still cling to the 400-foot high promontory where endangered peregrine falcons nest on the cliff face. Rare plants including prairie sagebrush and cliff goldenrod grow with more common species such as silky aster, lead plant, blazing star and little bluestem. Slender lip fern, hairbell and smooth cliff brake find niches on rocky outcrops. The summit offers a striking vista of the river corridor and Lake Pepin below and is a wonderful place to observe resident and migrating raptors, including bald eagles, turkey vultures and the occasional golden eagle. The site's name comes from a Native American legend in which the maiden Princess Winona is said to have leapt to her death from this bluff rather than marry a suitor she did not love. The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program provided funds to purchase this natural area for this and future generations.

How to get there: From the intersection of State Highway 35 and County Highway J in Stockholm, go north on J for 0.7 miles, then northwest on County E for 1 mile, then west on Long Lane for 0.7 miles to a parking area. A trail leads to the bluff. Visit dnr.wi.gov and search "Maiden Rock Bluff" for a map and more information.