

# WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES

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## EXCITEMENT OVER AN EAGLE PLATE

City trees shine in  
urban forest inventory

Adopt a fish and  
wildlife area

Step inside an outdoor  
expo for youth



# Back in the day



STABER W. REESE

Conservation Warden Emil Kramer was part of a crew who harvested 250 deer from Chambers Island in October 1945.



WILLIAM S. FEENEY

A herd of 500 deer on the island had eaten all vegetation up to 6 feet above ground level, creating a browse line throughout the island, like this one in cedar along the southwestern beach of Chambers Island.

## A controlled hunt from 70 years ago provides a lesson for modern wildlife managers.

Kathryn A. Kahler

A photo and caption from our August 2011 issue showing the DNR law enforcement boat *Barney Devine* laden with dead deer seemed oddly out of place for its time. The deer were taken from Chambers Island during a deer reduction effort in 1945. That was in the midst of the “deer wars” when early wildlife managers debated the effects of too many deer with a public so enamored with whitetails that they were willing to pay to feed them through the winter. What had happened on the island to make residents agree to a controlled reduction of their treasured deer?

Chambers Island is a 3,000-acre island five miles off the Door County mainland. Nowadays, it is mostly privately owned and the little public traffic it sees is from charter boats and visitors to the lighthouse on its northern shore. There is a private air strip, about 40 summer cottages, a solar generator and one cell phone tower.

According to a historical account from 1917, the island was settled in the mid-1800s by shipbuilders and furniture makers who cut tens of millions of board feet of pine, oak and hemlock. By the early 1900s, the island was purchased by furniture company executive F.A. Dennett, who made it his summer retreat and private game reserve “where deer by the hundreds roam in peace.”

Peace, that is, until half a century later when island residents determined something must be done to prevent widespread starvation of the deer herd that had grown to nearly 500. A 1945 *Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin* story reported that despite the logging operations over the years, the island was still well forested, but went on to describe an “odd forest condition” that was evident across the entire island.

“Here were trees that annually scattered their billions of seeds over the entire area, including oaks, maples and beeches, but in the last decade not one new tree had succeeded in taking its place in the community of trees,” the article stated. “The youngest tree on the island is estimated to be 10 years old or older.

“There is the island floor, mostly sparsely covered with grass. There is not a leaf of any kind from the grass to 5 or 6 feet above. The lower foliage line of the trees ends abruptly with a ruler-like exactness.”

That precise line is what wildlife managers call a browse line made by a burgeoning deer herd surviving on summer grass and fall acorns. Managers determined that the deer suffered from both summer and winter starvation. Door County residents, presented with the option of allowing nature to take its course with starvation to reduce the herd, chose the more humane option of a controlled hunt.

“Conservation Department field men were assigned to remove deer and turn them over to the state Department of Public Welfare for distribution as food to various public institutions,” the article stated.

Between Oct. 17 and 25, 1945, some 250 deer were shot and transported off the island, amounting to a total dressed weight of 21,216 pounds of venison. The project continued for several more years.

“Today, there are no deer on Chambers Island, haven’t been for decades,” according to DNR’s Aaron Buchholz, the Door County wildlife biologist in 2010 when a request was made to reintroduce them to the island. “My take on the request was to not approve it based on the history, which provides the likely outcome for deer and deer impacts on the island. As far back as 1919 there are indications that the deer had to be fed to survive winter and the overall recurring theme is one of high populations leading to decimation of food resources, then starvation, followed by population crashes.”

For now, while Chambers Island may not have a deer herd to speak of, it is said to have a flourishing forest and understory. Emmet Judziewicz, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point professor of biology and curator of the Robert W. Freckmann Herbarium, surveyed the island in 2004 and found 209 vascular plant specimens, increasing the number known on the island to 358 specimens.

Judziewicz said in the May 2004 issue of *Wisconsin Flora*, “The island forests are unusual in a number of ways. Deer had a devastating effect on plant survival and regeneration on the island from the 1940s through the 1980s; local residents said that you could see a half-mile through the woods because the understory was so open. But they have now been absent for many years, resulting in fine regeneration of sugar maples and some conifers.”

The list of species Judziewicz found included junipers, beachgrass, white and red pine, big and little bluestem, Indian-grass, needle-and-thread grass, Muhlenberg’s sedge, New Jersey tea, butterfly-weed, blazing-star, hoary puccoon and smooth aster. “Many,” he said, “grow nowhere else in the Door Peninsula or the Grand Traverse Islands.”

Kathryn A. Kahler is an editorial writer for Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine.



# WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES

REGINALD MUHL

October 2015 | Volume 39, Number 5



CHICO LA BARBERA



REGINALD MUHL



OLIVIA WITHUN

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**FRONT COVER:** Raptor trainer Diane Visty along with rehabilitated bald eagle, Glory, at the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center during a photo shoot to help promote a new Wisconsin specialty license plate featuring an eagle photo by Troy Hattemer.

MICHAEL KIENITZ

**BACK COVER:** White cedar and white pine lean over the banks of a sandy-bottomed trout stream at Keller Whitcomb Creek Woods State Natural Area in Waupaca County. **INSET:** Turkey tail fungus (*Trametes versicolor*). 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](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "SNA."

BACK COVER AND INSET PHOTOS BY THOMAS A. MEYER, DNR

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apps mobile apps

Editor-in-chief Natasha Kassulke  
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Art Direction Thomas J. Senatori  
Printing Schumann Printers

Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine (USPS #34625000) is published bimonthly in February, April, June, August, October and December by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The magazine is sustained through paid subscriptions. No tax money is used. Preferred Periodicals postage paid at Madison, WI. POSTMASTER and readers: subscription questions and address changes should be sent to Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine, P.O. Box 7191, Madison, WI 53707. Subscription rates are: \$8.97 for one year, \$15.97 for two years, \$21.97 for three years. Toll-free subscription inquiries will be answered at 1-800-678-9472.

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PUBL-OC-015  
ISSN-0736-2277



Troy Hatterer's photo of a bald eagle was selected from more than 2,000 entries for Wisconsin's new endangered species license plate.

# Talon a great story



BALD EAGLE LICENSE PLATE  
CELEBRATES A COMEBACK AND RAISES  
FUNDING FOR ENDANGERED RESOURCES.

*Lisa Gaumnitz*

Glory was in all of his glory.

The 14-year-old bald eagle perched on the gloved arm of his trainer, Diane Visty, along a small lake at the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center in Milwaukee.

It was time for his photo shoot to help promote a new Wisconsin specialty license plate to raise money for rare species and natural areas.

As the photographer started snapping away, Glory extended his wings to nearly their full 7.5-foot wingspan.

Visty's hair fanned out in the backdraft

and she took several small steps to counter the bird's movement as its wings beat the air and its talons dug into the glove.

It was a good reminder of who was the star that day and why.

"People like eagles because they are so awesome and powerful and exciting for people to see up close," Visty says. "For us as educators, we can talk to children about things we can do right in nature."

"When I was growing up, we didn't see eagles. We were down to 400 eagles in the lower 48 states in the 1970s but we figured out the cause of decline. We figured out something to fix it, and we succeeded. That is very powerful to be able to tell fourth graders."

That conservation success story and



its message of hope for the future is getting a powerful wind beneath its wings this fall with the help of Glory, Visty and many others across the state.

### Hopes soar for plate sales, conservation action

The new eagle design, fledged in August, offers Wisconsinites a fantastic-looking license plate to display on their cars and the opportunity to make a difference for the wildlife and special places they love, says Erin Crain, who leads the DNR's Natural Heritage Conservation program.

Sale of each plate brings a \$25 annual donation to the Endangered Resources Fund, which pays for work by Natural Heritage Conservation staff and partners to protect, manage and restore Wisconsin's nongame animals, native plants and 673 natural areas. These gems harbor rare species and preserve unique geological formations, archeological sites and the best remaining examples of prairies, savannas, wetlands and



MICHAEL KIENTZ

Glory, a bald eagle with the raptor program at Schlitz Audubon Nature Center in Milwaukee, was on hand for the Aug. 5 unveiling of the new eagle license plate. Above right: Hattemer shows a sample plate featuring his photo while Glory looks on after the Aug. 5 event at Prairie du Sac.

old-growth forests in Wisconsin. Plate revenues are a key ingredient in the mix of grants, donations and plate sales that pay for such work.

"Why did we choose the eagle?" Crain asks rhetorically. "In Wisconsin, the eagle represents up north, as well as the Mississippi and Wisconsin rivers that are near and dear to peoples' hearts and part of their identity," she says. "Choosing the eagle reminds people that they can do something...they had a hand in bringing this species back and in the next conservation successes."

Wisconsinites helped push for the ban of the pesticide DDT, which improved eagle hatching rates, helped fund and conduct surveys to find and protect eagle nests, and supported eagles' comeback through donating through the tax check off.

"This is one way, anybody, from any occupation, any station in life, can change the environment. We're recognizing the important role every citizen plays in the protection of rare species," Crain says.

MICHAEL KIENTZ



Lainet Garcia-Rivera, a community program coordinator for the Urban Ecology Center in Milwaukee, is one of a dozen Wisconsinites who are helping promote the plate and caring for nature, as is outdoors adventurer Karen Crossley of Madison (bottom photo).



MICHAEL KIENTZ

### An eagle hotspot yields a winner

Troy Hattermer couldn't have known the important role he would play in future conservation efforts when he set out that February day looking for eagles to photograph.

An avid hunter and angler, Hattermer got into photography at the urging of a co-worker, Jerry Zimmer, at the S. B. Foot Tanning Company in Red Wing, Minn.

"Jerry always brought some of his photos to work and talked about how much fun he was having. I said, 'I've got to try it.'"

Hattermer bought a cheap camera at first.

"I loved it, so I went and bought better equipment and it snowballed from there," he says.

That February day his search took him to the backwater sloughs of the Mississippi River near Hager City, Wis., a known hotspot for eagles.

He captured the image of an eagle swooping down to scoop up a fish. "As soon as I looked at this one on the computer, I went, 'Oh, wow!'"

He entered it in DNR's photo contest to provide an eagle image for the specialty plate.

"I'm just an amateur and a guy like me thinks you're not going to win anything so it was a nice surprise," Hattermer says. "It will be nice to see it on a plate and other people buying it."

The plate design was unveiled Aug. 5 in a ceremony at Prairie du Sac and the Department of Transportation started issuing the plate Sept. 1, according to Jeremy Krueger, supervisor of License Plate and Postal Services for the state's Division of Motor Vehicles.



MICHAEL KIENTZ





AJ Sullivan, an ironworker from Poynette, and Preston Cole (below), chair of the Natural Resources Board, DNR's policymaking board, share a love of nature. Cole says that spending time in nature has social, psychological and health benefits and he is committed to increasing children's chances to have more outdoor opportunities.

MICHAEL KIENTZ

"I like the plate," says Krueger, who worked with DNR's Tyler Brandt, the plate's designer, to shepherd the eagle plate through the nearly year-long process. "It's definitely something different. There really aren't any others (of the other specialty plates) that have the full photo across the plate."

Hattermer's eagle photo provided the kind of dramatic image and implied movement that Crain and Brandt sought in the design, and it worked well with national plate design standards DMV follows for easy identification and safety.

The eagle is printed on a high quality sticker that is attached to the metal plate and then stamped with a number or, for an extra charge, a personalized message of up to six characters.

Motorists can choose between two designs that support the Endangered Resources Fund: the new eagle plate or the wolf plate introduced in 1995.

The design introduced in 2010 bearing a badger and other native species is no longer being sold, although current users can keep that plate on their cars. State law allows only two endangered resources plate designs to be sold and the wolf has remained significantly more popular



MICHAEL KIENTZ





Mary Kay Neumann, an artist and activist, uses her paintings to encourage people to make changes to protect the things they love in nature.

among motorists so the badger was retired.

Through 2014, the endangered resources plates rank third in sales among Wisconsin specialty plates, right after the military plates and one promoting the Green Bay Packers, Krueger says. He expects the eagle plate will be popular as well.

### Portraits of caring for nature

Gratifyingly, people have been eager to help promote the plate, Crain says. A dozen citizens and Glory posed for photos with the new plate to highlight the message that everyone can play a role in caring for nature. Scores of people turned out in Prairie du Sac to watch the unveiling of the plate.

That enthusiasm is not so surprising in a state that produced John Muir, Aldo Leopold and Gaylord Nelson, and which keeps minting new heroes, like Huda Al-kaff of West Bend, honored this July by President Obama for her work promoting environmental preservation as an Islamic faith ethic, and the late educator Dorothy “Dot” Davids, a member of the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians, celebrated in Patty Loew’s 2014 book, “Seventh Generation Earth Ethics: Native Voices of Wisconsin.”

“...Wisconsin has an especially rich tradition of people who have committed themselves to the land in a passionate and self-reflective way,” observes UW-Madison Environmental Historian William Cronon in his essay, “Landscape and Home: Environmental Traditions in Wisconsin.”

People like Dick and Kim Cates, pasture-based livestock farmers in Spring Green. Conservation is a way of life for the couple, winners of the 2013 Leopold Conservation Award from the Wisconsin Farm Federation Bureau and partners.

“In 1967, when I was 15 years old, my dad purchased this old hill farm and he put my four siblings and me to work; we did whatever he needed us to do. It wasn’t a business, but a place where we tended cattle and made hay as a family; through this work we started to learn about what it means to take care of the land,” Dick Cates recalls.

A year later at Christmas, his dad gave him a copy of Leopold’s “A Sand County Almanac,” now regarded as a cornerstone for conservation science, policy and ethics. He read the entire book before school started again in January.

“The idea of a land ethic was important to my father, and it began to take on meaning to me. Leopold’s notion of conservation — when people and land do



Jeanette Hoard volunteers to help restore the prairies, woodlands, streams and wetlands in a county park near Cross Plains.

MICHAEL KIENITZ

MICHAEL KIENITZ



# CATES FAMILY FARM



Dick and Kim Cates, pasture-based livestock farmers in Spring Green, view conservation as a way of life that takes care of their land and their family.

well together by virtue of their partnership — became a motivating force in my life.

“It has been an honor and a privilege to steward the resources of our farm in a way to protect and improve them, and at the same time, make a living for our family. I look at this land as a gift; it will take care of us through the ages if we listen and work with all it can teach us.”

Lainet Garcia-Rivera found promoting the eagle plate a natural, particularly given her commitment to bat conservation, which benefits from the plate sales.

She spent more than a decade researching bats at a leading institute in her native Cuba before coming to Wisconsin and volunteering for DNR’s bat conservation program.

Now a community program coordinator at an Urban Ecology Center in Milwaukee, she helps urban residents get involved in environmental education and outdoor recreation programs, thus they will learn more about the nature around them. She supports volunteers in using the acoustic bat monitoring assisting ultrasound detectors to record calls of

different bat species. During her research in Cuba, she used fine-mesh nets called “mist nets” to carefully catch bats, to identify and tag the species to track them for future studies.

“The mist nets are a powerful tool. I can show the bats to kids and adults and say, ‘Is it not a cute animal?’” she says. “I see how their faces change after they get a chance to see bats up close.”


In the end, that’s what the plate is all about — getting the chance to see nature up close, not in a picture book or a museum after it’s disappeared from the land, skies and water.

And that brings us back to Glory.

Without everyday people caring about nature, Glory might not be here today. The bird injured its wing when it fell out of its nest in the Prairie du Sac area. A canoeist on the Wisconsin River found the injured bird and it was taken

to a wildlife rehabilitator.

The young bird healed successfully under the rehabilitator’s care but had accidentally imprinted on people and could not be returned to the wild but was sent to the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center in 2001, Visty says.

So Glory and Visty became a pair. They have since done hundreds of events, helping share with others the awe and excitement of being a heartbeat away from a majestic and powerful apex predator. And now, helping make the next conservation success possible in Wisconsin. 

*Lisa Gaumnitz writes for the Natural Heritage Conservation program.*

## ONWARD AND UPWARD

Eagles are doing well in Wisconsin. They’ve made a significant comeback from 100 pairs in the 1970s to a record 1,344 occupied nests in 2013 and the numbers continue to grow, says Carly Lapin, a Natural Heritage Conservation district ecologist stationed in Rhinelander who coordinates eagle nest surveys.

“We think bald eagle numbers may be approaching carrying capacity in the Northwoods, meaning their numbers have grown to the point where all available territories are occupied. Smaller lakes generally support one pair, and we already have that on many lakes.

“We’d like to see their numbers hold steady or continue to increase. We are starting to see them expand into southern Wisconsin; bald eagles were documented nesting in the Milwaukee area recently for the first time in many years and we will probably continue to see them expand southward.”

Wisconsin just completed its 43rd year of nest surveys, one of the longest running in the country. DNR pilots and biologists conduct surveys from fixed-wing aircraft to document the locations of nests in April and then return in May or June to count the number of eaglets hatched.

“In Wisconsin, we should be proud of our bald eagle recovery,” Lapin says. “We’re in the top five for numbers in the country and we were one of the first states leading the way in bald eagle recovery. We have a long-standing monitoring program and in the past, we exported eagles to other states to assist with additional recovery efforts. People have a real respect for eagles, and I think it’s a real treat for people to see them.”



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

To purchase the eagle license plate, go to [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search “eagle plate” to download the form along with directions on how to mail it in.

Share your photos of your new eagle plate on social media using the hashtag #Weagleplate.



Partner groups can be a significant resource for managing properties such as waterfowl nesting areas, both in financial contributions and volunteer labor through the Adopt a Fish and Wildlife Area program.

# Adopt a Fish and Wildlife Area program

TAKE A HANDS-ON APPROACH TO IMPROVE YOUR FAVORITE PROPERTY.

*Eric Verbeten*

Do you have a favorite state fisheries or wildlife area? New this year is a chance for those who love the outdoors to give back to their favorite spots and become a sponsor. The Adopt a Fish and Wildlife Area program opens up state fisheries and wildlife areas, flowages and riverways for groups to make a commitment to take an active role in managing and improving these properties all around the state.

Sponsors will have a unique chance to work directly with DNR staff to create a work plan aimed at improving the areas based on the specific needs of each property. Activities include a wide range of fun and rewarding projects like wildlife surveys, building and maintaining facilities (such as boardwalks), habitat improvement projects, litter cleanup, sign and fence postings, seed collections and prairie restoration. Groups will have a chance to perform their activities on a schedule that works for them. The program includes an option for groups or individuals to donate an annual financial contribution to the property.

"The Adopt a Fish and Wildlife Area program is a great way for groups to join in and give back to their communities and the environment in a special way," says Tim Lizotte, DNR wildlife supervisor. "This program is not limited to conservation organizations, but includes school clubs, scouts, businesses, faith-based groups and other interested groups. This is a unique opportunity for groups to invest in their local natural

resources while building teamwork and comradery."

Getting started is easy. Groups can sign up by going to the DNR website at [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and searching keyword "Volunteer" to find the application form and a listing of fish and wildlife areas. It is highly recommended that those considering applying consult with their local area property manager. Property managers can be found by calling DNR customer service at 1 (888) 936-7463. Sponsors who adopt will be recognized with signage at the entrance of the property that will feature their name, an image and examples of work activities being completed on the property.

The Adopt a Fish and Wildlife Area program requires groups to make an annual commitment of three work days totaling 100 hours of labor, OR \$3,000, OR an equivalent combination of the two over a three year period.

*Eric Verbeten writes for DNR's Office of Communications.*



Sponsors are recognized with an Adopt a Fish or Wildlife Area sign at a visible location on the property.



## WHAT'S A FISH AND WILDLIFE AREA?

Fish and wildlife areas are managed to sustain fish, wildlife and natural communities found on the properties and to provide a wide range of nature-based recreational uses including hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, paddling, birdwatching and nature study. Edible fruits, edible nuts, wild mushrooms, wild asparagus and watercress may be removed by hand without a permit for the purpose of personal consumption. Select areas are also open for dog training and hunting dog competitions.





For maps of the Mississippi River Pools, including an overall vicinity map and detailed maps with access areas for each pool, visit [fws.gov/refuge/Upper\\_Mississippi\\_River/map.html](http://fws.gov/refuge/Upper_Mississippi_River/map.html).

SUE FLETCHER

## MIGRATION STOPS ON THE MISSISSIPPI OFFER A RARE CHANCE TO HEAR AND SEE THESE STARS.

*Ruth Nissen*

On a clear morning in October, Brenda Kelly, DNR wildlife manager, looks intently out the window of a small plane at the Mississippi River below her. The plane is flying 150 feet above the surface of the water near La Crosse. Her eyes scan the edges of clumps of marsh plants for feeding mallards and move quickly to examine half-submerged logs in the shadows of neighboring trees for loafing wood ducks.

Kelly is conducting a waterfowl aerial survey as part of a team of biologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Illinois Natural History Survey. The team conducts these surveys in navigation pools 4 through 14 of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, which stretches from Wabasha, Minn. to Rock Island, Ill. The surveys are flown by three crews, with each crew responsible for different stretches of the river. Kelly and I are responsible for pools 8 through 11 from La Crosse to Dubuque, Iowa.

As the plane crosses the main channel of the Mississippi River near Brownsville, Minn., Kelly glances ahead through the windshield at the Pool 8 Wisconsin Islands Closed Area and announces over the radio, "The swans are here!"

The swans have traveled far from their arctic breeding areas. They have

spent over a month on the vast marshes and shallow lakes of the Prairie Pothole Region of Canada, followed by the Dako-

tas and western Minnesota before stopping here.

During the third week of October the first few small flocks appear on the river. Their numbers slowly build, but by late October and through November thousands of tundra swans will be spread along the Upper Mississippi River reaching a peak population around the second week of November. The peak has averaged 37,870 during the last 10 years with the majority of these birds found on the stretch of the river from Alma, Wis. (Pool 4) to Lynxville, Wis. (Pool 9).

The Mississippi River is just one stop in a migration journey from the tundra to their wintering grounds along the mid-Atlantic coast. Migrating during the day and night their melodious, qua-

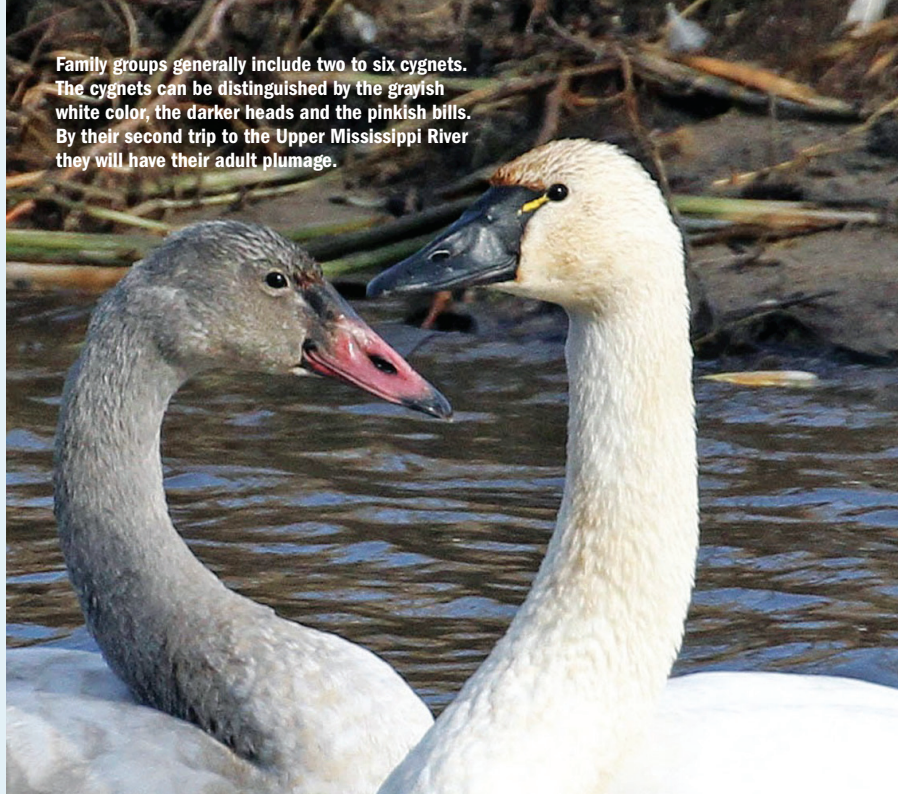


RUTH NISSEN

**These large, elegant birds will generally linger on the Upper Mississippi River to rest and feed for a little over a month. Many of them will stay on the river until it freezes, which generally occurs in late November.**



Family groups generally include two to six cygnets. The cygnets can be distinguished by the grayish white color, the darker heads and the pinkish bills. By their second trip to the Upper Mississippi River they will have their adult plumage.



SUE FLETCHER

vering, who-who-who calls are heard at a great distance as they fly along in their familiar V-formation. During flight, the swans average 30 to 45 mph, but travel faster with a tail wind. They generally fly at altitudes of 2,000 to 4,500 feet, but have been sighted at elevations of 6,000 to 8,000 feet where flocks have been struck by aircraft.

During the fall, 20 to 45 percent of the eastern population of tundra swans uses this stretch of the river as a stopover point, making it a critical staging area during fall migration. It is especially important to family groups traveling with cygnets (young swans). Over half the cygnets produced in a year will spend time on the Upper Mississippi River during the fall flight. Relatively undisturbed resting areas combined with easily accessible, rich food resources allow the cygnets to replenish depleted energy reserves and continue to grow.

While here, the swans feed mainly on starchy bulbs or tubers of plants such as arrowhead (duck potato), wild celery and sago pondweed. Tubers are buried in the mud on the river bottom, but the swans are well equipped with powerful legs, large webs and prominent toes to stir up the soft mud to dislodge the tubers. With their long necks they can usually reach the bottom by just immersing their head and neck, but sometimes in deeper water, they tip up so that only the tail protrudes above the water.

One arrowhead plant may produce as many as 40 tubers. This productivity is critical for sustaining a peak population

of 37,000 swans.

"An individual swan requires about 1/2 pound of tubers daily to maintain weight. Therefore, a population of 10,000 swans would require around 5,000 pounds of tubers per day," explains Kevin Kenow, U.S. Geological Survey research wildlife biologist. "However, swans may consume on the order of 6 pounds of tubers per day while gaining weight on the Upper Mississippi River during migration."

Despite feeding so many swans, the size and density of the arrowhead beds on the river do not appear to be impacted the following year. This is attributed to the effect of diminishing returns for the swan's amount of energy expended. When the density of tubers reaches a point where it is not worth their time to dig for them, they move to other sites. This leaves enough tubers for the plants to begin anew the following spring.

The number of swans using the river has increased over the last 15 years as a



ALAN STANKOVITZ

One of the main attractions for the swans are tubers from arrowhead, an aquatic plant that grows on the water's edge. The swans dig for the tubers, which grow similar to potatoes.

result of improved river conditions combined with management and habitat restoration activities.

"In lower Pool 8, a summer drawdown was conducted in 2001 and 2002, which helped to re-establish beds of emergent plants such as arrowhead and river bulrush," says Kelly. "This was followed by a habitat restoration project, completed in 2012, that benefitted a variety of birds, animals, fish and mussels."

This project — Pool 8 Phase-III — was funded through the federal Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program. It was designed to restore nearly 3,000 acres of Mississippi River ecosystem by reconstructing an island complex similar to what existed in 1954, forming an area protected from wave action and currents to promote aquatic plant beds. This allowed the re-established beds of arrowhead and bulrush to further expand. Wild rice appears to be another major beneficiary of the island restoration project.

The island complex also improved waterfowl migration habitat by providing loafing areas, in addition to protection from the cold winds of November and December, which previously had howled across lower Pool 8. As a result of this work, tundra swan and other waterfowl use of this area has increased.

Similar restoration work has been completed in other pools. A drawdown has been conducted and an island construction project has been completed in Pool 5, while a similar island construction project is underway in Pool 9.

In contrast, Rieck's Lake, near Alma was previously a swan hot spot, but the habitat changed as sediment carried by the Buffalo River was deposited. This changed the vegetation from primarily arrowhead to another, less desirable plant from a swan's point of view — bur reed — and there is very little open water. Consequently, not as many swans gather here as in the past. The character of the Mississippi River will continue to change and the birds will adjust.

The swans will spend almost six months of the year in migration. They fly over 3,000 miles from the nesting area to their wintering areas. Satellite tracking has shown that from the Upper Mississippi River the majority of swans head east to the Great Lakes Region, and then undertake the final leg southeast to the wintering grounds of the mid-Atlantic coast. They will reach their destination by late December and spread out along the mid-Atlantic area.





Prior to island reconstruction in lower Pool 8 there were few islands and even fewer plant beds like arrowhead to attract tundra swans and other waterfowl.



The Brownsville Overlook, located three miles south of Brownsville, Minn. provides a world-class spectacle of swans and other waterfowl in and around the restored island complex in lower Pool 8 of the Mississippi River.

Other swans, particularly those without cygnets in tow, will migrate nonstop from the Upper Mississippi River to the East Coast, a flight of about 1,000 miles. The majority will spend the winter in North Carolina. The rest are spread between Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Their northward journey begins in March.

The thousands of tundra swans that congregate on this part of the Upper Mississippi River every fall offer interested spectators an unparalleled viewing opportunity that attracts thousands of visitors each year. In 2014 over 13,000 visits were made to watch swans and

other waterfowl at the overlooks near La Crosse. In the past, visitors to Rieck's Lake in Alma came from 42 states and 25 countries to watch the swans.

The attraction of this unique and special place for people is best described by Don Hultman, retired refuge manager of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

"Birds have a unique way of touching our minds and hearts," Hultman suggests. "Perhaps it is their color and their ability to fly unaided by technology. Perhaps what holds us in awe is the mystery and magic of migration. The panorama of marsh, islands and bluffs,

swans, geese, ducks and coots, pelicans and eagles combined with the sounds of the swans talking to each other allows us to connect with the miracle of migration, and helps link a part of natural history with our own history. People have been watching these gatherings and passages of swans, geese and ducks for thousands of years. May it always be so."

This autumn, take the time to enjoy this world-class spectacle which exists on our doorstep and, "Catch the swan migration."



Ruth Nissen is stationed in La Crosse and works with the Mississippi River Team in the Department of Natural Resources.

## WHERE TO SEE SWANS ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

### WISCONSIN:

- Rieck's Lake Park just north of Alma
- Lower Spring Lake Overlook, South River Road, Buffalo City (overlook will be completed in 2016)
- Lake Onalaska Overlook, County Highway ZB, Brice Prairie, five miles north of Onalaska
- Shady Maple Overlook, south of La Crosse on Highway 35
- Potosi Point, south end of Potosi on Highway 133, Point Road

### MINNESOTA:


- Brownsville Overlook, located three miles south of Brownsville on Highway 26
- Weaver Bottoms, north of Minneiska on Highway 61

A driving loop using the Great River Scenic Byway is possible by using the bridges over the Mississippi River at Wabasha, Minn.; Winona, Minn.; La Crosse, Wis.; or Lansing, Iowa.

Although swans may not be present at every site, all the time, eagles, pelicans and large concentrations of other waterfowl generally use these same areas.

For up to date information, call the Upper Mississippi Refuge-La Crosse District Office (608-779-2399) or visit the Refuge's home page on the Internet at [fws.gov/refuge/upper\\_mississippi\\_river](http://fws.gov/refuge/upper_mississippi_river).





Joy is found in a hollow log and dozens of hands-on activities at the expo.

# MOHEE, Yipppee!

STUDENTS, EDUCATORS AND CONSERVATION PARTNER ENTHUSIASM FOR MIDWEST OUTDOOR HERITAGE EDUCATION EXPO 2015 MEANS RECORD SUCCESS AT MACKENZIE CENTER.

*Story by Mark LaBarbera, photos by Chico La Barbera*

**“Events like this put dreams in young hearts,” Ray Howell told the media at his Kicking Bear Foundation’s tomahawk-throwing station at the Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expo.**

Ruth Ann Lee and Chrystal Seeley-Schreck, education co-leads at DNR’s MacKenzie Center agreed, adding, “If you want to know how well your youth event is connecting students and teachers to conservation and outdoor skills, listen to them at the end of the day as they talk among themselves while waiting for their bus.”

We did.

What we heard exceeded expectations of event partners. It bodes well for skills training at the DNR’s 500-acre Columbia County property and

throughout Wisconsin.

After the two-day May event, letters and drawings arrived from students and teachers, adding to the positive feedback.

“There was truly something for everyone,” wrote Cuba City teachers, noting, “The only thing more impressive than the variety of activities was the enthusiastic and knowledgeable professionals who went above and beyond to make sure our students felt safe, comfortable and excited.”

Teacher Gina Rollins said, “For many

of our students, this was the first time they had been exposed to Wisconsin’s outdoor heritage and related activities. The stations provoked an interest and sense of appreciation for Wisconsin’s natural resources. Those students left wanting to learn more about a world they would not have had the opportunity to explore without attending this year’s expo.”

A Fall River student, wrote, “My favorite parts were shooting the BB guns, climbing the tower, holding the baby pheasants and the animal mounts. I also liked the dog demo.”

“This was our all-time best field trip ever,” was the most frequent comment from students, along with, “Can we come back next year?”

A record 2,380 students, chaperones and teachers enjoyed a touch of the wild at this year’s MOHEE (mo’-hee), or MO-HEXPO (mo-hex’-po), as some call it.

The total included 1,967 mostly fourth through sixth graders who tried their hand at outdoor skills with help from volunteer mentors and DNR staff. Last year’s inaugural event was a success with 1,435 students. This year’s event



not only had more students, but also more schools, more partners and more skills training and other activities, as well as more adults. Some of the 413 chaperones and teachers also discovered new activities.

"Even I tried shooting for the first time," said Rollins.

Schools attended from as far away as Appleton, Fond du Lac and Marshfield, often funded by local conservation clubs and county sporting alliances, to see the live animals and try hands-on experiential learning in archery, airgun, birding, fisheries, forestry, parks, wildlife, natural heritage conservation, safety training and more.

At one station, DNR's Davin Lopez and the Natural Heritage Conservation team identified living organisms that students netted in the pond. At another station, Bob Haase and Trout Unlimited volunteers showed those youngsters how to tie fishing flies that match those organisms that fish will eat.

More than 30 groups from the Wisconsin Trappers Association to Madison Audubon, Manitowoc County Fish and Game Alliance, Wings Over Wisconsin, Dane County Conservation League, Wisconsin Muzzle Loaders Association and the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs, teamed up with three Safari Club International chapters, Wisconsin Friends of NRA, the Department of Natural Resources and the Outdoor Heritage Education Center charitable nonprofit, which organized the event.

OHEC's goal for the annual event is to introduce youth, families and educators to outdoor activities, conservation and safety training programs so they can choose which ones to explore further. Teachers are given information about where students and their families can go to find more information about ongoing programs.

Admission is free thanks to support from many groups, including large donations from the Southeast Wisconsin Bow Hunters Chapter of Safari Club International, SCI Wisconsin and SCI Badgerland chapters plus Wisconsin Friends of NRA and Dane County Conservation League. Next tier donors include National Wild Turkey Federation, Wisconsin Conservation Congress, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Wings Over Wisconsin.

The event introduces the MacKenzie Center to groups that can then help support it year-round as the department uses the property to connect youth with



The "net result" of sampling aquatic education activities at MOHEE is that more students have begun to look more closely at water resources.



Lou George uses cow calls and bugles to attract students to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's activity area where they learn about elk in Wisconsin.



Helping students get hooked on fishing, Trout Unlimited's Bob Haase starts tying the fly that this student completes and takes home.





Simple first-time experiences, like holding a live fish, connect students with resources and leave lasting impressions.

nature, including increasing outdoor skills training and learn to hunt for food programs on the property. Event supporters and natural resources professionals see it as the wide top of a recruitment funnel that can feed the various other opportunities and mentored programs creating conservation-minded citizens, license buyers and informed and engaged future leaders.

Talking about MOHEE again choosing MacKenzie as its venue, JD Smith, the center's director said, "The DNR is a supporting partner at many other expos and we are happy to continue that support by providing an ideal location for schools to bring students for this outdoor experience."

In on-camera interviews during the event, other DNR professionals, like Deputy Secretary Kurt Thiede, mentioned that MacKenzie is a great location for the event. Other DNR staff pointed to the property's unique mix of prairie, pond and forest; bison, wolves and other live wildlife; plus trails, fire tower, syrup-finishing house, logging museum and other facilities.

Dan Schroeder of DNR's law enforcement program said it's cost effective to have the students and teachers discover archery programs and DNR resources available to them while also showcasing the MacKenzie property.

Rob Bohmann, chair of the Wisconsin

Conservation Congress, said, "Friends of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress will donate funds and offer transportation grants again next year (2016) for schools planning to attend the Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expo, May 18-19."

WCC's Dale Maas told media that he had been involved in other youth expos and sees how good MacKenzie is for such events.

Some funding comes from WCC affiliates, plus individuals and other groups across the state that want their local schools and students to connect with natural resources and healthy outdoor activities.

Columbia County Sporting Alliance, Ducks Unlimited, Dodge County Sporting Conservation Alliance, Columbia/Marquette counties Chapter of Pheasants Forever, North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association, Wisconsin Bowhunters and Whitetails Unlimited are among the groups adding support.

Neil Bishop, president of the Friends of MacKenzie, said, "We're glad to support this event, feed the volunteers and showcase MacKenzie Center, just 25 miles north of Madison. With interpretive trails, live wildlife, plus museums and education programs for school and youth groups, MacKenzie is a wonderful place to visit and learn about the natural world."

The State Game Farm is connected to the MacKenzie Center and is adjacent to the arboretum on the western half of the property. The facility raises 75,000 pheasants that the Department of Natural Resources releases on more than 90 properties open to the public in Wisconsin.

"Wisconsin conservation is rooted at this place," said Vic Connors, president of the Friends of Poynette Game Farm. "We see this education expo as a valuable way to share this history and build upon our outdoor heritage."

*Mark LaBarbera is treasurer of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin and founder of OHEC and MOHEE, and can be reached at [ohceinfo@peoplepc.com](mailto:ohceinfo@peoplepc.com).*

## MOHEE 2015 PARTNERS

Action Track Chair  
Alpen Optics  
American Bank & Trust  
Applewood Market  
Atwater Conservation Club  
Audubon, Madison Area  
Assoc. of WI Snowmobile Clubs  
Benton State Bank  
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Bob Allen Companies  
Boyt Harness Companies  
C4 Outdoor Productions  
Cabela's, Prairie du Chien  
Casey Funeral Home  
Columbia County Sporting Alliance  
Columbia/Marquette counties, Pheasants Forever  
Dan Small Outdoors  
Dane Co. Conservation League  
Dodge Co. Sporting Conservation Alliance  
Ducks Unlimited  
e . motion Photography by Chico La Barbera  
Field & Stream Sportsmen's Club  
FigaRo Productions  
Forrest Home Animal Clinic  
Friends of MacKenzie Center  
Friends of NRA  
Friends of Poynette Game Farm  
Friends of Wisconsin Conservation Congress  
Gen Ebert's Mammals of Wisconsin  
Hawke Optics  
Henry Repeating Arms  
Hidden Creek Kennels  
Izaak Walton League, Southwest WI  
Kicking Bear Foundation  
Leroy Hunter Education Fund  
Manitowoc Co. Fish and Game Protective Assoc.  
Mission Archery  
North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association  
National Archery in the Schools Program  
National Hound & Tree Dog Association  
National Wild Turkey Federation  
Outdoor Heritage Education Center  
Pheasants Forever  
Pumpkin Center Sportsmen's Club  
River Valley Hunting Retriever Club  
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
Schaller's English Cocker  
Safari Club International Badgerland  
Safari Club International SE WI Bowhunters  
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Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association  
Wisconsin Bowhunters Association  
Wisconsin Coonhunters Association  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
Wisconsin Muzzle Loaders Association  
Wisconsin Outdoor News  
WI Rapids High School Conservation Club  
Wisconsin Trappers Association

## TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE MACKENZIE CENTER

Visit [outdoorheritageeducationcenter.com](http://outdoorheritageeducationcenter.com) or [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search keyword "MacKenzie."



## HOW ONE DEER SHOWED THE AUTHOR THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HARVESTING AND HUNTING, AND WHY HE NOW PREFERS THE LATTER.

*Ron Weber*

A light snow was gently falling as I moved through the almost pitch-dark woods toward the ladder tree stand, which waited for me on a balsam-laden ridge above the edge of an expansive spruce bog. The excitement of the impending hunt was not the only reason I could feel my heartbeat racing. For me, and probably many other hunters, walking alone in dark woods conjures childhood visions of creatures of the night on the prowl, though many would be hard pressed to admit it. It is always a good feeling to reach the relative security of a tree stand, safe from all manner of beasts, real and imagined.

After securing my safety harness to the tree, I carefully hauled up my bow. Knocking an arrow, I settled back against the hemlock to wait for the dawn, which, because of heavy cloud cover, was slow to come. A pack of coyotes broke the silence — their excited yipping confirming that I was not the only hunter on the move this morning.

As the gathering light slowly won



The author has hunted since he was a teenager and still gets excited for the nine-day gun season each year.

STEPHEN J. LANG

the war with the dark, first shapes, and eventually images, became visible. A couple of inches of fresh snow covered the forest floor, appropriate for the second week of November in northern Wisconsin. The peak of the rut was in full swing and like many hunters at this time of the season, I felt as though something memorable may happen today. But little did I know just how true that would be.

The first few hours were uneventful, save for the regular visits of some of the neighboring red squirrels and blue jays. A pair of gray jays moved through, quietly flitting from one tree to the next. It is funny how nature designed them to be the alter ego of their more obnoxious and raucous cousins. Just as I glanced at my watch at a quarter to ten, I caught movement 60 yards or so along the edge of the bog.

From out of the shadows, a deer emerged and began walking up the ridge that I was sitting on. I could see that it was a doe and it appeared to be alone. It quietly browsed on sedges and grasses passing within 20 yards of me, oblivious to my presence. Though a legal target, I had no interest in bringing any harm to the doe and she eventually moved down the ridge and out of sight.

Around 11 o'clock the cloudy skies began to break and the sun made its first real appearance. The warmth it brought felt nice. By noon, the clouds were gone and beautiful, clear blue skies remained. I hoped the change in weather would also bring a change in deer activity. My answer came around one o'clock.

# A buck in the balsams

Encountering a buck in the balsams about five years ago, though, convinced him that today, his passion is in the hunt rather than the harvest.



As I looked down the ridge in the direction the doe had walked off to, I saw a horizontal figure that seemed out of place 75 yards away. As my eyes locked on the shape, I noticed a quick flash of white. With the flick of its tail, the deer began to walk across the ridge and down toward the spruce bog. From my vantage point, I could see that the deer carried a small rack — maybe a four- or six-pointer.

Though not a trophy by many hunters' standards, I decided that if I got the chance, I would try for this deer. Through my bow hunting career I had traveled a long and winding road. As a boy I was willing to shoot at any deer that came within my 20-yard range. But as I got older, and after harvesting a few deer, I entered a stage in which I desperately tried for big bucks. I was glad that I recognized after just a few seasons that trophy hunting really wasn't for me — at least, not the trophy as defined by many hunting magazines and television programs. Eventually, I settled into a place where the interpretation of trophy was a little more broad and subjective. I felt comfortable there.

A couple of low grunts from my grunt call stopped the buck's descent toward the bog and turned his attention in my direction. He stared down the ridge looking for what he must have assumed was another buck. After about a minute he turned and began walking toward my stand.

I slowly raised my bow and got into position for a shot as the buck closed the distance between us. Forty yards, 30 and then 20. At 15 yards his head went behind a large basswood and I came to a full draw. My eyes concentrated on his chest as I instinctively lined the bow up with my target. My fingers slowly released the string and in an instant the arrow disappeared into the buck's chest with a dull thud.

The deer bolted forward for about 20 yards and stopped. He looked around trying to figure out what had just happened, seemingly unaware that a four-bladed broadhead had just passed through him. He began to walk off slowly as if nothing was wrong and for a moment I wondered if I really had hit him. Of course, I knew I had. After walking for about 15 yards the buck stopped and looked around again. Thirty seconds later he lay down on his side and never moved or made a sound again.

After lowering my bow to the ground, I sat back for five minutes to say a prayer. As I did, I noticed a red squirrel running down the hemlock limb above me and a chickadee noisily moving from one branch to the next. Everything around me seemed the same as it was five minutes earlier, but something inside me felt very different.

As I walked the short distance to my buck, my eyes met the blank gaze in his soft brown eyes and I noticed my legs beginning to tremble. As I knelt beside the deer and ran my fingers along the length of his five-point antlers tears welled up

in my eyes and began streaming down my face.

As a lifelong deer hunter with bow and gun, I had killed many deer and though there was always a touch of sadness, it had never bothered me like this before. I remembered something I had read when in my teens by the great Wisconsin author Mel Ellis. In the piece, Ellis had confessed that it was getting tough for him to kill. Though I had thought about that from time-to-time throughout the years, I never really knew what he had meant. Now I knew exactly what he felt.

It has been over five years now since that November day. I still bow hunt regularly and am as excited for the nine-day gun season each year as I was as a teen. I have not filled a tag since that day but not for lack of opportunity. In fact, though I have seen many bucks — including many others would consider trophies — I have not drawn my bow or raised my gun at a deer.

I love every part of the hunting experience except the killing. In his song "Jack and Diane," John Cougar Mellencamp sang about life, but for me the hunt goes on long after the thrill of killing has gone.

The trail we are on as hunters leads us into many places we never expected to be. Maybe I will pass through this phase as I once passed through my trophy phase. Or maybe I will continue to hunt by the mantra that adventure author James Curwood suggested when he wrote, "The greatest thrill is not to kill but to let live."


This season, as another buck walks past me down the ridge on a steely, cold November day, my bow with arrow nocked will remain resting on my lap. With that, I am at total peace. That may be the lasting legacy of the buck in the balsams.

*Ron Weber writes from Weyerhaeuser, Wis.*



STEPHEN LANG





A foggy sunrise showcases mallards and other birds and rewards the authors for rising early to trek the L.H. Barkhausen Waterfowl Preserve.

# The beauty of Barkhausen

## CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF WATERFOWL REFUGE AND RECREATION IN BROWN COUNTY.

*Story by Jane and Reginald Muhl, photos by Reginald Muhl*

Have you ever witnessed geese, ducks or cranes in flight as the brilliant red and orange colors of the warming sun arise, or spotted a white-tailed deer in the early morning fog? How about smelling the sweet fragrance of wildflowers in bloom or pondering the engineering astuteness of an eagle building its huge nest?

These images describe some of the beauty we experience each time we hike the trails, photograph the beauty and experience the wonders of the natural resources at the L.H. Barkhausen Waterfowl Preserve on the west shore of Green Bay.

One of the first waterfowl refuges in Wisconsin, the L.H. Barkhausen Waterfowl Preserve is a sanctuary consisting of 920 acres of meadows, wetlands, prairie and forest that serve as a home and safe haven for many species of fowl, flora and fauna.

The preserve is part of Brown County's public park system and is named in honor of its donor, a former Green Bay businessman named Louis Henry Barkhausen, who 60 years ago, in 1955, donated 474 acres of land to the citizens of Brown County.

His only stipulation was that the property remain a refuge for waterfowl and wildlife. Barkhausen had purchased

this property in 1926 with the vision of providing a resting and feeding area for migrating waterfowl. It was primarily brush and marshland, located about a half mile back from the bay of Green Bay shoreline, and was originally known as the Suamico Game Sanctuary.

An avid waterfowl hunter and conservationist, and one of the creators of Ducks Unlimited, Barkhausen developed the area by constructing two diked water areas (impoundments), drilled wells and installed pumps so the water levels over the marsh could be managed. He then erected fences around the property to limit access, control poaching and provide for raising white-tailed deer. In addition, he built a caretaker residence and hired staff to oversee the property.

Barkhausen's dedication and devotion to the preservation of waterfowl resources is perhaps best associated with his work of re-introducing the giant Canada goose to the Green Bay area.

Once thought to be extinct in Wisconsin, in 1932, Barkhausen bought three pairs of "giants" and began raising them on his preserve. They quickly multiplied and in 1948, the flock was divided, with half the geese given to the Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary on Green Bay's east side. Today, descendants of the original geese number several thousand and the preserve continues to be home to a large resident flock. As a tribute to Barkhausen, the preserve aerates a pond and provides corn for geese that winter here.

The preserve expanded in 1976 when the Fort Howard Paper Foundation donated an additional 446 acres for use as a wildlife and educational study area. Access to the waters of Green Bay was made possible by this donation and it became the catalyst to provide educational programming for students and area residents.

Today, the mission of the 920-acre preserve continues to focus on resource management so that it remains a refuge for wildlife and waterfowl, while broadening its goals to also include environmental education and passive recreation for area residents.

A closer look at the work that is being done to achieve each of these goals brings a greater appreciation of the property and those committed to preserving them.

### **Resource management**

Through the efforts of the Brown County Park Department staff and volunteers,



managing the property to improve the overall plant, wildlife and waterfowl habitats continues to be a focus. Many activities are ongoing, such as providing supplemental food sources, constructing and maintaining nesting structures, improving spawning habitat for northern pike, and enhancing/maintaining marsh habitat by controlling the spread of invasive species of plants.

Areas of brush are also mowed in wetland areas to open up marshes and pond areas allowing native grasses, sedges and cattails to grow, and, in turn, provide better habitat for myriad wildlife including migrating birds, nesting waterfowl and other wetland species.



Visitors surprise a deer as it ambles down a path.

Critters commonly observed at the preserve include white-tailed deer, coyote, red fox, otters, muskrats, opossum, skunk, raccoon, mink, weasel, groundhog (woodchuck), chipmunks, pine squirrels and 13-lined ground squirrels.

In the waters and wetlands, various types of turtles, several varieties of snakes, and many species of frogs are found. Bullfrogs are commonly heard calling on July evenings and Blanding's turtles have also been spotted using the preserve.

The vegetation and flowers are typical of the low, sandy soils of the area and include skunk cabbage, marsh marigolds, May apples, Joe-Pye weed, swamp milkweed and prairie wildflowers.

Over 200 bird and waterfowl species have been observed at the preserve including nesting waterfowl, migrating birds, and other species that consider the

preserve their residence such as mourning doves, woodpeckers and owls.

### Environmental education for students and adults

A second goal of the preserve is to provide quality outdoor educational programs for schools and the public. To accomplish this, in 1980, a portion of the residence building was converted to a classroom and display area and became known as the West Shores Interpretive Center. An 800-square-foot Discovery Room was added for natural history displays and live animals.

In 1982, the first naturalist was employed. Today, the staff includes a park ranger, park educator and an assistant naturalist. As part of the organized educational programming for schools, the staff presents outdoor educational programs focusing on three habitats — marsh, woodland and pond — while immersing students in an outdoor classroom as they gain life skills they will never forget.

Staff-led programs for the public include programs across the seasons. Winter offerings include snowshoe lessons, basic winter survival skills, moonlight snowshoe hikes and tiki torch evening treks. Spring offerings have included courses in building bluebird and bat houses, maple syruping, kayaking, archery and more.

Four-day summer camps for children ages 6 through 13 started in 2013.

Barkhausen has a cure for anyone suffering from nature-deficit disorder!

### Passive recreation

The third goal of the preserve is to allow the public to experience the beauty of Barkhausen through access to the many areas of the preserve. The 920 acres of the L.H. Barkhausen Preserve are interwoven with over 9 miles of carefully marked trails through the fields, forests and wetlands. Most of the trails have a crushed limestone surface, although some just have grass. Along the trails, bird watchers, naturalists, nature photographers, hikers and families find an abundance of plants, including a few threatened species, as well as waterfowl and wildlife.

The trails are accessible to users of all

abilities, including those in wheelchairs. The preserve has an all-terrain wheelchair, or Action Trackchair, purchased through a fundraising effort by the county in 2013. Several local individuals and foundations donated the funds so those with mobility limitations would have access to the natural world. The preserve "rents" the all-terrain chair by reservation for free.

The hiking trails are groomed for classical cross-country skiing and there are two signed snowshoeing trails that take visitors through areas of the preserve that are not accessible other times of the year. The pond in front of the Interpretive Center is cleared for skating.

In addition to the trails, three observation blinds, a raised mound overlook, a 12-foot-high viewing platform and a 315-foot raised boardwalk enhance the opportunity for visitors to experience the wonders of wildlife in its natural habitat. In 1955, the preserve was designated as a State Wildlife Viewing Site. The annual usage is estimated to be over 66,000.

Experience the wonders of nature and help celebrate the 60th anniversary of the preserve.



Jane and Reginald Muhl write from Green Bay.

## L.H. BARKHAUSEN PRESERVE

### ADDRESS:

2024 Lakeview Drive  
Suamico, WI 54173

### DRIVING DIRECTIONS:

Take Hwy. 41-141 north of Green Bay 4 1/2 miles to Lineville Road exit, turn right (east) on Lineville Road to intersection with Lakeview Drive, turn north onto Lakeview Drive. Park entrance is about a half mile ahead on the right. About 5 miles north of Green Bay.

### PHONE:

920-448-4466


### WEBSITE:

co.brown.wi.us

### HOURS:

The Interpretive Center is open to the public Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and on Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4 p.m. Trails are open sunrise to sunset.





In recognition of the health, social, environmental, aesthetic and monetary value of the urban forest, the State of Wisconsin is developing the Wisconsin Urban Forest Inventory and Analysis program. To learn more go to [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "urban forest inventory."

# Taking good ideas from rural Wisconsin

A STATEWIDE URBAN FOREST INVENTORY IS UNDERWAY FOR COMMUNITIES BIG AND SMALL.

TRACY SALISBURY

*Katherine Esposito*

Back when northern Wisconsin was facing the forest cutover of the early 1900s, the U.S. Forest Service began measuring what was left.

Starting in the 1930s, field workers ventured into the woods to count trees, one by one, collecting data on everything from species to size to health. To select plots, a lattice-like framework was laid over the land, and small sections were purposefully identified and then sampled and re-sampled at regular intervals. Over decades, their work helped mill owners know what to expect, and also allowed forest researchers to determine whether the burgeoning forest was headed in a healthy direction.

Now, the Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Forest Service are teaming up to give municipal lands in cities and villages across Wisconsin the same ground-level scrutiny that our rural forests have long received, beginning an ongoing process that will help answer these questions.

Called the Urban Forest Inventory and Analysis, it is being carried out using much the same protocol used for its rural counterpart. Last spring, crews began visiting selected areas in Milwaukee and Madison to collect data on tree cover, or, in many cases, lack of tree cover. For each of the next six years, they'll visit new areas, and then in the seventh year, they'll circle back to the first ones measured in

2015 to evaluate gains and losses.

In 2002, Wisconsin partnered with the U.S. Forest Service to initiate a pilot program to inventory urban trees, which the Department of Natural Resources repeated, with modifications, in 2012. The Forest Service then partnered with the cities of Baltimore in 2013 and Austin in 2014 to begin inventorying those cities. In 2015, the Forest Service partnered with six more metro areas, including Madison and Milwaukee to start a national urban forest inventory effort.

Soon, the Department of Natural Resources will extend the inventory to establish permanent sample plots all over Wisconsin, something no other state is doing.

Eventually, the inventory will cover about 1,250,000 acres of urban Wisconsin, with the Village of Oostburg being the smallest at 650 acres. The inventory will be conducted in urban areas from Superior to Beloit, and Green Bay to La Crosse, as well as other communities large and small throughout the state.

Later, the department will combine ground surveys with aerial imaging and street tree data to give the most complete picture possible of what is happening in our urban forests.

For 80 years, rural tree data has pow-

ered the state's timber economy, buoying large industries and small, providing thousands of paychecks. It still does.

In return, forest growth powered tourism, bringing millions of visitors to the Northwoods for scenic beauty, recreation and hunting. It provided serene cool nights, refuges from frantic day jobs, and shelter for birds and bears. More recently, scientists have appreciated that masses of trees also keep the air cleaner by absorbing pollution and trapping carbon.

It is a trove of data that Wisconsin resource managers now want to replicate for the urban forest, for similar reasons: attractive landscapes, improved public health, wildlife habitat, cooler temperatures, and, with the reality of trees dying from various causes, timber value as well. In a world where numbers count more than sentiment, the department hopes that quantifying the changes in the urban forest will help citizens, forest managers and elected officials to recognize patterns and what, if anything, they might want to do about them.

U.S. Forest Service scientist David Nowak has studied urban trees for two decades, developing ever-more sophisticated computer models to quantify how much they affect pollution levels, how much they trap carbon, and whether they are holding their own in the face of pressure from pests, diseases and development. The pool of information is growing rapidly. And now Wisconsin will add its rich new set to the mix.

"DNR is cutting-edge," Nowak says.

It's something State Forester Paul DeLong has heard before. When he attends national conferences, he hears compliments about the urban forestry program.

"Wisconsin is very highly regarded for its urban forestry program and management," he says.

## A focus on private trees, not just public

Wisconsin's population is slowly increasing, and with it, the amount of urban land is rising as well. In 1990, the percent of urban land in Wisconsin was estimated at 3 percent; by 2050, it's projected to grow to 8.3 percent.

That means pressure on city trees, whether owned publicly or privately.

Richard Rideout, DNR's Urban Forestry Partnership specialist, doesn't wring his hands over the loss of some city trees. The urban inventory data will afford a chance for citizens, municipal managers and even corporations to step

KATHERINE ESPOSITO



back and think deeply about the overall picture.

"The inventory will be the first step to help people to preserve and replant, to use better species, and make a more resilient forest," he says.

Canopy: a word that's been used to describe the Amazon rain forest, a place where mysteries abound, where millions of trees and other leafy plants shelter wildlife and trap carbon dioxide, one very helpful factor in the struggle against a changing climate.

From England to Baltimore to Australia, it's also a word being invoked by urban foresters, designers, planners and policy makers anxious to avoid, or to reverse, the scenario of hot cities jammed with ever more people, more buildings, more concrete, but with landscape trees only a casual afterthought.

In Wisconsin, urban foresters have

had their eyes on the canopy for some time, but much assistance has focused on helping municipalities start and improve their public tree programs. Many have done so, often aided by DNR grants of up to \$25,000. Many have gained "Tree City USA" status, given after certain conditions are met, ranking Wisconsin second in the nation with 196 Tree Cities.

But privately owned trees were always somebody else's responsibility.

The new inventory will envelop the entire forest, whether public or private. The community-by-community, plot-by-plot inventories will include commercial parking lots, subdivision backyards and university dormitory front yards. If there are no trees in those places, well, that's part of the research, too.

"We want to get data to answer some questions we have no answers for," says Andy Stoltman, DNR Rural and Urban

Forest Inventory analyst. "We all know that if you develop an area, you're probably losing canopy. But how much, and for how long?"

In Wisconsin, emerald ash borer is a recent culprit. Estimates are that the state is home to about 725 million ash trees, with five million in urban areas. Some communities could lose as much as one-half of their street trees to this pest.

Urban streets are particularly hard-hit because ash was deliberately — and somewhat misguidedly — planted in force after it was viewed as useful for difficult urban settings. But street trees comprise only a fraction of the whole canopy — averaging only 5 percent, overall. By far, most trees are found in backyards and near highways and byways. That's one reason why the recent emphasis on overall canopy — street trees plus all else — is so important.

What does canopy do for us? In the last two decades, research on the benefits of standing trees has exploded.

At the macro level, trees everywhere bind carbon as they grow, releasing it when they are turned into mulch or burned for fuel. City trees are no exception. Recent research using state-of-the-art satellite imagery shows that urban trees currently store 700 million tons of carbon, just over 3 percent of the total stored by all forestland. Meanwhile, these same trees absorb a range of pollutants: carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, lead, sulfur dioxide and fine particles, which are culprits in common urban health problems such as bronchitis and asthma and can also result in death.

The urban forest contribution is significant, according to Nowak, because nowadays, most people live in cities, not in the country. Using sophisticated computer models, plus pollution and health cost data, scientists calculated that deaths and illnesses from respiratory diseases were avoided by the thousands because of the cleansing effect of the urban forest.

And there's so much more. Remember the last time you took shelter under a tree in a deluge? Trees cushion the impact of rainstorms, lessening stormwater runoff to streams and sanitary sewers. Trees provide critical shade, leading to cooler temperatures and reduced air conditioning needs.

"Urban trees are 3.6 percent of all trees, but in that 3.6 percent is over 80 percent of the population," says David Nowak.

On a more personal level, trees soften the landscape, perhaps even change human behavior. At the University of



Trees, such as these in downtown Neenah, have been shown to add economic value to a business district.

OLIVIA WITTHUN



The urban forest canopy is made up of both public and private trees — and everyone has a role in helping care for this valuable resource. This canopy view was taken from a bluff overlooking La Crosse.

OLIVIA WITTHUN



Washington's College of the Environment, social scientist Kathleen Wolf and staff from the U.S. Forest Service created a website, *Green Cities, Good Health*, summarizing two decades of national research on the effects of urban trees and green landscapes on human perception and behavior. Some studies have focused on shoppers' responses to trees in retail districts and on home values in neighborhoods with larger trees, finding that shoppers spend more time on streets with canopy and that homes are valued more highly.

"Savvy community planners realize that trees are part of the equation for community vibrancy," Wolf says.

In Baltimore, a recent study of crime patterns using advanced tree imaging techniques and geographic coordinates for crime data found that a 10 percent increase in larger canopy trees was associated with a 12 percent decrease in crime, mostly on public lands. The study was conducted by researchers from the University of Vermont and the U.S. Forest Service, who concluded that forestry programs should consider public safety when planting city trees and involve police departments, too.

### Partners in tree care

The urban forest analysis will not only help nurseries learn what trees to grow, but will provide data on what's dead and dying. And, if a nonprofit group in Madison is any indication, it may also offer ideas as to how canopy data can be used to teach residents about trees.

The new information will guide professional landscape managers as well as decision makers in their long-term planning for tree replacement and maintenance, says John Gall, a certified arborist with Wachtel Tree Science in Merton.

"Statistics will filter down to the nursery industry as well," he says. "Right now, we're struggling to get enough trees to deal with emerald ash borer [removals]."

Meanwhile, there's a growing movement to make the best of a bad situation: the thousands of ash trees being removed due to emerald ash borer and other city trees being cut down for other reasons. In the past, these were often chipped for mulch, burned or sent to the landfill. A new nonprofit, Wisconsin Urban Wood, has created a network of businesses that find creative uses for these trees from furniture to flooring, lumber and more. WUW member Baraboo Woodworks in Madison now operates a lumber mill

and woodworking business on Madison's East Side.

"We come in if a tree has to be downed," says Josh Rice, a manager there. "But instead of having a walnut chipped or burned, we give it a second life."

### The value of education

After receiving his master's degree in landscape architecture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Evan Slocum, who'd also worked as an arborist in New York City, decided he wanted to educate people about trees instead of simply planting, pruning and removing them. Assisted by a DNR Urban Forestry grant, in 2011 he founded the Urban Tree Alliance, which not only offers tree pruning and planting, but also pruning workshops, free tree plantings to underserved areas, and a new Citizen Forester program, to reach people who may never have considered the urban forest.

"Homeowners don't think that their trees contribute to the urban forest



Evan Slocum

KATHERINE ESPOSITO

canopy," Slocum says. "Even an arborist doesn't think about the canopy as an entity, which it is. It's a shared resource."

Last spring, the UTA debuted the Madison Tree Map, an "open-source" inventory of trees in Madison and the first of its kind in Wisconsin. It builds upon prior public and private inventories to create a single online map that can be easily accessed and is constantly updating as homeowners add their own trees. It also uses iTree, a U.S. Forest Service computer modeling program developed by David Nowak and others, to estimate the benefits of the urban forest.

"The goal is to have people engaged in urban forestry, to get people involved," Slocum says.

Getting people engaged statewide is exactly what Andy Stoltman would love to see.

"What are our values?" he asks. "What is the price tag on a tree?"

Over the next 10 years, as plots are resurveyed and the data roll in, a picture will emerge: This is the urban forest we have. Is it what we want?

Katherine Esposito is a freelance writer from Madison.

### A DAY IN THE FIELD

The men and women counting trees for the urban forest inventory go wherever the research darts land, always getting permission from the owners before stepping foot on private property.

On June 16, one landed in a city park, in a manicured recreation field. In the randomly picked 48-foot circle, there was only one tree, a Norway maple.

Seen from a distance, it looked good. Fifty-three feet tall, about 50 years old, surrounded mostly by mown grass, a few neighbor birches and an ash just outside the study area, and a basketball court where a dozen young adults were energetically exercising.

It was a plain Jane, ordinary maple that likely never got a second look in its life until the morning the inventory crew, Terry Schreiber and his assistant, Erick Fruehling, showed up.

On closer examination, it didn't look so good. A root had emerged from the ground and was circling the base. A cavity had opened and the tree's inner core was exposed.

On a list of 20 variables, the rot was duly noted as tree damage. Others included ownership (the city); ground cover (grass); sidewalk-root conflict (none); improper planting (likely); and crown dieback (dead branches up high).

"That tree's got a big seam full of rot in it," Schreiber said. By the time the crews return in seven years, "it won't be here."

The next dart landed along a bicycle trail near a busy street, where Schreiber and Fruehling found four trees — three locusts and a Japanese tree lilac — within the circle. They then made their way to a campus, where the plot finally encountered a dense stand of trees, including locust and white oak, some quite large.

All told, the two men were given 35 plots in Dane County to survey that included typical urban land types, from mown grass (two schoolyards, three golf courses) to untended invasive weeds (drainage ditches along the state highway) to the middle of Lake Mendota (they got a pass).



Terry Schreiber

KATHERINE ESPOSITO



# A decade of partnerships takes shape

TEN YEARS INTO GREEN TIER, PLACON PLASTICS IS A SHINING EXAMPLE OF COMPANIES GOING BEYOND COMPLIANCE AND BUILDING BUSINESS VALUE.

*Story by Steve Miller, photos provided by Placon*

Many innovative minds began their life's work in a basement, a shed or a garage. From Jeff Bezos' creation of Amazon to Wozniak and Jobs' Apple; from Larry Page's search algorithm for Google to the Wisconsin-based motorcycle manufacturers William Harley and Arthur Davidson — all began as nothing more than an idea. Whether it is a garage or a basement, these famous brands all featured sweat and tears to grow from their humble beginnings.

A new plastics business formed in a basement.

Tom Mohs was one of those innovative businessmen. His interest in the creation of plastics shaped much of his life, dating back to his time as a chemical engineering major at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In the late 50s, Mohs recruited a dozen students and then convinced his engineering-plastics professor to teach one final semester of the exclusive plastics-focused engineering course.

After graduation, Mohs accepted a job with the Monsanto Company and moved into plastics engineering, learning and perfecting techniques, and even designing a thermoforming machine. Ever the entrepreneur, Mohs wasn't satisfied with merely designing products for Monsanto, and he soon moved back to Wisconsin, looking for distinctive markets and product ideas for thermoformed plastics.

In 1961, he acquired his first thermoforming plastics machine, testing his various theories, eventually incorporating Placon in 1966. In the last half century, the plastics company that was founded in Mohs' basement, has become a leader in the industry, as both a

manufacturer of quality plastic packaging and as a catalyst for environmentally conscious recycling efforts.

## The early days

Mohs always had specific objectives for his plastic containers. He originally sought to create a box for jewelry that was cleaner, tighter and more easily packaged than others on the market.

In 1980, Mohs created and patented the BlisterBox® a hinged container that has been modified and perfected into one of the industry standards for plastic containers. The container that preceded the BlisterBox® was an injection-molded option that consisted of two pieces; each had to be packaged and shipped separately. Mohs wanted to create something that was one fluid piece of plastic and could be easily stacked, as it would not only last longer, but would dramatically decrease shipping costs and inventory issues.

The small plastic cases Mohs perfected are known throughout the plastics industry for their tight and reliable seals, durable and simple plastic hinges and high-clarity plastic. However, despite seeing quality results, Mohs didn't want



Placon is a leading North American designer and manufacturer of thermoformed plastic packaging trays, clamshells and blisters for retail, medical and food uses.

to lose control over his raw material costs (which reflected the wide swings in the price of petroleum) and sought to create a more predictable source of raw material from recycled plastic.

Around this same time, both consumers and businesses began showing interest in recycling plastic and purchasing recycled materials. Mohs and other manufacturers began to see the value of using polyethylene terephthalate plastics in products, due to the simpler recycling process associated with PET plastic. The environmentally-driven decision to invest in PET has paid major dividends for Placon as the organization grew to integrate recycled PET back into



At the EcoStar® facility, curbside collected PET bottles and thermoforms are sorted out and eventually used to create both food- and non-food grade recycled PET packaging.



its manufacturing stream.

Designing products that feature recycled materials as a raw material is, of course, only the first step. Creating the infrastructure to collect, transport, process and recycle the materials are all part of the recycling infrastructure. With recycling options for PET still in their infancy, Placon answered the call and began to move into purchasing recycled plastics in bulk and establishing its own internal Recycling Department in 1988. This was another crucial step for Placon, and was a key in the path to joining the elite state environmental Green Tier program.



Roughly one billion recycled PET bottles and thermoforms pass through Placon's recycling facility's doors each year.



### Going beyond compliance

In 2004, the Wisconsin State Legislature passed a law that enabled the Department of Natural Resources to work with companies to focus on environmental performance and beyond compliance goals. While businesses must maintain a variety of environmental protection regulations, permits and approvals, many of these only measure the minimum standards for health and environmental safety.

Today, the Green Tier program continues to engage companies that demonstrate a commitment to environmental leadership. More than 100 participants have been recognized by the Green Tier program in a variety of sectors throughout the state for going above and beyond compliance performance.

There are many benefits to joining Green Tier. In addition to the recognition and branding benefits, participants report great value in the collaborative relationship with the single point of contact who is assigned to work with each company. The contact is able to assist each Green Tier participant with making connections within the department and identifying opportunities for beyond compliance performance.

performance.

Many companies are strengthening their business by focusing on environmental performance. Their efforts not only assure compliance but also reveal money saving opportunities.

"If you ask companies why they are active in the environmental area, the need to satisfy their regulatory requirements is just one of many important reasons," says Tom Eggert of the DNR Green Tier program and Manufacturing Sector development specialist. "Companies have been establishing their green credentials to attract and retain customers and employees and to reduce risk and save money."

Placon became a Green Tier participant in 2013, joining the extensive environmental leadership program, in large part due to the long history of environmental stewardship and advances in PET recycling.

### Taking the next step

With the move toward using recycled

PET, Placon continued the march toward a self-sustaining business practice. The big step Placon took in 2011 was releasing the EcoStar® brand recycled PET.

"There is the connotation out there that plastic is bad for the environment, but here at Placon, we don't believe that," says Tom Mohs' son and Placon CEO Dan Mohs. "You have a raw material that you can reuse over and over again and really minimize the use of virgin resources."

To create EcoStar®, the company's in-house recycling unit takes in recycled plastics, including the very products Placon produces, and converts them back into Placon's EcoStar® line of recycled PET packaging. However, the challenge didn't come without a few kinks.

"Initially it was very challenging to trim the recycled products, but we developed newer ways to slim down on the amount of plastic to be used," says Dan Mohs.

The savings the in-house recycling unit has created allowed the Placon Corporation to grow despite the decelerated economy of the past decade. Ultimately, it all comes back to the firm conviction that recycling PET is both a responsible action and an economically efficient action for Placon.

"The belief of preserving the value in plastic packages has helped us lead and transform the shape of our industry," says Dan Mohs.

### Molding a partnership

Placon sought new ways to create plastics, and that innovation was not unnoticed by the Department of Natural Resources. When Placon applied for the Green Tier program, DNR staff was eager to begin a partnership with the pioneering plastic manufacturers.

"Placon was a great addition to the Green Tier program, because of what they've done historically in trying to find an alternative use for recycled PET," says Eggert. "They've created their own supply chain, produced the raw materials, and have created the infrastructure that will allow them to continually manage their supply chain."

"Placon is a good example of a future-thinking organization that isn't just focused on producing good numbers for this quarter or the next quarter," says Eggert. "That focus really exemplifies how we want Green Tier companies to be oriented."



Steve Miller was a communications specialist for DNR's Office of Communications.

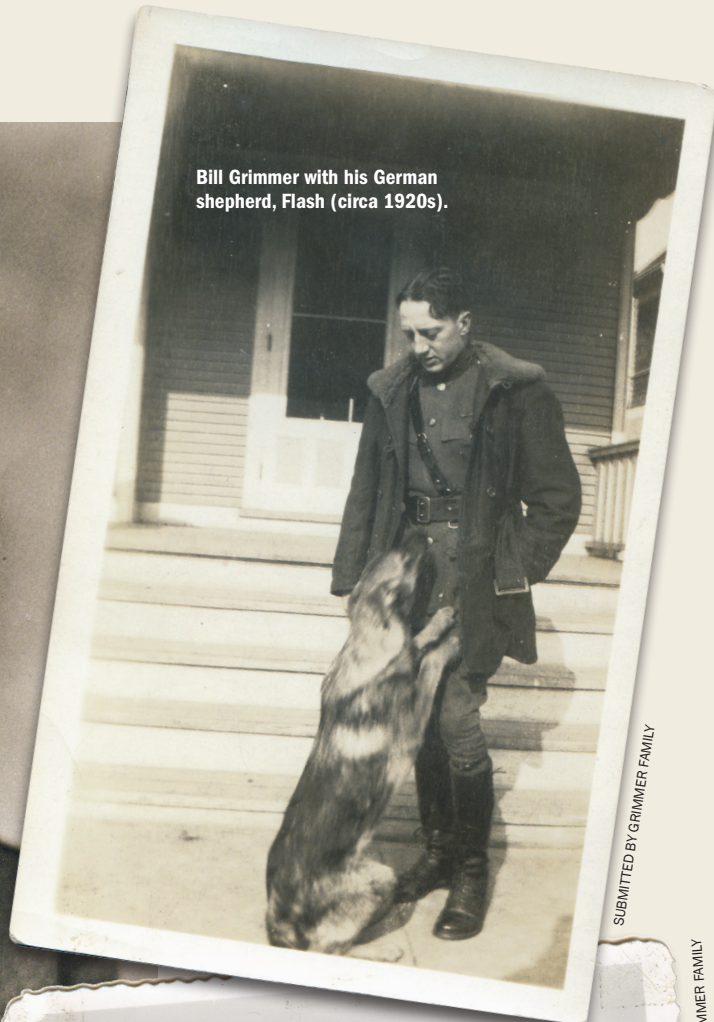


Lt. William F. Grimmer, St. John's Military Academy, Delafield (circa early 1920s).

# A portrait of a giant in wildlife management

SUBMITTED BY GRIMMER FAMILY

Bill Grimmer with his German shepherd, Flash (circa 1920s).



SUBMITTED BY GRIMMER FAMILY



SUBMITTED BY GRIMMER FAMILY

Bill Grimmer with friends, ice fishing on Lake Mendota (circa 1930s).

WILLIAM F. GRIMMER DEFINED A PROFESSION THAT IS A CORNERSTONE TO WISCONSIN'S NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT.

*David Gjestson*

Complemented by his quiet, military-like appearance, William F. Grimmer had a natural ability to find compromise in the face of controversy. Today, the State Game Farm and wildlife management program are testimony to that gift of arbitration.

In fact, throughout his illustrious career as the longest-serving head of wildlife management at the Department of Natural Resources (formerly the Wisconsin Conservation Department), Grimmer initiated many management and research innovations in the early years of the wildlife profession that left an indelible mark on the profession.

Grimmer was the state's superintendent of the Game Division for 25 years until his death of a heart attack on May 25, 1955. He was just 55.

Among his accomplishments were wildlife research and the public hunting grounds system, a policy on public hunting grounds and shooting preserves tied into a general

refuge and sanctuary plan, formal projects for wildlife cover establishment and statewide winter feeding of deer and game birds, and a publicity program to develop public consciousness of game management problems for the purpose of obtaining public support for game programs.

The state also initiated a pheasant rearing and release program under his leadership, arguably the finest of its kind in the United States through the 1930s and 1940s.

Grimmer acted in concert with Aldo Leopold and WCD Director Harley MacKenzie to create "game committees"



in each county of the state, an organization which later became the Wisconsin Conservation Congress.

And he developed a distinct waterfowl management plan for marsh and lake restoration projects and protective sanctuaries, along with creating a formal fur-bearing animal program and annual furbearer surveys emphasizing muskrats and beaver.

### The early years

William F. Grimmer was born on March 31, 1900 in Mauston. His father, William A. Grimmer, owned and operated a drug store in town, and his mother, Cora Mae, took care of the household. Siblings Merton and Bess completed the family.

While growing up, Grimmer received his formal training through St. John's Military Academy in Delafield where he was sent by his parents, likely to shape him up. Little else is known about his early life except that he also loved hunting quail, pheasants, ducks and geese.

Grimmer's hunting interest most likely influenced his game management career choice.

Grimmer attended Marquette University for some time, but did not graduate. Instead, he became an assistant commandant at St. John's and served in that capacity for 10 years while teaching at that facility.

During that time at St. John's, he married Marguerite "Madge" Neilsen from

Milwaukee and they had two daughters: Elizabeth (Libby) in 1933 and Catherine (Katy) in 1937. Their first born, William (Billy) Frederick II was born in 1929 but died of spinal meningitis when he was just 7 months old.

As a young father, Grimmer took up experimenting with game farming at a time when little was known about the practice. He raised pheasants, wild turkeys, bobwhite quail and Hungarian partridge. At home, he constructed large wooden and clear plastic cages to raise finches that his daughters fondly recalled later. The girls especially liked strawberry and society finches.

### A career is born

Grimmer's game bird raising expertise no doubt was a valuable credential when he applied for the Game Division superintendent position offered by the Wisconsin Conservation Department. He was hired August 1, 1930 to replace the departing superintendent, Wallace Grange.

Though a hard worker, Grimmer also looked forward to time at home and on the lake fishing with his family. Perch fishing on Lake Mendota in Madison was a special treat for Libby and Katy.

When interviewed earlier this year, both daughters agreed that their father had a great sense of humor and that he was very family oriented.

Libby recalls fishing with her dad as a girl and says, "In the 1940s, you could

dangle a worm on a drop-line in front of the jumbo perch you could see below... the lake was that clear. Catching your limit was no problem."

Ice fishing with friends was an occasional winter pastime for Grimmer.

Libby also recalls that her dad enjoyed puttering in the garden and proudly raised beautiful tuberous begonias.

The Grimmer sisters note that at times their dad combined work and family time and that they often traveled with their father to Poynette when he had meetings there. They enjoyed visiting the wild animal exhibit and the conservation museum, as well as marveling at all the pheasants being raised on the grounds.

They remember spending time in summers at a log building located at the Wisconsin Conservation Department's Trout Lake Forestry Headquarters where great breakfasts were enjoyed in lumberjack style for many years.

Libby tells a story of going to Outer Island in the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore chain with her parents to view the infamous capercaillie (also known as wood grouse) release program firsthand. She remembers that the trip out across churning waters was very exciting and they were eager to see how the newly released birds were doing.

During his career, Grimmer developed into a solid administrator. His accomplishments as a leader included expanding the State Game Farm at Fish Lake in Door County. He took a personal interest in experimenting with more varieties of potential game birds including Reeves, golden, black and Mongolian pheasants as well as Hungarian partridge, ruffed grouse, wild turkeys and chukar partridge. Ultimately, he moved the entire State Game Farm operation to Poynette in 1934.

Grimmer's long-term service to the department and his exemplary record led to the establishment of the annual W. F. Grimmer Award program (later entitled Wildlife Biologist of the Year Award), the first of which was given to Harold Shine in 1956.



EUGENE SANBORN

Grimmer often took his daughters along when attending meetings at the State Game Farm in Poynette. Here he is flanked by Harley W. MacKenzie (WCD director), left, and Game Farm Superintendent H.B. Kellogg, Jr., in December 1936.

David Gjestson retired from the Department of Natural Resources in 1999 after more than 30 years of service. Most of his career was in game/wildlife management. He also was a policy and planning analyst including coordinating the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway from 1989 to 1996. His book, "The Gamekeepers: Wisconsin Wildlife Conservation History from WCD to CWD," documents the rich history of wildlife conservation in Wisconsin and how game management evolved in the state.





DNR staff weighs paddlefish in January 2011. Paddlefish is a threatened species in Wisconsin.

# A fantastic fishing tale

## WISCONSIN TEENS LAND A RARE PADDLEFISH.

*Alec Riddle*

On July 23, my friend, Logan Thomas, and I were out fishing for flathead catfish at the Prairie du Sac Dam from a boat. We had been out for about two hours with minimal luck when suddenly one of the rods went.

I grabbed it and hooked into a 22-inch sheepshead. As soon as I started to unhook the fish, one of my other rods went off, except it wasn't the normal tap-tap-tapping hit. It was more of a slow pull.

I tugged and my line felt like it was wrapped around a rock or a tree because of the way the line tension stayed steady. I gave the line a good hard yank to try to free the line and that's when all of a sudden the red, 50-pound braided line shot out of my hands like a truck was on the other end.

Acting quickly, my friend and I took off our shirts to use as gloves to prevent our hands from being burned by the

line. We knew at this point that something huge was on and we could feel every pump of the fish's tail through the responsive braided line.

For the next 25 minutes we fought the creature with only our hands, taking turns to prevent us from injuring our hands when the fish went on runs. After pulling in over 150 yards of line we finally saw the beast — a paddlefish.

The fish was massive and covered in a half dozen lampreys. By this time a nearby boat of men fishing for musky had motored over to watch the fight. They too were amazed by the size of the fish.

With a heave from my friend, we had

the paddlefish on the rear deck of the bass boat. We quickly detached all seven lamprey and removed the mangled hook from the fish's gill plate. As soon as the fish was free of rusty hooks and lamprey, we set it in the water, only to get splashed by the beast.

My friend and I looked at each other in astonishment. We guessed the fish was about 100 pounds. My friend lifted me into the air, the same way as the fish. I weighed 120 pounds when the fish was caught and he declared without question that the fish weighed as much, if not more, than me.

I am 5-feet-5 inches tall and the fish's overall length stretched about a foot over my head. The belly of the fish was bigger than both of us combined. Wisconsin, I know, has strict laws about keeping paddlefish in the water so we didn't take the time to measure the length, girth or weight.

My friend's dad has been fishing the Wisconsin River since he was a kid and can't recall a bigger paddlefish that he or anyone else has caught. Who knows, maybe this fish was a state record, but we will never know for sure. My friend and I share all the credit on the catch. It was a team effort.

Paddlefish, I have learned, are descendants from an ancient lineage of fish which has changed little since the time of the dinosaurs. Since they filter feed, they compete with other filter feeding species for the same resources. Sadly, because the paddlefish is a threatened species, most people will not have the opportunity to see a paddlefish because of how rare they are. The dam at Prairie du Sac is one of a few places in Wisconsin where you can find them in larger numbers. But the species can be found in other parts of the state along with other states like Iowa, Illinois, Kentucky and Missouri.

*Alec Riddle is 15 years old and writes from Middleton.*



### PADDLEFISH

**Paddlefish, listed as a threatened species in Wisconsin, prefer large rivers and their lakes. They spawn over mud or gravel in early spring during high flows. Spawning occurs from early May through early June. To learn more, visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search keyword "paddlefish."**





## DUCK BLINDS VERSUS TREE STANDS – A PUBLIC HUNTING COMPARISON

I was reading your article about tree stand safety ("Stand up for safety" October 2014) and I agree completely. They can be unsafe; which is why I can't understand why guys like me, who hunt public land, have to take them down every day, risking injury. Duck hunters are allowed to keep not only their blinds out in the bog where I hunt, but they're even allowed to keep their boats out there! Yet we're required to move a stand? It makes no sense to me, other than they don't want guys feeling like they can "reserve" a spot out on public land. So why are duck hunters given the privilege?

Brad Bartkus  
Cedarburg, Wis.

*Thanks for taking the time to share your thoughts and questions related to tree stands and waterfowl blinds. Over the past decade, the Department of Natural Resources has received varying degrees of public support for allowing overnight placement of tree stands on DNR lands with the most recent during the 2015 Spring Hearing meeting. As you mentioned, hunter safety and hunter convenience are the normal discussions behind the rule change with user conflicts and "holding an area or spot" on the other side of the discussion. Additionally, taxpayer costs associated with stand theft, stand abandonment and other personal property storage concerns*

*further complicate the issue. The results of the several public input processes have never supported the change. As for waterfowl blinds, their placement in marshes, bogs, and shorelines is historical, and the laws regulating their placement pre-date the proliferation of commercially manufactured portable tree stands. That said, the same debates stated above occur with waterfowl blinds, however the density of waterfowl hunters is much lower than land-based hunters. The department continually solicits public input on land management topics, and routinely evaluates property/hunting rules.*

## JUMPING WORMS BOUNCE INTO WISCONSIN

If it has taken until October 2013 for the Department of Natural Resources to find our first jumping worms, we are very lucky. I live in Green Bay and remember the Georgia Jumpers being sold locally in the early 70s as popular bait. A neighbor used to get 3x3 packages of these worms from Faines Baits in Georgia on a regular basis. Your article did not mention the Wisconsin counties in which they were found, but I would not be surprised to find them in or near the fishing areas around Brown County. The little jumpers have had over 40 years to get loose. I have seen articles saying they are becoming a problem in the Great Smoky Mountains area. Not a surprise as that is where ours may have originated.

Lawrence Klee  
Green Bay, Wis.



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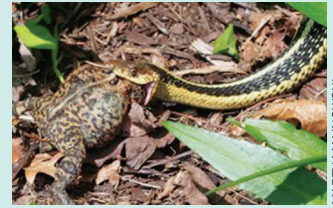
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## RARE SNAKE LUNCHING IN THE GARDEN

Does anybody on staff know what kind of snake this is? I found him having lunch in my perennial garden. I'm thinking it is a northern ribbon, which is a rare species.

Marty Malinowski  
Hayward, Wis.



MARTY MALINOWSKI

DNR conservation biologist Rori Paloski responds: *The snake in the photo is definitely one of Wisconsin's five species of gartersnakes. Gartersnakes in Wisconsin can be very difficult to identify given their nearly identical physical characteristics and due to the fact that several of these species can also hybridize. Gartersnakes are typically distinguished from one another by the location of their lateral (side) stripes. Lateral stripes involve a variety of combinations of scale rows. Scale rows are horizontal rows of scales found along the length of the snake and are numbered starting above the rectangular ventral (belly) scales. The ribbonsnakes are typically differentiated from one another by counting the number of scales on their upper "lip." Wisconsin is home to five gartersnake species: eastern ribbonsnake, western ribbonsnake, plains gartersnake, Butler's gartersnake and common gartersnake. The two ribbonsnakes are endangered species in Wisconsin and are only found at fewer than 10 sites each. These species typically inhabit wetlands and surrounding areas. The plains gartersnake and Butler's gartersnake are species of special concern in Wisconsin and are found in open and semi-open canopy uplands and wetlands in southern and southeastern Wisconsin, respectively. As its name indicates, the common gartersnake is the most common species of gartersnake in Wisconsin and is found throughout the state in a variety of habitats. The plains, Butler's and common gartersnake are also known to hybridize with each other in southeastern Wisconsin.*

## HONEYBEE CLARIFICATION

I enjoyed the article, "Bee aware" (June 2015), on the importance of pollinators. I believe, however, there was an inaccuracy in the story. The article mentions "various native species of honeybees." Honeybees are non-native to North America and were brought by European settlers. Wisconsin does have several native bee species. Your June 2009 article ("What's the buzz about bees?") on the subject confirms this and does an excellent job describing the enormous impact that pollinators have on the economy and natural resources.

Bill Hickey  
Excelsior, Minn.

The author, Christopher Tall, responds: *Thanks and you are correct. Honeybees are indeed, not native to North America. European settlers first brought colonies to the continent during the early 1960s. I should have written, "If you look at a plot of land in Wisconsin, recent research suggests that the greater the diversity of ecosystems, including wild flowers and natural habitats (forests, prairies, fields, ponds and marshes), the greater the abundance and richness of various bee species." It is a noteworthy distinction.*

## SPIDER IN THE SINK

While visiting near Minocqua, this critter was found in the basement bathroom sink. I posted it on Facebook and had several different ideas of what type of spider it might be. Would you confirm what type it is?

Jenny Ramker  
Colby, Wis.



JENNY RAMKER

Patrick (PJ) Liesch, UW-Madison Dept. Entomology Insect Diagnostic Lab, responds: *With the color patterns on the legs and the faint black "W" patterns on the abdomen, this looks like it may be one of our fishing spiders from the genus Dolomedes. Good-sized spiders can be pretty common in the Northwoods, but ultimately harmless. They're associated with, and normally hang out near water; they do sneak indoors on occasion.*

## 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](mailto:dnrmagazine@wisconsin.gov). Limit letters to 250 words and include your name and the community from which you are writing.

## 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.



## Traveler

### Heritage Hill State Park — with its own greens and golds — is Green Bay's other hallowed destination.

*Story by Natasha Kassulke, photos from the Wisconsin Department of Tourism*

**As you enter the grounds of Heritage Hill State Park, you are welcomed by one of the best views in Green Bay — that isn't surrounded by stadium seating and Brett Favre's retired number. Your eyes will follow the gentle slope of greens and golds past historic buildings down to the beautiful Fox River, rather than the home field for the Green Bay Packers. On any given day you might encounter a military reenactment or perhaps a wedding, instead of a football game.**

In a city that is football fanatical, Heritage Hill State Park, a 48-acre outdoor museum and park in Green Bay, features 25 structures from Wisconsin's past — the fur trade in 1762, Fort Howard in 1836, small towns in 1871 and ethnic farms in 1905. And it keeps growing.

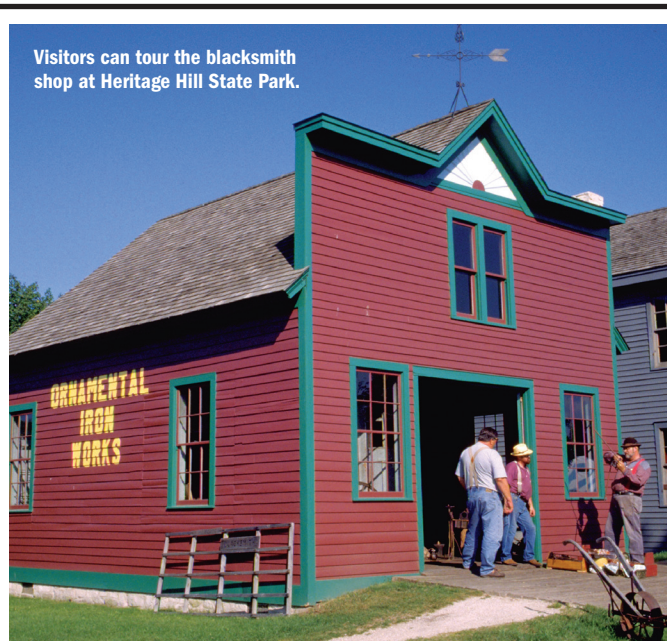
Recently, the park held a grand opening of the restored \$2.1 million guardhouse. In 2009, portions of the original guardhouse were located in Green Bay, purchased and then relocated to Heritage Hill. It is now one of the four original buildings from Fort Howard.

Heritage Hill State Park is an unusual property in the state park system since the park and museum are operated by two partner groups. The Heritage Hill Corporation, a nonprofit organization, is charged with operations as well as maintenance and development of the park under terms of a lease with the Department of Natural Resources. The Heritage Hill Foundation solicits and manages donated, granted and bequeathed funds to help support the growth as well as the operation of the park.

The relationship between Heritage Hill State Historical Park and the Department of Natural Resources provides an

excellent example of a public and private partnership.

Heritage Hill receives a small portion of its funding from the state. The balance comes from admissions, donors and the Heritage Hill Foundation, which also is the Friends of Wisconsin State



Visitors can tour the blacksmith shop at Heritage Hill State Park.

Parks group for Heritage Hill State Historical Park.

The park is busy year-round and events include garden walking tours, cooking and canning workshops, history and military camps, learning labs on how to build a log cabin and more. The park also offers school field trips and discovery days. Approximately 18,000 school children visit the park each year for general tours and hands-on programs.

On Oct. 17 and 24 (3 to 8 p.m.) the park features "A Brothers Grimm Halloween at Heritage Hill." During the event, trick-or-treat in a family-friendly environment, play snap apple, and find out which fairytale character will be strolling the grounds. Enjoy the outdoor movie showing on the green of classic Brothers Grimm shorts and much more.

December brings the popular "The Spirit of Christmas Past" event on Dec. 12 and 19 (noon to 6 p.m.). Experience an old-fashioned Christmas with horse-drawn wagon rides, historic dancing, cooking, crafts and music from local musicians. Enjoy the many Christmas trees decorated with natural, homemade and Depression era decorations. See different types of Christmas meals and styles of cooking in Fort Howard and the farm. Visitors will be able to frost their own sugar cookie and purchase s'mores and hot chocolate. Premium admission rates apply during this event: Adults \$11, seniors (62 and older) \$10, children (4 to 15) \$8, children (3 and under) free.

Structures at the park are as varied as the events.

One of the more unusual is the Bark Chapel. The Jesuit priests would use these structures as places of worship as well as for their dwellings. Original structures were constructed of sapling framework with elm bark. The Bark Chapel



Heritage Hill is a living history museum.



## What's cooking?

### RED WINE MARINATED VENISON STEAKS

John G. Motoviloff

This is a go-to recipe for marinating venison — whether burgers, steaks or roasts. You might be tempted to use olive oil in the marinade, since it goes so well with red wine in other situations. Resist this and go with canola or vegetable oil. The stronger flavor of olive oil can bring out a gamey taste in venison.

#### INGREDIENTS:

2 pounds venison steaks: medallions cut into roughly 4-ounce sections  
Salt and pepper to taste

#### MARINADE:

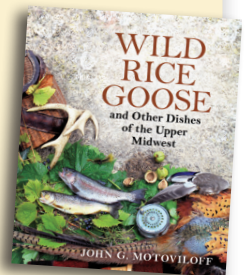
1 cup dry red wine  
4 tablespoons vegetable or canola oil  
1 teaspoon dried thyme  
2 garlic cloves, crushed  
¼ teaspoon salt  
Pinch of black pepper

#### DIRECTIONS:

Trim venison of any skin, tendon or fat. Salt and pepper meat on all sides. Whisk together marinade ingredients. Pour over meat and marinate in a stoneware or other nonreactive container for several hours. Grill or broil to medium-rare. Serve with skin-on garlic mashed potatoes.

John G. Motoviloff is a publications editor for DNR's wildlife management program. He also is the author of "Wild Rice Goose and Other Dishes of the

Upper Midwest" (University of Wisconsin Press). The book is a must have guide to cooking wild foods that you can hunt, fish or forage for (and sometimes buy from a wild food vendor) in the Upper Midwest. You'll savor more than 100 other recipes like Morel Mushroom Scramble, Cathy's Plum Lake Bluegill and Orange Pheasant. The book retails for \$24.95 paperback and \$14.95 e-book. Motoviloff splits his time between Madison and a timber-frame cabin in the Kickapoo Valley. Other books by this author include "Fly Fisher's Guide to Wisconsin and Iowa."



Civil War reenactments are popular events at Heritage Hill State Park.



See a Belgian farmhouse — laundry and all.

at Heritage Hill is a replica.

The Fur Trader's Cabin was constructed around 1800. The building was found inside of a house that was being torn down in order to construct the Tilleman Bridge. The building is constructed in the French style of piece-on-piece, meaning one log upon the other. Grooved upright logs are set in the ground at the corners, doors and windows. The horizontal logs are cut to fit and placed on top of each other in the grooves. Cracks are chinked to give it a tight fit.

Other buildings include the Maple Sugaring House, the log Court House, Fort Howard Section (home to the Fort Howard School and Hospital). The Fort Howard Hospital is the oldest standing military hospital in the United States.

The Growing Community Area features trades found in Green Bay during the last half of the 19th century (housing the Moravian Church, Franklin Hose Company, YMCA Library, Print Shop, Blacksmith, Baird

Law Office, Allouez Town Hall, Tank Cottage and Victorian Bandstand). Heritage Hill records five buildings on the National Registry of Historic Homes. Tank Cottage is one of the oldest houses in Wisconsin.

The Ethnic Area traces the roots of farmers from the Brabant province of Belgium

#### >>> FOR MORE INFORMATION

**CALL:**  
920-448-5150 or toll-free  
800-721-5150 or visit  
<http://heritagehillgb.org/> for  
information.

**ADMISSION:**  
(Monday through Friday, prior to  
May 31 and after Sept. 7) - \$5.

(June 1 through Sept. 7):  
Adults - \$10  
Seniors - \$9  
Children (ages 4 to 15) - \$7  
Children (3 and under) - free.

**DIRECTIONS:**  
Heritage Hill is on the east bank  
of the Fox River, just north of  
State Highway 172, at 2640 S.  
Webster St., Green Bay.

who began immigrating to Northeastern Wisconsin around 1853. Buildings include the Cheese Factory, Belgian Farm, Cotton House, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and Roadside Chapel. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is located on the site of the old Fort Smith. Bones of a soldier were found when excavating for the park. Every year a special Memorial Day ceremony is held at this site.

Heritage Hill is also one of Wisconsin's best kept secrets for weddings. Bridal parties can choose from two venues — a Moravian church and a Victorian gazebo. Built in 1851, the Moravian Church offers a rich history and quaint atmosphere. Inside the church natural light pours in through the eight 15-foot-tall clear glass windows. The church comes with a pump organ or baby grand piano for your use. It seats 150 guests.

Situated in the center of the park on a lush green lawn, the gazebo is the perfect spot for an outdoor wedding. The Victorian gazebo seats 500 guests.

Heritage Hill accepts reservations up to two years in advance. And it just may be a lot easier to score than season tickets to the Green Bay Packers.

Natasha Kassulke is editor of Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine.





## Wisconsin, naturally

### KELLER WHITCOMB CREEK WOODS STATE NATURAL AREA



Thomas A. Meyer  
State Natural Areas Program

**Notable:** A diversity of ferns and fungi greet autumn visitors to Keller Whitcomb Creek Woods, owing to the site's array of native plant communities coupled with an undulating landscape molded by the passing of the last glacier. The 128-acre natural area sits in a depression of glacial till, through which the sandy-bottomed south fork of Whitcomb Creek flows. The Class 1 trout stream receives water from spring seeps and spring runs that line the banks, providing cool conditions for naturally-reproducing brook and brown trout. Wet forest of white cedar, black ash, balsam fir, white pine and red maple is found in low pockets, while the uplands support hemlock, yellow birch, white birch, red oak and white oak. The ground layer of plants is rich and diverse, with at least 18 species of native ferns present — among them cinnamon, maidenhair, bulblet, lady and crested wood fern. The “macro-fungi” — those types with large fruiting structures like mushrooms, puffballs and brackets — are especially abundant here in wet years. The preliminary list of fungi includes 136 species, some with wonderful colloquial names like tawny grisette, false death cap, bitter bolete, golden waxy cap, velvet fairy fan and turkey tail.

**How to get there:** Within the DNR's Whitcomb Creek Fishery Area. From the intersection of County Highways E and G south of Big Falls, go west and south on G for 2.3 miles, then west on Boelter Road for 1.7 miles to a small parking area on the south side of the road. The site lies to the south. There are no established trails here. Visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search “Keller Whitcomb Creek Woods” for a map and more information.

