INSIDE HEALING OUR RIVERS & HARBORS

WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES

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The original Flash Mob

Dangerous drug discoveries

Sturgeon return to the falls

From birds to beagles

It's why I took up rabbit hunting.

Story by Rob Ruth and photos by Josie Ruth

I am not old enough to have seen the great pheasant populations in Wisconsin during the 1940s and 1950s. Growing up in Rock County, however, I do recall in the late 1970s and early 1980s flushing as many as 20 pheasants in an hour in an 80-acre field near my house.

Since then, pheasant habitat in southern Wisconsin has declined. Most of my former pheasant hotspots have either been developed (like the 80-acre field near where I grew up), converted to agricultural use, or are overrun with poor cover like canary grass.

I kept pheasant hunting even as the pheasant habitat and population declined. I enjoyed it so much, particularly working with a good bird dog, that I was willing to search more for fewer pheasants. Everything changed a few years ago, however, when my bird dog died.

At that time I had almost no experience with beagles, but the lack of pheasants made me think that perhaps I should try something new. I started with a 1-year-old male beagle. A few weeks later I picked up an older, more experienced female beagle. It did not take long before I was hooked. By the end of my second season I had five beagles. And rabbits were my main pursuit.

The most obvious advantage to rabbit hunting is that, compared to pheasants, rabbits are bountiful in southern Wisconsin. It seems like just about every thicket or overgrown woodlot holds a few cottontails. Wisconsin's rabbit hunting season is also longer than the pheasant season and extends into a time of year when there is not much else to hunt. Rabbit season opens in mid-October in southern Wisconsin (mid-September in northern Wisconsin) and goes until February 28.

The greatest part about hunting rabbits with beagles is the thrill of the chase. Much of the hunting that we do in Wisconsin is based more on searching, waiting or calling than chasing. Wisconsin deer hunting is mostly waiting and driving. Turkey, duck and goose hunting is mostly calling and waiting. Upland bird hunting is more searching than chasing. With beagles, the chase is everything. And for me, after 35 years of hunting in Wisconsin, I never really understood the thrill of the chase until I pursued rabbits with a pack of beagles.

The author, Rob Ruth, and son Robbie, who is holding Trixie. The other dogs from left to right are Boomer, Tex and Escow.

A rabbit hunt starts more or less the same as a pheasant hunt. The dogs hustle around until they find a rabbit. In pheasant hunting, as the dogs close in on a bird that is trying to sneak or run away, one gets a little taste of the anticipation and excitement of the chase. Once the pheasant is jumped, there is a moment of exhilaration associated with the shot, but if the shot hits the mark, the rush is over. With beagles, locating and jumping the rabbit is only the beginning. After the rabbit is jumped, the beagles pursue it by scent, all the while sounding off with a bawl, or chop, or whatever other baying sound that particular beagle makes when pursuing game.

There is nothing like the sound of a pack of beagles — the more the merrier — in pursuit of a rabbit. When the dogs lock on to a hot track, the hunter partakes in the same canine versus prey drama that has unfolded countless other times in the last 10,000 years. The hounds, wild with excitement, simultaneously work together and in competition with each other in pursuit of their quarry. As the chase heats up, the dogs bay with greater intensity. If they lose the trail, they quiet down until they find it again and when they do find it, they fire right back up and forward progress resumes. A run on a cottontail might last 45 minutes or more, with many ups and downs along the way, all of which are communicated to the hunter by the dogs. A good rabbit chase is so exciting that most of the time I prefer to keep the chase going, rather than shoot the rabbit and end it.

Much of the thrill of pursuing rabbits with beagles flows from the fact that the rabbit is such a formidable adversary. Rabbits juke and cut, backtrack, sprint, walk, hide, circle — just about any move that you can imagine to outwit the dogs. The rabbit also has one big advantage over the hounds — it gets to decide which way to go. The dogs rarely see the rabbit and even when they do, it does not usually last long. Depending on the speed of the dogs and the conditions, the dogs might be anywhere from a few seconds to a few minutes behind the rabbit. They have to figure out the rabbit's moves based only on scent.

Rabbits tend to run a circular route, passing over the same general area as

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JOANNE M. HAAS

MARJY BRZESKIEWICZ, BOTANIST, USFS – CHEQUAMEGON-NICOLET NATIONAL FOREST

ANDY PAULIOS

FRONT COVER: Fireflies capture our eyes and our imaginations. But do they hold the clue to something more?

© Steven David Johnson

BACK COVER: Clover Valley Fen State Natural Area in Walworth County harbors many plants adapted to the springy, alkaline soils. INSET: Lesser fringed gentian (*Gentianopsis procera*), a late summer bloomer. For more information, or to order a guidebook to State Natural Areas for $18.00 (postage paid), contact the State Natural Areas Program, Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation, DNR, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707 or visit dnr.wi.gov and search "SNA".

Thomas Meyer, WDNR

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Editor-in-chief Natasha Kassulke
Circulation Manager Ellen C. Corso
Art Direction Thomas J. Senatori
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Blinking

Fireflies get glowing reviews from their fans but remain mysterious.

Fireflies. Lightning bugs. *Photuris pyralis*. Whatever you choose to call them, they are a majestic sight if you can catch them in your palm as the sun sets on a calm summer night. Securing them temporarily in Mason jars is a summertime thrill passed down from generation to generation as kids of all ages gather in yards or on front porches, seemingly hypnotized as they watch the beetles blink in the growing darkness.

Fireflies have been putting on flash mob shows for as long as anyone can remember. The new take on "flash mob," though, is a group of people who gather spontaneously in a public space and perform a coordinated dance or action.

STEVEN DAVID JOHNSON

beetles

Amanda Laurenzi

DON SALVATORE

Fine to watch but you wouldn't want to eat one. When attacked, fireflies shed drops of blood in a process known as "reflex bleeding." The blood contains chemicals that taste bitter and can be poisonous to some animals. Because of this, many animals learn to avoid eating fireflies.

The first flight of fireflies signals the beginning of summer, and throughout the rest of the season they can be seen on walks and late night drives in the country. But fireflies also contain chemicals that are being used in researching cancer, multiple sclerosis, cystic fibrosis and heart disease.

These tiny flash dancers are a mystery yet to unfold. Not much is known about fireflies because there are over 2,000 species in the world. Each one has a different lighting pattern, habitat and way of life. Researchers have only begun to delve into the mysterious lives of these creatures; much time has been spent trying to learn more about the aspects which make the firefly famous. The ability of fireflies to produce cold light (bioluminescence) has led to new flashlights and flares on the market today.

Unknown to most observers, fireflies are neither flies nor bugs, but rather are classified as beetles. They reside in habitats such as meadows, wooded areas, streams and lawns. They generally prefer moist habitats for laying eggs. Larvae are carnivorous and eat other small insects in the soil.

Putting on their flashers

During the summer, fireflies use their light to attract mates — backyards and fields become a sort of singles bar for these beetles. Every species has a different light pattern. Males flash their light signals and wait for female fireflies of the same species to flash the same signal back to them. When two fireflies of the same species are paired, they mate and the female lays her eggs. However, some female species will flash a light pattern that is not their own to lure male fireflies in for prey.

The eggs are laid in moist soil a few days after mating. Four weeks later, the eggs hatch and the larvae begin to feed until the fall. When colder weather arrives, the larvae burrow underground and do not surface until summer begins again. When summer arrives, the larvae spend about two and a half weeks in a small, earthen shell before emerging as adults. Then the mating cycle starts all over again.

One of the most significant features of the firefly is the light they produce. Other insects are able to produce light, as well, but the firefly is the only one that can flash it on and off. Even the larvae have a glow; this is where the term "glowworm" came from. Their light is produced by oxygen and the chemical luciferin reacting in the presence of the enzyme luciferase.

While their light is definitely used for finding mates, it is also believed by scientists that it acts as a warning to other insects. Daniel K. Young, a professor of entomology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, speculates that fireflies do not taste good to predators because of the chemicals that make up their light.

STEVEN DAVID JOHNSON

Fireflies emit light mostly to attract mates, although they also communicate for other reasons as well, such as to defend territory and warn predators away.

In a firefly's tail, you'll find two chemicals: luciferase and luciferin. Luciferin is heat resistant, and it glows under the right conditions. Luciferase is an enzyme that triggers light emission. ATP, a chemical within the firefly's body, converts to energy and initiates the glow.

STEVEN DAVID JOHNSON

He explains, "It's telling other species that, 'Hey, I don't taste good!'"

The potential for lights out

Researchers have proposed that firefly populations are declining. However, Young suggests that this is impossible to determine without fully understanding each and every species of firefly.

"We don't really know our fireflies in Wisconsin," Young says. "It's an incredibly difficult group taxonomically to understand."

He suggests that one reason fireflies may seem in decline is dry winter seasons. "Some years, like last year and the year before last, when we had a dry winter and we don't have much moisture, the following year may look like they're in decline simply because the drought may have knocked the populations back. However, it may not be permanent."

Young adds that because fireflies depend on wetlands and moist habitats, humans can play a crucial role in determining how many fireflies come out for the summer. When these microhabitats are drained for agricultural or development purposes, the moist areas they depend on are lost. This causes a problem for females laying eggs since they need moist soil to do it.

Parasites usually have an impact on a multitude of species, but fireflies are not overly affected by them. "[Fireflies] exude milky looking stuff with chemicals, which protects them," Young says.

Firefly.org suggests light pollution also plays a major role in the disappearance of fireflies. The disruption of foreign light has an impact on fireflies being able to communicate through their flashing patterns. According to Firefly.org, research shows that even a car passing by with its headlights on can delay a firefly from finding a mate by a couple minutes. Although seemingly insignificant, less mating occurs and therefore fewer eggs are laid. Even porch lights can have an effect on mating patterns.

How to be firefly friendly

There are a few ways to help protect firefly populations. Firefly.org suggests limiting light pollution by turning outside lights off when they are not in use during the summer. This will give fireflies plenty of space to flash their lights and mate without disruptions. Another tactic is to allow fireflies' natural habitat to remain untouched. Removing rotting logs or natural litter can take away environments female fireflies need in order to lay their eggs. You can also start planting trees to allow future habitats to be in place.

Along with planting trees, water sources are essential for these insects. Either by building a small pond or redirecting a stream through your property, the long-term effects can have a positive influence on future firefly populations. When gardening, use natural fertilizers and avoid using pesticides. Be sure to reduce mowing your lawn, as well. Fireflies like long grass for mating, so even leaving small patches of long grass around your lawn is beneficial.

Firefly.org also suggests reducing earthworm numbers in your yard. They are not native to Wisconsin and can destroy plants and leave less food for fireflies and other insects.

Although these approaches to preserving firefly populations are relatively general, Young advises that each species differs, and in order to truly understand how to save fireflies, each species would have to be researched and understood fully in order to know what they require to survive.

Doing more than making summer nights sparkle

Firefly taillights contain two rare chemicals — luciferin and luciferase. Luciferin is the light source while luciferase acts as the enzyme or trigger, which is fueled by oxygen. Ohio State University Extension entomologist William Lyon explains in his online firefly fact sheet that a body chemical called adenosine triphosphate (ATP) converts to energy and causes the luciferin-luciferase mixture to light up.

Lyon notes that injecting a firefly's chemicals into human cells can quickly detect energy problems in those cells and this "firefly technique" is being used to study heart disease, cancer, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy and other diseases.

Will fireflies save lives some day? Time will tell.

But what is known about these tiny pyrotechnicians is that they have a way of lighting up summer nights and stirring a glimmer of goodwill toward the insect world in all of us.

Amanda Laurenzi is a student at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. She also contributes to Wisconsin Natural Resources *magazine and enjoys watching fireflies at her family's farm house.*

Join the volunteer firefly watchers

Tips for tracking the flash dancers.

Karely Mendez

Fireflies are a special flashing part of our summer, but they seem to be disappearing. The Museum of Science-Boston has teamed up with researchers from Tufts University and Fitchburg State University to track these bright insects.

They need volunteers to help track fireflies, so they set up a program called Firefly Watch. Anyone can participate and it only takes a fraction of your time. The idea is to track your own backyard or an open field for 10 minutes a day, once a week throughout the summer, and then enter your data in the Field Journal available online. Even if you are not able to collect data every week, any information you can gather is valuable.

So what exactly are you supposed to look for? Basically you will report whether or not you see fireflies, but even if you don't see fireflies you should still enter that information into your observation sheet. You can also distinguish the type of fireflies out there by flash color, pattern and location.

Their flash color could be a yellow-green flash, bright dark-green flash or other colors. Firefly flash patterns also vary, which is how a firefly identifies its own kind. Flash patterns vary in length, number of flashes, and the number of intervals between them. Location matters too, and distinguishes males from females. Males flash in the air while patrolling an area and females answer by flashing from a perch either on the ground or above it.

TIPS FOR OBSERVING AND HANDLING FIREFLIES

- **Wear bug spray**
  Since you can find mosquitoes where you find fireflies, it is a good idea to protect yourself from mosquito bites.
- **Dress accordingly**
  Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts to protect yourself against other insects.
- **Watch out for ticks**
  Fireflies prefer tall grass neighboring wooded areas, but unfortunately so do ticks. It is a good idea to be on the lookout for ticks as well as to check for ticks when you get home.
- **Bring the observation sheet with you**
  Bring a printed copy of the observation sheet with you, then copy the data to the online form when you get home.
- **Shine a blue light**
  Since light is the firefly's form of communicating, shining a flashlight on them disrupts their communication. Fireflies can't see blue light, though, so turn your flashlight blue by taping a piece of blue acetate over it.
- **Learn their light patterns**
  Fireflies look very similar and are difficult to see in the dark, but they do have different flash patterns. Using flash patterns to identify the fireflies is the way to go.
- **Collect with care**
  Don't handle fireflies if you sprayed insect repellent on your hands, and if possible, use a net to catch them instead. Also, if kept in a jar, add a piece of moist paper towel to keep the jar humid.

For more information on the program and fireflies visit legacy.mos.org/fireflywatch/

Karely Mendez is an editorial intern with Wisconsin Natural Resources *magazine. Originally from Green Bay, Karely now attends the University of Wisconsin-Madison.*

The cover photo of this issue of *Wisconsin Natural Resources* magazine was taken by Steven David Johnson of Broadway, Va. His firefly photos will be featured in a new book, *Next Time You See a Firefly*. The book is part of the *Next Time You See* book series from the National Science Teachers Association. These books inspire children to experience the natural world. Specially designed to be shared with an adult – be it a parent, teacher or friend – the *Next Time You See* books serve as a reminder that you don't have to look very far to find something remarkable in nature.

The book is available for purchase through the NSTA online Science Store, nsta.org/store/ or through Amazon.com

See a trailer video about the book at youtube.com/watch?v=zZsGVuHkiQg

NATIONAL SCIENCE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

"That Tree"

A one-year iPhone™ photo project captures fireflies in action.

Xin Wang

Fireflies share the spotlight with "That Tree" in this image.

MARK HIRSCH

On the night of July 2, 2012, Mark Hirsch used his iPhone™ and captured this deep indigo sky at dusk gilded with fireflies in a cornfield in southwestern Wisconsin.

Aiming at a bur oak centered by these twinkling insects, Hirsch gasped and anxiously waited for the image to develop on his iPhone™. The result was amazing: the bright yellow brushstrokes that marked the fireflies' flight paths appeared on the screen, making the image a dramatic scene.

"I stood up and ran around the valley herding fireflies towards my iPhone™, giggling like a little kid," Hirsch said, "I love that photo and the memory."

This photo was the 101st from his "That Tree" project, a year-long photo diary of the same bur oak tree. A professional photojournalist, Hirsch never before had much thought about taking a picture of this ordinary tree, which he drove past for 19 years. Nor did he believe his iPhone's™ camera could ever be used for anything more than a passing snapshot.

Then, one day in January 2012, he stopped during a snowstorm and took a picture of the tree.

"It was on the same day that my friend messaged me about my new iPhone™, saying 'Isn't the camera great!'" Hirsch recalled.

Hooked by the first photo with his iPhone™, two months later, he accepted another friend's challenge and officially started this project.

He purchased an app called Camera+ that allowed his iPhone™ to work like a basic single-lens-reflex (SLR) camera, as well as other apps for use in different circumstances.

On the night of the fireflies, finding that the standard camera app could not capture the subtle light of the fireflies, he added an app called SlowShutter. It acted like a timed exposure, capturing an extended time-lapse image. He activated the shutter when the fireflies flew through the scene and snapped this marvelous picture.

"I found it more challenging and therefore rewarding with the iPhone™," said Hirsch. "The limitations of the camera forced me to see differently."

Due to the technical limitations of the iPhone™, Hirsch became more sensitive to the subtle changes in light and the angles to achieve his visual goals.

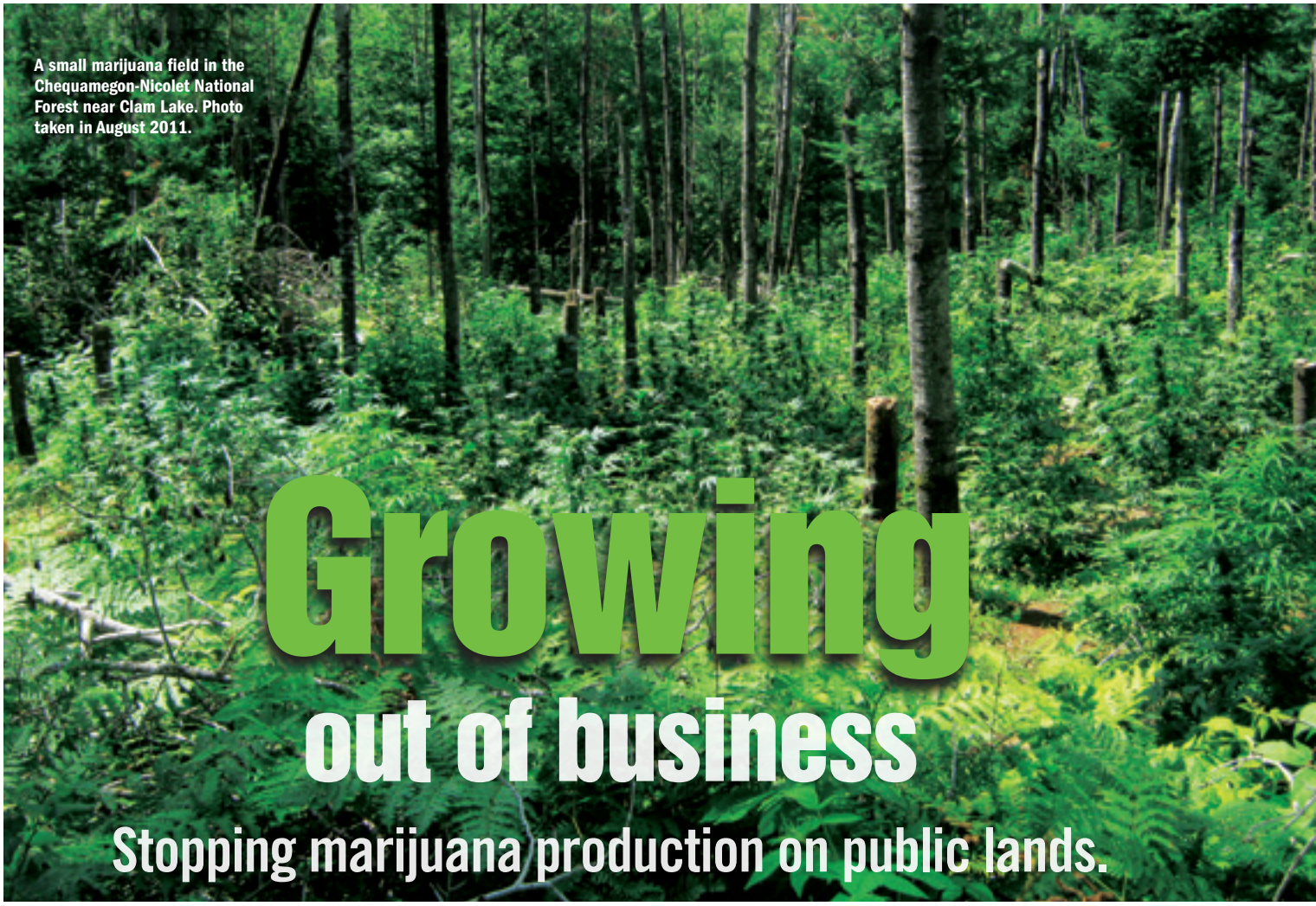
"I could not reach for a different lens, instead I had to reach into my creative reserves and be the human zoom," he said, "I don't think this project would have had near the depth of creativity, vision or representation of place if I had shot it with my digital SLR cameras."

For the whole year, Hirsch documented the life of the bur oak. Living a mile and a half from the tree, he paid daily visits and took shots. To commit to this project, he did not take his family on a vacation and gave up annual ski trips with friends.

After a few months, the investment in time began yielding rewards. Not only did he learn to tackle the visual challenges, but he also began to appreciate the contemplative nature of "That Tree."

Hirsch completed the year-long project on March 23, 2013. He posted the photos on his website (thattree.net/) and Facebook (facebook.com/photosofthat tree) and caused a sensation online. He expects the collection to be published in August 2013, in his book entitled *That Tree: An iPhone Photo Journal Documenting a Year in-the-Life of a Lonely Bur Oak.*

Xin Wang is a graduate student in journalism at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and an editorial intern for Wisconsin Natural Resources *magazine.*



A small marijuana field in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest near Clam Lake. Photo taken in August 2011.

Growing out of business

Stopping marijuana production on public lands.

Story by Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen and photos provided by Wisconsin Department of Justice

It was 5:30 a.m., dawn was breaking and a meteor shower could be seen overhead. The damp air was mild and settled in the river bottom. If you were there to enjoy nature, as I had been many times before, it was a beautiful morning to be in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest.

However, the team of law enforcement officers, who had already walked a half-mile through the dense forest, had another purpose, and when they stepped out of the trees north of the river, they could smell thousands of marijuana plants growing on clear-cut fields carved out of the forest.

As the team crossed the river toward the marijuana growers' makeshift camp, they were spotted by one of the growers who had just risen to cook breakfast. He ran, but only after warning one of his associates. As the law enforcement team approached another "hooch," three more growers ran barefoot out the back, leaving behind their loaded guns and other possessions.

The camp was now vacant. The area was secured and additional teams arrived to document, collect and remove all of the evidence. More than 9,400 marijuana plants — representing a street value of more than $9 million — were seized and destroyed. Other evidence, including hundreds of feet of water hose, extension cords, generators, pumps, chemicals, litter, garbage, camping equipment, three semi-automatic rifles and one pistol were seized. Officers captured one of the growers later that morning and arrested five others the next day. One was armed with a pistol. None of the men were from Wisconsin or had any ties to the area. All six were later convicted and sentenced to federal prison.

Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen

DTO grows

"DTO" stands for "Drug Trafficking Organization." DTOs are criminal organizations, frequently national or international, engaged in the manufacture and distribution of controlled substances. DTO grows on public lands were first found in 1995 in the national forests of southern California. To date, they have been identified in at least 67 national forests in 20 states, including Wisconsin. Growing

Marijuana grower's sleeping quarters (also called a "hooch") discovered in the Chequamegon–Nicolet National Forest.

marijuana on public lands allows growers to shorten supply routes, reduce risks of being intercepted, and minimize the costs of smuggling their most profitable product into the Midwest.

In Wisconsin, the first DTO marijuana grow on public lands was encountered in 2008. Since then, 12 of these large open-land, occupied marijuana grows have been found with a total of more than 90,000 marijuana plants representing a street value of more than $90 million. Many of these grows have been in national forests in the northern part of the state. However, they also have been found in southeastern Wisconsin and on county, state, federal, tribal and even privately-owned lands. Wisconsin's growing season may be shorter than California's, but more than 5.7 million acres of public lands with fertile soil, access to water and proximity to the major markets of Chicago and the Twin Cities make the state an attractive destination for DTOs.

DTOs growing marijuana on public lands in Wisconsin typically operate on a loose, cell-based network. Those higher in the organization control different "cells" of growers, often illegal immigrants, who live and work in the forest all summer planting, tending, protecting and harvesting the marijuana. These individuals live and work in remote areas of the forest under hard, austere conditions such as Wisconsin's heat, humidity and biting insects. They are supplied by a "lunchero" or lunch man, who brings them food, fuel and other supplies as needed.

Law enforcement response

Local and state law enforcement, including the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and federal law enforcement agencies, including the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the U.S. Forest Service, have coordinated their resources and efforts to combat this ongoing public threat to Wisconsin, in pursuit of four priorities:

Public safety — Nationally, and even in Wisconsin, people tending these large DTO grows are usually armed and always dangerous. They are prepared to protect their multimillion dollar operations from competitors, thieves, accidental discovery and law enforcement raids. In California, DTO growers have actively menaced forest users, even murdering or taking citizens hostage. They have shot at biologists, rangers, ranchers, hikers, campers, anglers and law enforcement. To date, these acts of extreme violence have not been reported in Wisconsin, but the risk is real. Weapons or evidence of weapons have been found at all but one DTO grow in the state, and growers have been spotted conducting armed patrols of their grow locations. These threats to the public must be addressed.

Contraband seizure and eradication — Using conservative estimates, the wholesale value of a large DTO grow is in the millions of dollars. Locating and seizing these grows deprives the DTO of the criminal proceeds and prevents the drugs from being distributed to the public. Through aggressive law enforcement, DTOs will eventually realize that grows on Wisconsin's public lands are not good business.

Arrest and prosecution of criminal actors — Merely seizing and eradicating a DTO's marijuana crop will not

dissuade them from continued criminal activity, as they already plan for, and can absorb, a certain amount of product loss into their "bottom line." In addition, a coordinated effort to identify, arrest and prosecute the growers and their workers will increase the personal risk for the criminal actors and has been shown to reduce and displace DTO grow activity.

Natural resources protection — While most people understand the danger to personal safety, the illicit cultivation of marijuana on public and tribal lands also causes significant harm to the environment. In order to create access to sunlight, acres of mature trees and other plants are damaged, or even clear-cut. Chemicals and fertilizers are used haphazardly in a manner that contaminates the soil and nearby waters. Terracing and other disruptions lead to soil erosion. In addition, growers often poach wildlife, divert natural water courses, and leave human waste and garbage in the forest. According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy:

> Law enforcement officials are also increasingly encountering dumpsites of highly toxic insecticides, chemical repellants, and poisons purchased by drug trafficking organizations, and transported into the country.
>
> Cultivators apply insecticides directly to plants to protect them from insect damage. Chemical repellants and poisons are applied at the base of the cannabis plants and around the perimeter of the grow site to ward off or kill rats, deer and other animals that could cause crop damage. These toxic chemicals enter and contaminate ground water, pollute watersheds, and kill fish and other wildlife.

The cost to remediate the damage caused by illicit marijuana grows can be significant, creating an additional financial burden for public and tribal land agencies. Remediation may include removal and disposal of camp debris, chemicals and hazardous waste (pesticides, fuels, fertilizers, batteries). It also may include re-contouring plant terraces, filling holes and re-vegetating clear-cut landscapes. Some estimate that full cleanup and restoration can range from $14,900 to $17,700 per acre.

The Wisconsin Department of Justice — Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI), which manages Wisconsin's Cannabis Enforcement and Suppression Effort (CEASE), has helped coordinate law enforcement's response to DTO grows on public lands by conducting ongoing training events, exchanging information with other states, and working joint criminal investigations with local sheriff and police departments, tribal law enforcement, the Department of Natural Resources, State Patrol, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security and Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Law enforcement also has enlisted the public's help through an informational campaign by the Division of Criminal Investigation and the Department of Natural Resources. This campaign has included awareness training for public land users and private pilots; notices published in DNR hunting regulations; posters at trailheads, parking lots, and boat landings; and news stories.

How to help

Law-abiding Wisconsin residents can play an important role in stopping the DTOs by following these guidelines. First, when enjoying public lands in Wisconsin, be aware of your surroundings and these signs of a DTO grow:

- cleared brush and timber in remote areas;
- signs of cultivation or disturbed soil in remote areas;
- NO TRESPASSING signs where they should not be;
- unusual campsites or structures such as lean-tos, shelters with tents/tarps and cut limbs, elevated sleeping platforms, particularly if concealed or camouflaged;
- quantities of food and supplies, or garbage from these supplies, indicating long-term camp living outside of designated camping areas;
- gardening supplies, including buckets, tools, pesticides, fertilizers, hoses, pumps, generators, gas cans and extension cords;
- large holes dug for water/pump reservoirs, garbage pits, or to conceal generators;
- Marijuana plants.

Second, if you see these signs, immediately leave the area the same way you entered. If possible, without risking your safety, mark your exact location on a map, noting landmarks, and/or GPS coordinates to help law enforcement locate the site. Try not to leave any sign you were near the growing area and be careful to avoid people or vehicles that may be associated with the grow. DO NOT try to investigate, look around for more grow or campsites or take anything with you.

Third, notify law enforcement as soon as possible by calling your local sheriff's department or Crime Stoppers, the Wisconsin DNR Tipline at 1-800-TIP-WDNR (800-847-9367), or the Wisconsin Drug Tipline at 1-800-NAB-DRUG (800-622-3784).You may remain anonymous/confidential, but it is best if you provide your contact information to allow law enforcement to follow up on your information.

A marijuana grower's camp kitchen, Chequamegon–Nicolet National Forest.

Fourth, talk to other users of public lands whom you know, and share these suggestions with them. This is especially important for parents or others who are responsible for the safety of other individuals.

Law enforcement at all levels is committed to stopping DTOs, enforcing our laws, keeping people safe and protecting the environment. However, we also need your help to put these dangerous criminal organizations out of business.

J.B. Van Hollen is Wisconsin's Attorney General.

C.O.P.S. Camp and conservation wardens

A week of safety, comfort and fun for kids in search of peace.

Joanne M. Haas

Maybe it was almost losing his toddler son two years ago to a surgery. Maybe it was slamming into the reality that he would never again fish or laugh so hard it hurts with some of the kids who have taught him how to be a better dad and husband, a better person and a better conservation warden.

Whatever it was, 2012 was different for conservation warden Tim Price at the annual Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.) Camp for Kids in East Troy. Last year, the guy who doesn't cry, did. And it was the wise children he's known for nine years who comforted him — the man they affectionately call Uncle Tim.

"This is the most rewarding thing I've done as a warden. It is hard to explain unless you experience it for yourself. We have some of the same wardens who keep coming back year after year, and each warden has their own reason for it," Price says, pledging to return every year to work the late summer camp for children from across the country linked by one thing. Each has lost a law enforcement parent in the line of duty.

And some have experienced a society not sure how to handle them as a family hit by the worst-case scenario.

Kerrie Johnson, of Vermont, and her son were among those longtime campers Price had to say farewell to on August 5 — the last day of camp. Johnson's youngest son, at 14, will be too old to attend the camp again.

"My kid is so at peace it is just crazy," says Johnson, whose husband was killed in 2003 when he was run over by a drug dealer. Their children were 5, 7 and 9 when she got the call. It's been tough.

It was Johnson's older son who nicknamed the Eagle River warden as his uncle years ago under circumstances neither she nor Price can recall. It doesn't matter — it stuck. As another mother said, "Families are formed at the camp — and bloodlines have nothing to do with it."

The law enforcement community is a family that will support one another through the good times as well as the bad. Regional warden Kevin Mickelberg of Milwaukee feels it every day.

"I know that each day that I go to work it may be my last. It gives me great comfort knowing that my children and wife will be cared for and supported by this law enforcement family if something were to happen to me," Mickelberg says.

It also is the sense of fitting in with others like you, feeling safe enough to just be yourself – and playing with another kid who just gets it.

As Warden Supervisor Jennifer Niemeyer of Racine put it: "It's a grief camp but you'd never know it."

Nearly 30-year-old camp growing every year

Created in 1984 with 110 members, Concerns of Police Survivors Inc. (C.O.P.S.) supports the families, friends and coworkers of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty, as well as training to law enforcement agencies on survivor victimization issues and public education. More than 15,000 families belong to C.O.P.S. There is no membership fee.

Each year, between 140 and 160 officers nationwide are killed in the line of duty and their families and co-workers are left to cope with the tragic loss. The Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.) provides resources to help them rebuild their shattered lives. DNR conservation wardens play an important role in the Wisconsin camp.

JOANNE M. HAAS

The 2013 C.O.P.S. Kids Camp runs July 29-August 4 in East Troy. Children ages 6 to 14 and their parent/guardian are invited to join in. Campers take part in family interaction, camp activities, grief counseling, relaxation and lots of old-fashioned fun.

CONCERNS OF POLICE SURVIVORS

The C.O.P.S. Summer Camp for Kids has been held at the Salvation Army Camp in East Troy since 2004. The 2012 camp served about 160 survivor children ages 6 to 14 and about 100 surviving spouses, grandparents and other adults. In addition, 40 support staff provided daily counseling sessions and law enforcement agencies sent mentors.

There is no charge to attend. C.O.P.S. covers the costs through fundraising efforts nationwide and attendees only cover their travel costs.

Mickelberg says wardens are honored to have the kids' summer camp in Wisconsin. "Our wardens understand that many of these kids no longer have the opportunity to be exposed to the outdoor world since their father was taken from them.

"For many of these children, it is the first time that they have been taken fishing, boating or shooting a gun or bow," he says. "This is one small way to support these families that have made the ultimate sacrifice."

Uncle Tim gets a reality check

Price was the conservation warden based in East Troy when the national group moved its summer camp from Missouri to Wisconsin in 2004. And he has shepherded it through challenges, changes and growth. In 2012, there were 22 wardens on site every day thanks to a slated deployment schedule.

Price also has been instrumental in making sure there are various activity stations for the campers. These include fishing, canoeing, .22-caliber rifle shooting, pellet guns, boating safety, archery and T-shirt printing.

"A person has to step back and reflect on what they are actually going through," Price says of the campers. "This is the first year that I was part of the counseling group for the 14-year-olds."

It was especially difficult and surprisingly emotional for Price, he says.

Price has always led the fishing part of the camp. "I can't tell you how many times I've heard that the boat at home hasn't left the garage and still has a cover on it since they had their loss," he says. "And when we're done, sometimes the mom says, 'When we get home, we're taking the cover off that boat and going fishing.'"

The camp is a world all by itself, he says.

JOANNE M. HAAS

The goal of the C.O.P.S. Kids Camp is for campers to leave with a continuing support system, sense of personal growth, self-awareness for the future and likely some lifelong friendships.

"These folks, they are on an island and they're all on it together. They all understand each other. When they all get back to their respective communities, their friends will never understand, nor will I understand. But I understand more than the average folks."

Night terrors replaced with sleep

Jennifer Thacker lost her husband in 1998 when she was the young mother of a then-18-month-old. She says children-survivors often want to sleep with the surviving parent.

"It's about safety — their sense of safety is very shaken," says Thacker, who attended camps as a survivor for years before becoming the C.O.P.S. national outreach director in 2010.

When a parent is violently taken, the sense of security — well-being — is severely rocked, she says.

She explains it as the case of the child who sees their now-deceased parent as the one who protected people from the bad guys — but a bad guy took out the parent. Now, the child wonders when the bad guy will come after him or the surviving parent.

"So when the child comes to camp, it is often the first time that child will sleep apart from that parent," she says.

Mentors are present in all sleep areas — but anxiety can remain. In one of the girls' cabins one year, the idea of a restful sleep was impossible.

"The mentor in that cabin was a police officer," Thacker says of that night. "The girls were surprised the woman was an officer."

"Girls," the officer told them. "I've got it covered."

And the girls got their sense of safety and slept that night.

Thacker says another thing kids learn so early is that society shows it is unacceptable to speak of a dead parent. She recalls one mother telling the story of how she put her toddler on the counter at a store and the child immediately told the clerk, matter-of-factly, "My dad is dead." The clerk ignored the child and pretended not to hear.

"That child is being told, indirectly, that it is unacceptable to talk about these things."

Cody and Emily

Emily met her husband in high school. The Indiana couple married when they were 20. The following year Emily's husband, a law enforcement officer, was killed while on duty. Emily was 21 and four months pregnant with their son, Cody.

Emily attended their first C.O.P.S. Camp for Kids when Cody was 6 — the youngest age campers can attend.

From a small community, Emily had support from family. She thought everything was moving along fine for the two. But she realized that wasn't accurate when the pair attended the morning therapy sessions, which are daily gatherings at the camp.

"He (Cody) said things in group that I had not heard him say before," Emily says. She also remembers how she watched the kids interact at the first camp.

"Kids just talk. 'How did your dad die?' they'd ask each other,'" Emily says. "I remember when Cody came up and said, 'Hey, see this kid? This kid doesn't have a dad either. We're gonna go play, OK?'"

Cody has since started pitching for baseball.

"My dad would have been proud," Cody, 12, says. Emily nods.

This year, as it sounds all years, has been another keeper. Cody won the trophy for his skill at the .22-caliber rifle station. "I always wanted to win," he says.

Emily has remarried and given birth to two more children. But the other families she has met at the camp also have become her "lifelong family members" without question.

Emily has purchased a .22-caliber rifle for her husband. And it may come to camp with Cody sometime.

"The warden said because we drive we can bring it," Cody says. "Uncle Tim will be here, too."

No doubt about it.

Joanne M. Haas is a public affairs manager for DNR's Bureau of Law Enforcement.

This year's C.O.P.S. Camp for Kids
runs July 29 through Aug. 4.
Visit nationalcops.org/ for information.

Blue Mound State Park is north of the Village of Blue Mounds, about 25 miles west of Madison via US Highway 18/151. From Highway 18/151, go north on County Highway F and turn left on County Highway ID into Blue Mounds. Go west on Highway ID about a half mile to Mounds Road. Turn right (north) and follow Mounds Road north through town. (Mounds Road becomes Mounds Park Road once you leave the village.) The park entrance is one mile north of the intersection of Highway ID and Mounds Road.

DNR FILE

Four seasons of fun

Blue Mound State Park delivers.

Colleen DuVall

Known for its well-kept cross-country ski trails and year-round access, Blue Mound State Park boasts activities and attractions for many visitors. It is a mere 25 miles west of Madison, in close proximity to a National Natural Landmark in the Cave of the Mounds, and home to the highest point in southern Wisconsin — the 1,716-foot West Blue Mound.

Blue Mound State Park Manager Kevin Swenson provides a behind-the-scenes view of working at such a busy and beautiful state property.

"There are several factors I enjoy about working in an outdoor setting, but experiencing the four seasons is by far the most rewarding," Swenson says. "(This would apply) whether it is the frigid cold of winter (-15 degrees grooming ski trails two winters ago), to the hot summer sun; from the smell of spring snow melt, to the explosion of fall colors. While this position comes with its fair share of stress, it is these experiences that make me realize I chose a career perfect for me."

Like other state parks, Blue Mound offers many special programs and events each year, most organized by the Friends of Blue Mound State Park. Interpretive programming runs from Memorial Day through Labor Day each year and includes topics such as large and small mammals, flora and fauna, Universe in the Park and folk music. Candlelight skis (held the first Saturdays in January and February) offer cross-country skiers and snowshoers the opportunity to ski at night by candlelight.

Swenson first started working part time for the Wisconsin State Parks in 1992 as an intern while pursuing his associate then bachelor's degrees at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He floated between the state parks system and Dane County Parks before being hired full-time by the state in 2001.

"I grew up working on the family dairy farm next door and always enjoyed

The East Observation Tower on the Blue Mound.

DNR FILE

Perched atop the highest point in southern Wisconsin, Blue Mound State Park offers spectacular views and unique geological features.

DNR FILE

the outdoor work environment," Swenson says. "We lived in the country and I spent most of my creative youth with my brother making bike paths, campsites and tree forts in the surrounding woods. It was these years coupled with scouting that gave me a deep appreciation and compassion for our natural environment."

Swenson shares this compassion for the outdoors with volunteers who he says are essential to Blue Mound State Park's ongoing popularity.

"Volunteering is a wonderful way to contribute to any state park, whether it is here in Wisconsin or anywhere else in America. Volunteering is a great way to give something back and have a great time outdoors at the same time," Swenson says. "Here at Blue Mound State Park, we have numerous volunteer activities. Some of the more prominent volunteer activities include being a campground host, park naturalist or visitor center volunteer."

Swenson says volunteers can spend as much or as little time as they want helping the park.

"If you are not looking for something too time consuming, possibly a conservation project for a group, many of our parks work with groups performing invasive species control (honeysuckle, garlic mustard pull, buckthorn and more), prairie seed collection, trail improvements, litter pickup, mulching, customized service projects, prairie restorations, woodland and wetland restorations and tree planting," he says. "We also are fortunate to have a wonderful group of individuals that make up the Friends of Blue Mound State Park."

Many Wisconsin state parks have a friends group, a non-profit organization comprised of individuals, families and community business partners whose mission is to develop, promote and maintain the educational and recreational opportunities within the area, as well as to promote the protection of natural habitat encompassed within the park.

"Members can be as active in the group as their schedules permit," Swenson says. "A major time commitment isn't necessary, but members can volunteer as much as they want. Through the years, the Friends of Blue Mound State Park have made significant and generous contributions to the park. Others have provided endowment funds to protect and enhance the future of our parks."

In January, the Friends of Blue Mound State Park opened a new Friends Shelter at Blue Mound. The shelter was the result of efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donors and the Friends' fundraising events such as the Horribly Hilly Hundreds Bike Event (arguably the toughest one-day challenge bike ride in the Midwest) and trail runs over the last 10 years. The shelter is heated, air conditioned and fully accessible with bathrooms and drinking water.

The Friends raised about 85 percent of the $500,000 needed for the structure. The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship fund was critical to the project's success.

For more information about Blue Mound State Park visit dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/name/bluemound/

Colleen DuVall lives in Milwaukee. She has had plays and short films produced, as well as an e-book. She has written for the Outpost Natural Foods Coop Exchange *magazine and the* Marquette Journal. *She recently had an article on state parks published in the* Shepherd Express.

Blue Mound State Park is the only Wisconsin state park with a swimming pool. The pool was built in 1972 because so few swimming opportunities were available in the area. The pool is L-shaped, 75 feet long on each side, and contains almost 200,000 gallons of crystal-clear water. Depth varies from 3 feet in the shallow section to 11 feet in the diving area. A poolside chair-lift helps visitors with physical limitations. The pool is open daily (weather permitting) from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend.

DNR FILE

No beach? No problem. Blue Mound State Park is the only Wisconsin state park with a swimming pool. The pool is open daily (weather permitting) from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend.

Blue Mound State Park offers spectacular views and unique geological features. Over 20 miles of scenic hiking, off-road biking and cross-country ski trails, as well as a family campground, access to the Military Ridge State Trail with bike-in campsites and a rustic cabin for people with disabilities make Blue Mound a popular destination year-round.

Ron Bruch and Ryan Koenigs

Welcoming back Namao

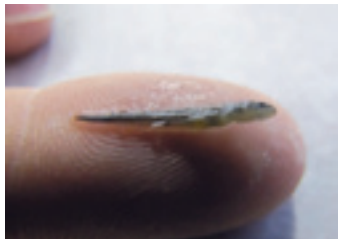
Spawning sturgeon on the Wolf River.

© BOB RASHID

The great lake sturgeon returns to Keshena Falls.

Menominee tribal elders stand on the banks of the Wolf River below the historic Keshena Falls and watch with eyes misted by deep joy as lake sturgeon spawn at this sacred place for the first time in over 100 years. This was the scene of a truly historic event for the Menominee people and the state of Wisconsin in the spring of 2012, only one year following joint efforts by the Menominee Tribe and the Department of Natural Resources to restore adult migrant and resident lake sturgeon in the Wolf River on the Menominee Reservation.

Lake sturgeon (Namao in Menominee language) from Lake Winnebago are well known for their spawning run up the Wolf River each spring where thousands of people have been watching them spawn for decades at sites along the lower river like the Sturgeon Trail in New London, Bamboo Bend in Shiocton, and below the Paper Mill Dam in Shawano.



RYAN KOENIGS

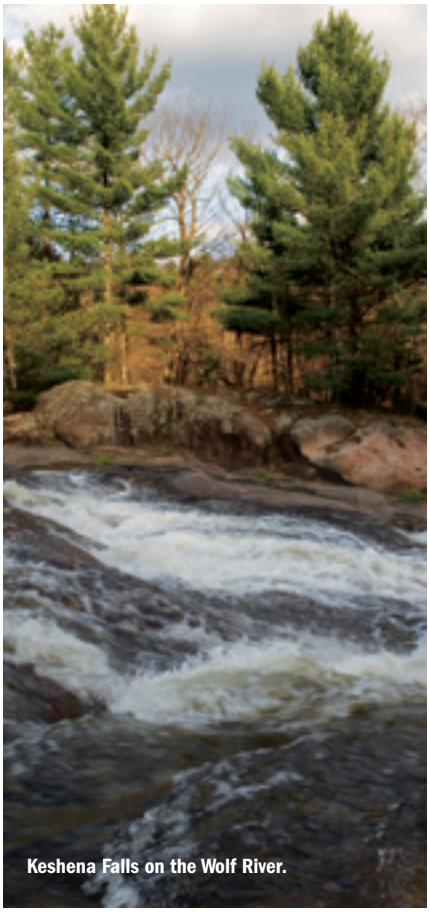
History is made when lake sturgeon larvae are captured from the upper Wolf River below Keshena Falls on May 21, 2013. Capture of larvae indicates that transferred sturgeon are naturally reproducing below Keshena Falls.

The dam in Shawano, and another like it 5.5 miles above Shawano, both built in the late 1800s, prevented the lake sturgeon from migrating upstream to Keshena Falls within the Menominee Reservation for the last century. Aquatic invasive species concerns including common carp and viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) virus are deterrents to reopening the river migration routes for fish using traditional fish passage methods.

Lake sturgeon typically don't spawn for the first time until they are older, age 14 to 29 for males, and 21 to 34 for females, and the females only spawn every three to five years after that. These fish can live for a very long time though, possibly over 150 years, and it is very likely that there are still some sturgeon in the Winnebago population that were hatched at Keshena Falls prior to the construction of the dams at Shawano in the late 1800s.

Lake Winnebago — along with the Wolf and upper Fox Rivers, and their connecting tributaries — is home to the largest population of lake sturgeon in the world. Over the years this population has been the focus of subsistence, commercial, and recreational fisheries, and an aggressive and pro-active management program dating back to the 1870s has provided the protection and management strategies needed to sustain both the Winnebago sturgeon population and the fishery.

The primary fishery on Winnebago since 1932 has been the winter recreational spear fishery on the lake that currently enjoys iconic status in the local culture around the lake system. The fishery is



Keshena Falls on the Wolf River.

© BOB RASHID

managed through harvest caps, which allow a sustainable annual harvest of over 1,500 fish by the 12,000 plus spearers who venture onto the ice each February to stare down their dark house spear holes waiting for their trophy to swim through.

The current sturgeon spearing culture has its roots in traditional Native American harvest methods that European settlers learned in the mid to late 1800s and subsequently adopted to harvest these prehistoric giants through the thick ice each winter on Lake Winnebago.

The Menominee people, led by Chief Oshkosh, selected the site of the current Menominee Reservation on the Wolf River north of Shawano shortly after Wisconsin became a state in part due to the annual spring run of sturgeon below Keshena Falls. The annual run of sturgeon provided much needed sustenance each spring to the tribe after the long Wisconsin winters depleted food stores by late April when the sturgeon would return to the Falls.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

DNR fisheries technician Colt Christopherson and fisheries biologist Ryan Koenigs transfer sturgeon from the DNR fish truck at Keshena.

Department fisheries staff have been working with the Menominee Tribe and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service since 1993 to restore lake sturgeon to the reservation by establishing a fishable population through fingerling stocking in the Legend Lake system. The state also provides 15 adult male sturgeon each year to the tribe for their annual sturgeon feast.

In 2011, Menominee Tribe and the DNR fisheries staff responsible for the Winnebago lake sturgeon management program agreed that more needed to be done to restore fish to the main-stem Wolf River above the dams and on the Reservation.

Having actively worked with the tribe since 1993 and as the Winnebago sturgeon biologist at the time, Ron Bruch proposed a renewed effort to capture and transfer sturgeon from the river below the dams to the river above the dams. The objective was to move sufficient numbers of fish to increase the probability that some would take up residence in the upstream river sections and that some would spawn at the ancestral spawning grounds below Keshena Falls.

Previous to this endeavor, Bruch's crew working with the Menominee Tribe captured and transferred limited numbers of sturgeon (10 to 20 fish per year) from 1995 to 2006. Results from these efforts were less than spectacular, difficult to measure, and transfers were discontinued altogether in 2007 following the discovery of VHS virus in freshwater drum from Lake Winnebago. By 2010, research demonstrated that lake sturgeon were not susceptible to the VHS virus, which once again opened the door for resumption of capture and transfer operations.

The renewed efforts in 2011 were supported by the newly appointed DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp, and called for increasing the number of fish transferred from 10 to 20 per year to 100 fish per year. Each fish would have a sonic transmitter surgically implanted inside its body cavity to allow for tracking and to determine if fish stayed in the river to spawn at Keshena Falls, took up residence above the dams, or moved back downstream to where they were originally captured.

Following the final agreement between the Menominee Tribe and the state, outlined in a new 10-year Memorandum of Understanding, Bruch and his crew used their electrofishing fleet to capture sturgeon from the Wolf River below Shawano in September and October 2011, and March 2012. During those three shocking events, 97 lake sturgeon were captured (mostly adult fish ready to spawn in the spring of 2012) and hauled on DNR fish stocking trucks to Keshena, and following transmitter surgeries, were released below Keshena Falls on the Menominee Reservation.

"The stage was set. Everyone's hopes were high, but not really knowing what to expect, as what we were attempting to accomplish had never been done before

Menominee Tribal historian Dave Grignon with Ron Bruch after a successful sturgeon transfer on the Wolf River.

Menominee Tribal members from children to adults gather to release sturgeon.

DNR FILE

with any other sturgeon species or population," Bruch recalls.

As the spring spawning migration grew near following the transfer of the first 100 fish, Walter Cox, Director of the Menominee Conservation Department, and Craig Corn, Menominee Tribal Chairman, worked with DNR Law Enforcement Supervisor Carl Mesman and his staff to set up a Sturgeon Guard program at Keshena Falls to watch for fish if and when they showed up to spawn.

As fate would have it, the spring of 2012 was early but drawn out by alternating warm and cold weather patterns, which disrupted the lake sturgeon spawning activity on the Wolf River. Hopes to see fish spawning at Keshena Falls were still high, but grew slightly more tempered as time passed. Menominee sturgeon guards worked around the clock, and tribal elders silently watched day in and day out for the return of the fish. Ron Bruch and his crew joined Don Reiter and Richard Anamita, the Menominee Tribal fisheries biologists, each day searching, waiting and hoping.

© BOB RASHID

Then suddenly, but as sure and deliberate as the return each spring of migrating geese, the song of the spring peepers and the leaf burst of Wisconsin's aspens, the lake sturgeon captured and transferred to their ancestral spawning grounds on the Menominee Reservation were there. They were there, and spawning below the historic and sacred Keshena Falls. All those seeing this grand spectacle that had not been seen for over 100 years were moved and deeply felt the sense of historical and cultural significance of this event.

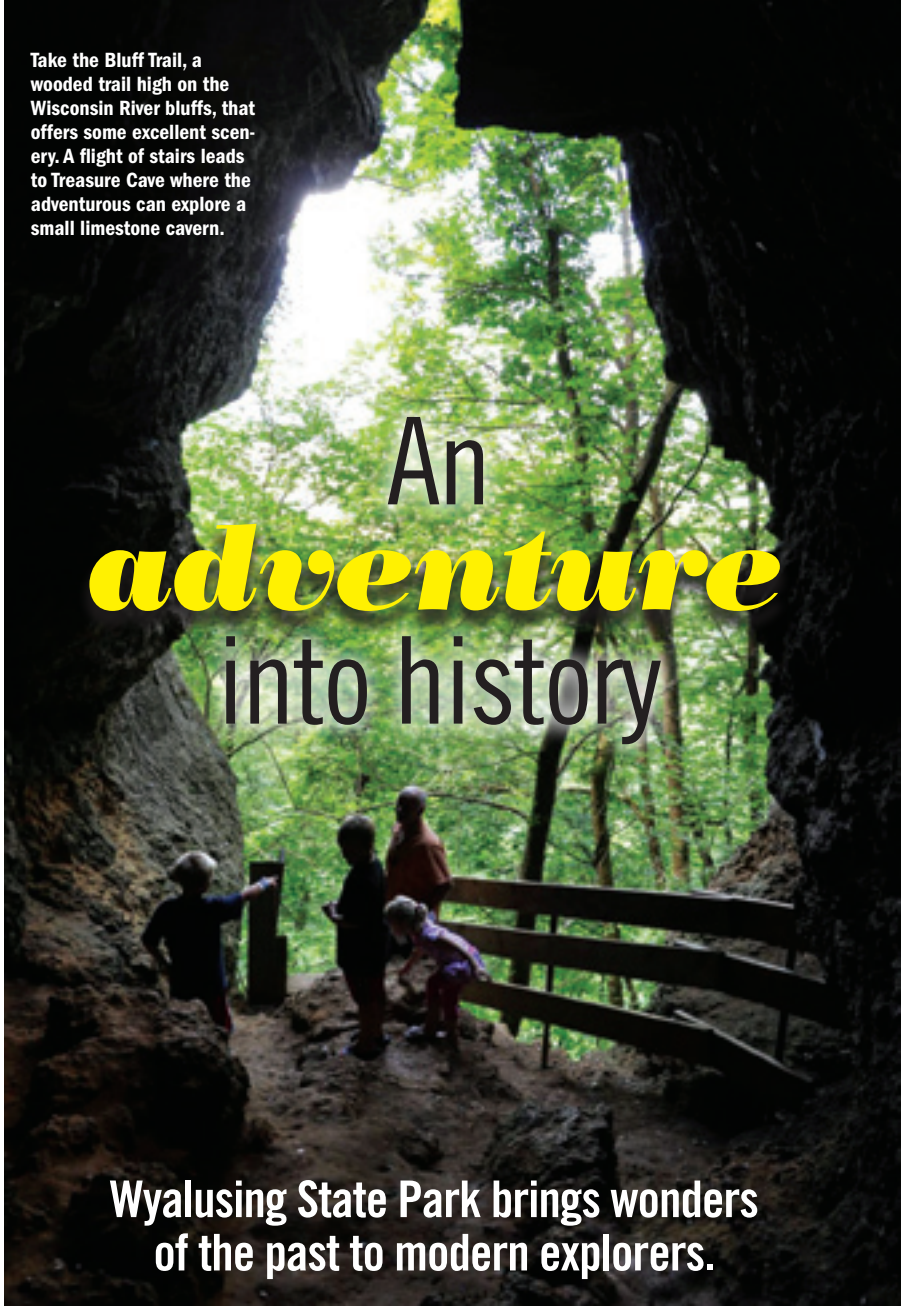
It's now late 2013, almost two years since the first new transfer efforts began, and over a year since the historic restoration of spawning lake sturgeon below Keshena Falls. Ryan Koenigs, the new Winnebago Sturgeon Biologist for the Department of Natural Resources following Bruch's promotion to a fisheries administrator position in Madison, has continued the capture and transfer effort. He and his crew working with the Tribe have released another 100 fish below Keshena Falls, which spawned there in early May.

Koenigs, Reiter and their crews, along with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, also accomplished another historic milestone with this project and in the global science of sturgeon restoration this past spring. On the night of May 21, approximately three weeks following the observation of spawning lake sturgeon below Keshena Falls, Koenigs, Reiter and crew captured lake sturgeon larvae naturally produced by the transferred fish that spawned there just weeks earlier.

The capture of these 3/4-inch long lake sturgeon marks another important accomplishment of this success story. It also is an internationally significant scientific accomplishment as this is likely the first known documentation of successful natural reproduction by any sturgeon species or population through an adult capture and transfer operation.

Namao has returned to Keshena Falls. It took a common goal, some good cooperation and joint efforts, but they have returned! The future looks bright for this fish, the Wolf River lake sturgeon population, and for the people who hold it near and dear to their hearts.

Ron Bruch is the DNR Fisheries Service Section Chief and Ryan Koenigs is the DNR Winnebago Sturgeon Biologist.



Take the Bluff Trail, a wooded trail high on the Wisconsin River bluffs, that offers some excellent scenery. A flight of stairs leads to Treasure Cave where the adventurous can explore a small limestone cavern.

An *adventure* into history

Wyalusing State Park brings wonders of the past to modern explorers.

Story and photos by Randall Paske

Why Wyalusing (pronounced Why-ah-LOO-sing)? The land on which part of the Wyalusing State Park is located was settled by Robert Glenn in the 1840s. The Glenns moved to the area from Pennsylvania and subsequently became a prominent name in the township.

The closest village, just south of Wyalusing State Park, was called Wyoming. In 1851, the village needed a post office. The postmaster, having become aware of another town in Wisconsin with the same name, went looking for a new name. Glenn remembered a small town in Pennsylvania on the Susquehanna River, near the Endless Mountains. The town's name was Wyalusing.

So, why not Wyalusing? Hence, the small town that was once called Wyoming changed its name to Wyalusing, an English version of a Native American word that means "where an old holy man dwells."

It was always Glenn's dream that his homestead be turned into a park.

In 1911, the Nolan Commission named four areas of Wisconsin for state parks. Finally, in 1917, Glenn's dream became reality and his homestead was named Nelson Dewey State Park after Wisconsin's first governor. It was renamed Wyalusing State Park when Nelson Dewey State Park near Cassville became a state park.

Wyalusing State Park is bordered by the Wisconsin River to the north and the Mississippi River to the west.

Point Lookout stands much as it did when Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet, along with five voyagers, paddled two canoes down the Wisconsin River and into the Mississippi River in 1673. Point Lookout overlooks the confluence of these two mighty rivers, once major routes for the explorer.

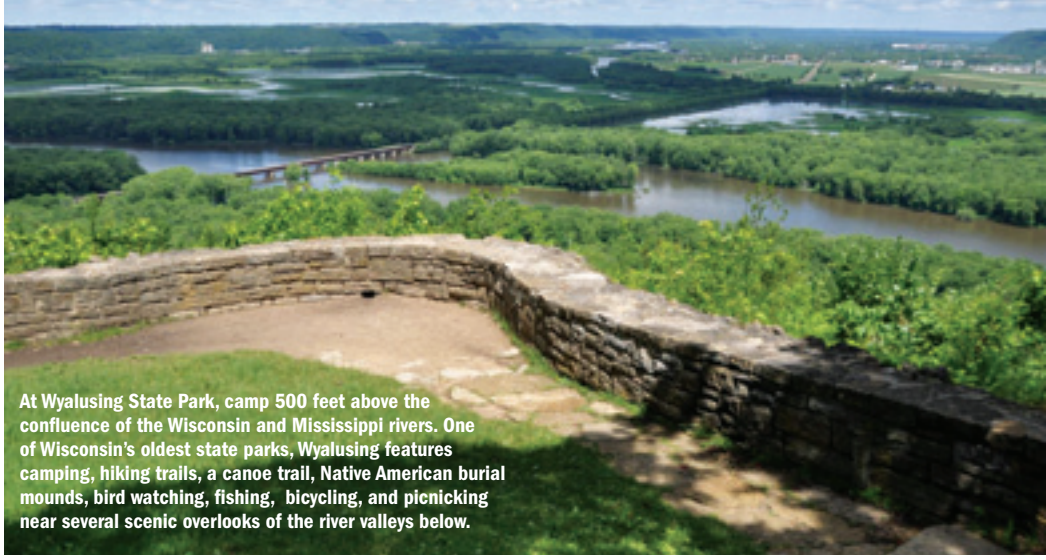
Today's modern explorer walks along a blacktop, accessible path to Point Lookout. Adults return to Point Lookout and remember earlier times when, as children, they sat atop the stone fence, which was erected by the Works Progress Administration in 1939. On occasion, young couples begin their lives together, expressing their love for one another, getting engaged and married as the sun sets in the west.

Eagles and turkey vultures soar on invisible rivers of wind high above as visitors gaze over the second oldest city in Wisconsin, Prairie du Chien. As the sun sets, and nightfall arrives, the twinkling

As you hike the park trails downward from the bluff tops, you are walking back in time. Each layer of dolomite (limestone), shale and sandstone is older than the layer above it.

Visit a monument dedicated to the extinct passenger pigeon.

Spirits of Wyalusing Past
Date: Sept. 28
Location: Wyalusing State Park
13801 State Park Lane
Bagley WI 53801
For more information: wyalusing.org/events.htm or call (608) 996-2261



At Wyalusing State Park, camp 500 feet above the confluence of the Wisconsin and Mississippi rivers. One of Wisconsin's oldest state parks, Wyalusing features camping, hiking trails, a canoe trail, Native American burial mounds, bird watching, fishing, bicycling, and picnicking near several scenic overlooks of the river valleys below.

lights of the city intertwine with the stars, lending a mystical quality to the land of the old holy man.

Point Lookout stands 500 feet above the confluence of the Mississippi and Wisconsin Rivers. It is located midway along two bluffs, the Wisconsin Ridge and the Sentinel Ridge. Four other lookouts along the edge of the bluffs offer a different perspective of the busy waterways where pleasure craft and towboats share the river during the summer.

It is not unusual, especially in the fall, to find a layer of fog between the valley and the top of the ridges. The soft white carpet of fog ebbs and flows. As the sun rises in the east, slowly, it dissipates, leaving a new day.

The only monument in the United States dedicated to the extinct passenger pigeon is also found in Wyalusing State Park. The monument was erected in 1947, just 30 years after the last passenger pigeon flew over what is now Wyalusing State Park. It is only fitting that the monument is located on Sentinel Ridge along the Mississippi River.

In 1997, the monument was rededicated, and at the rededication Gaylord Nelson, founder of Earth Day, said, "The most important challenge the human species has is the challenge to preserve the integrity of the ecosystems that sustain all life — plant and animal." The Friends of Wyalusing State Park assisted in the celebration.

The Friends of Wyalusing was formed in the late 1990s with 16 members. Since its inception, the mission of The Friends of Wyalusing is to support the visitor experience by enhancing the connection between nature and the park visitor.

The Spirits of Wyalusing Past is the culmination of events by The Friends of Wyalusing. Interesting, colorful, historical tidbits of the area are presented by the "Spirits of Wyalusing Past."

The "Spirits" are portrayed by members of The Friends and other volunteers who have talent and a willingness to portray a character. The "Spirits" are located on the 500 foot bluff, overlooking the lights of Prairie du Chien and the confluence of the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers. Families reserve camping spots a year ahead for this event. Local scout groups and camping families decorate and carve donated pumpkins. The lighted pumpkins and Tiki torches are placed along the .5-mile trail part that follows the Wisconsin Ridge. It is not unusual to have more than 250 visitors attend this event.

Wyalusing State Park has two main campgrounds: Homestead and Wisconsin Ridge. Homestead Campground derives its name from the Robert Glenn Homestead.

The Wisconsin Ridge campground offers campsites along the ridge, facing the Wisconsin River Valley. These sought-after sites are in high demand during the camping season. Many campers are content to sit in lawn chairs or picnic tables and enjoy the swooping turkey vultures, the cry of an occasional eagle and the views of the river valley below.

Across the valley an occasional private airplane lands without a sound at the Prairie du Chien Airport. Fishing boats dodge around the Wisconsin River sandbars like tiny dragonflies. A canoeist paddles between the railroad trestles over the river. A Burlington Northern Santa Fe train loaded with freight cars soundlessly snakes its way through the valley below. The camper can relax and imagine what the real spirits of Wyalusing past thought as they trekked along the trails of Wisconsin Ridge.

Wyalusing State Park is also a birders' paradise. During migrations, people can be found gazing into the tree tops, binoculars focused on a bird only seen at Wyalusing. People of all ages travel hundreds of miles to Wyalusing State Park and locate more than 90 bird species residing in the park during the summer and 100 more during spring and fall migration. Birding tours frequent Wyalusing State Park, one of Wisconsin's premier birding sites. Populations include prothonotary warblers, Bell's vireos, Henslow's sparrows, wild turkeys, red-tailed and red-shouldered hawks, turkey vultures and bald eagles.

But the species that brings birders to Wyalusing each year is the yellow-throated warbler. Wyalusing State Park is the only location in Wisconsin where this species (listed as endangered in Wisconsin) is sure to be found every year — maybe not by everyone or every time one visits, but it will be found by some birders every year.

The Hugh Harper Indoor Group Camp is one of only three indoor group camps in the Wisconsin State Park system. Hugh Harper Indoor Group Camp is the largest. The four dorm buildings can house up to 27 people each. Each dorm is divided into two sleeping areas (12 people each) with bunk beds. A center counselor's room can accommodate three people. There are two bathrooms in each dorm. Bathrooms have showers, toilets and sinks. Campers must provide their own sleeping bags or sheets, blankets, pillows, towels and toiletries. Two of the four dorms are fully accessible. Heat and hot water are provided. The main lodge houses the kitchen, dining and meeting facilities. The kitchen is equipped with large commercial appliances. A large charcoal grill is available just a few steps outside the kitchen. Groups must provide their own food, dish cloths, towels, paper towels and other kitchen supplies.

So are you still asking, why Wyalusing?

Why not? Wyalusing has over 21 miles of trails: foot trails, nature trails and bike trails. It has four known caves, more than five lookout points along the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers, two other lookouts look west, a large picnic shelter with four fireplaces, a nature center, a concession stand, five smaller picnic shelters, an outdoor campground, two regular campgrounds, an indoor campground, canoeing, fishing, birding, an observatory, effigy mounds, burial mounds, monuments, cross-country ski trails and snowshoeing. Not to mention, terrific views!

Randall Paske writes a blog for The Friends of Wyalusing State Park. He lives in Prairie du Chien and is a retired teacher.

SOUTHEAST WISCONSIN INVASIVE SPECIES CONSORTIUM

Above: A Phillips High School science class tackles buckthorn.
Below: Schurr People GM pull garlic mustard.

UPPER CHIPPEWA INVASIVE SPECIES COOPERATIVE

Cooperative Weed Management Areas

Local and regional groups take on invasive species.

Kelly Kearns

Don't be surprised if when you hike through a forested park you see groups of volunteers pulling garlic mustard. This highly invasive Eurasian plant is the target of annual control efforts by thousands of landowners around the state. However, pulling your own weeds can be a losing battle if your neighbors or the park down the road allows them to thrive. The solution — join others in your area to share information and prioritize and coordinate prevention and control projects.

IAN SHACKLEFORD

Growing a partnership

Groups that band together for the purpose of dealing with invasive plants are traditionally called Cooperative Weed Management Areas, or CWMAs. Local citizens, landowners, non-profit groups and businesses join together with city, county, state, tribal and federal officials to cooperate and coordinate invasive plant work across jurisdictional boundaries. Don't let the word "weed" fool you, it is much more than weeds. Some groups include aquatic invasive species and forest pests in their responsibilities.

In Wisconsin, some of these groups have formalized their partnerships through written agreements and strategic plans that help them prioritize projects and seek grant funding. Our first official CWMA was formed in 2005 as Northwoods CWMA. Others have agreed to more informal partnerships, or to work only on a specific project, location or troublesome species. By pooling their talents, time and resources partners leverage their own efforts. They provide an exceptional model to help meet management goals on a landscape scale.

Getting the word out

Outreach and education are primary goals of all of these organizations, regardless of their size or focus. They reach out to landowners and others through the media, local presentations, farmer's markets, local fairs and festivals and other forums. Invasive Species Awareness Month, held in June each year, finds many of these partners linking teaching about invasives with opportunities for control work or creative fun in the outdoors.

A few groups have "Weed Feeds," where they share dishes made from garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed and other edible weeds. New this year, a 30-mile bike ride in Rock County included break stations where riders learned about invasive species. Many groups have speakers bureaus and lead field trips and workshops.

Hitting the road

In 2009, the state's invasive species rule, NR 40, went into effect. A few DNR staff had a large job to train numerous groups of people about the new rule and how they could help to minimize the spread of invasive species through Best Management Practices. The South-

east Wisconsin Invasive Species Consortium stepped in to put on workshops for managers of roadsides, utilities, parks and public works. While other CWMAs put on similar trainings, in some areas county staff and volunteers partnered to conduct additional educational sessions.

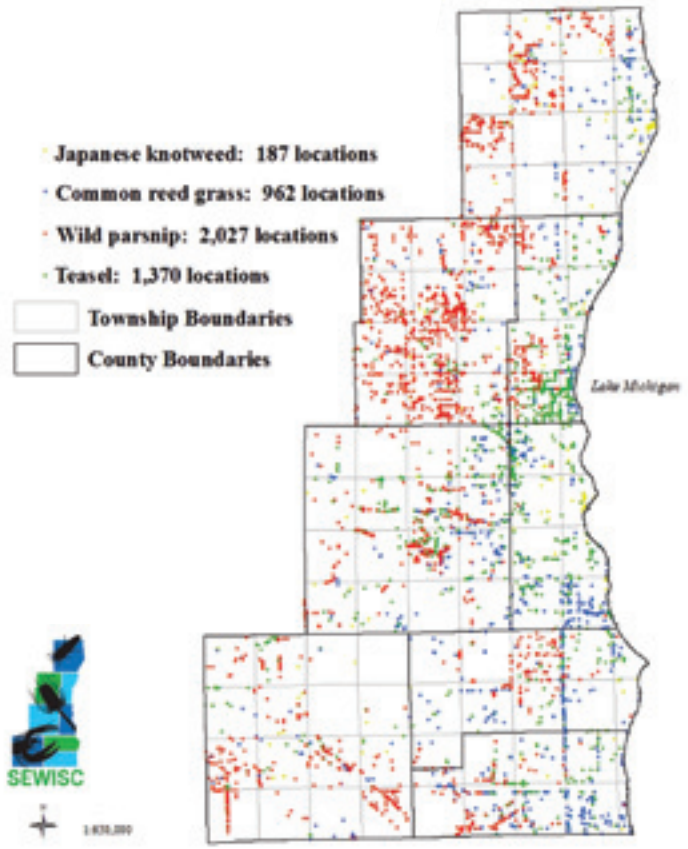
Wild parsnip, teasel, spotted knapweed and thistles are well-recognized because they flourish along roadsides. Late season mowing, after seeds have developed, often results in these invasives being spread along the rights-of-way (ROW), and then into adjacent crop fields, pastures and prairies. These fast growing aggressive species pose a major threat to the few remaining prairies in the state where already 99.9 percent of our original prairies have disappeared under the plow, pavement and development.

Keeping these few remnants from being overtaken by invasives is a constant struggle. Many CWMAs have begun to conduct ROW surveys. The techniques vary from using teams of volunteers to slowly drive roads and record target plants, to hiring summer interns to walk every roadside, mapping all invasive plants seen. Data gathered is typically shared with county highway departments who put the information into their county maps. After training sessions with their maintenance staff, highway managers are encouraged to coordinate their mowing to target specific weedy stretches before the plants start developing seed.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) is supporting the effort by having county crews, who are contracted to mow state and federal highways, complete their mowing earlier in the season. As there are limited funds for control work of invasive plants on roadsides, some local groups are receiving permits from DOT or their counties to do their own control of certain weedy sites.

Preventing the spread of invasives is the most efficient way to minimize their impacts. For years, volunteers and lakeshore owners have met boaters at launches, instructing them to remove plants from their boats and trailers and drain water before leaving the ramp. Similar messages are being adopted and shared with loggers, campers, mountain bikers, ATVers and many others to remove the mud and other debris (and the seeds it may contain) from equipment and clothing before moving to a new area.

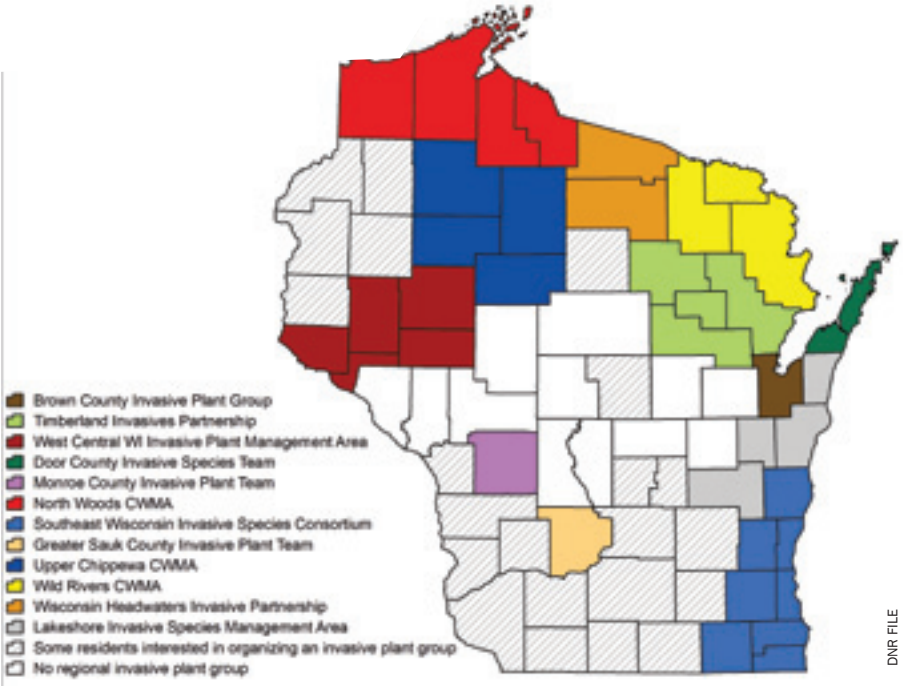
SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN INVASIVE PLANT ROADSIDE SURVEY 2012



SOUTHEAST WISCONSIN INVASIVE SPECIES CONSORTIUM

REGIONAL INVASIVE PLANT GROUPS IN WISCONSIN

Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas • As of June, 2013



DNR FILE

IAN SHACKLEFORD, BOTANIST, US FOREST SERVICE, OTTAWA NATIONAL FOREST

***Heracleum mantegazzianum*, commonly known as giant hogweed, is an invasive in Wisconsin that is phototoxic, meaning that its sap can cause severe skin inflammations when the skin is exposed to sunlight or to ultraviolet rays. Initially, the skin turns red and starts itching. Then blisters form as it burns within 48 hours.**

NORTHWOODS COOPERATIVE WEED MANAGEMENT AREA

Cooperative Weed Management Areas share information with a key audience at farmers market.

CWMAs are also partnering with the DNR's earthworm specialist to educate anglers not to dump their earthworms in forests, where their spread can be very damaging.

Early detection

Finding and containing small or new populations of known or suspected invaders before they become widespread is the best way to tackle most pioneering invasives. DNR's invasive plant team can help regional groups determine which plants are likely to become established and spread in their areas. Land managers, landowners and other partners are trained to identify these plants, report their locations and coordinate control work, maximizing their efforts. Monitoring after control work is critical in preventing a population from exploding. Containing a population and preventing invasive plants from spreading will save money, time and biodiversity in the long run.

On the ground

Many local groups conduct "weed-outs" or work parties. Some work primarily on containing new species or removing new infestations from their local natural areas. Others, like the Madison Area Weed Warriors, schedule events each year to keep plants like garlic mustard from becoming established in numerous local parks. In the southeast counties, a competitive garlic mustard "pull-a-thon" was held.

The Giant Hogweed CWMA formed between Iron County in Wisconsin, Gogebic County in Michigan and the U.S. Forest Service with the sole purpose of containing the largest of Wisconsin's herbaceous weeds. This massive plant has leaves up to three feet across, flowers the size of a basketball and a sap that causes serious burns on skin. After several years of regularly controlling the known populations, the group has disbanded, with only a few plants remaining to be controlled each year.

Lessons learned from this group have been instrumental in Manitowoc County where the Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator is working with landowners to locate and contain the only other hogweed populations known in the state.

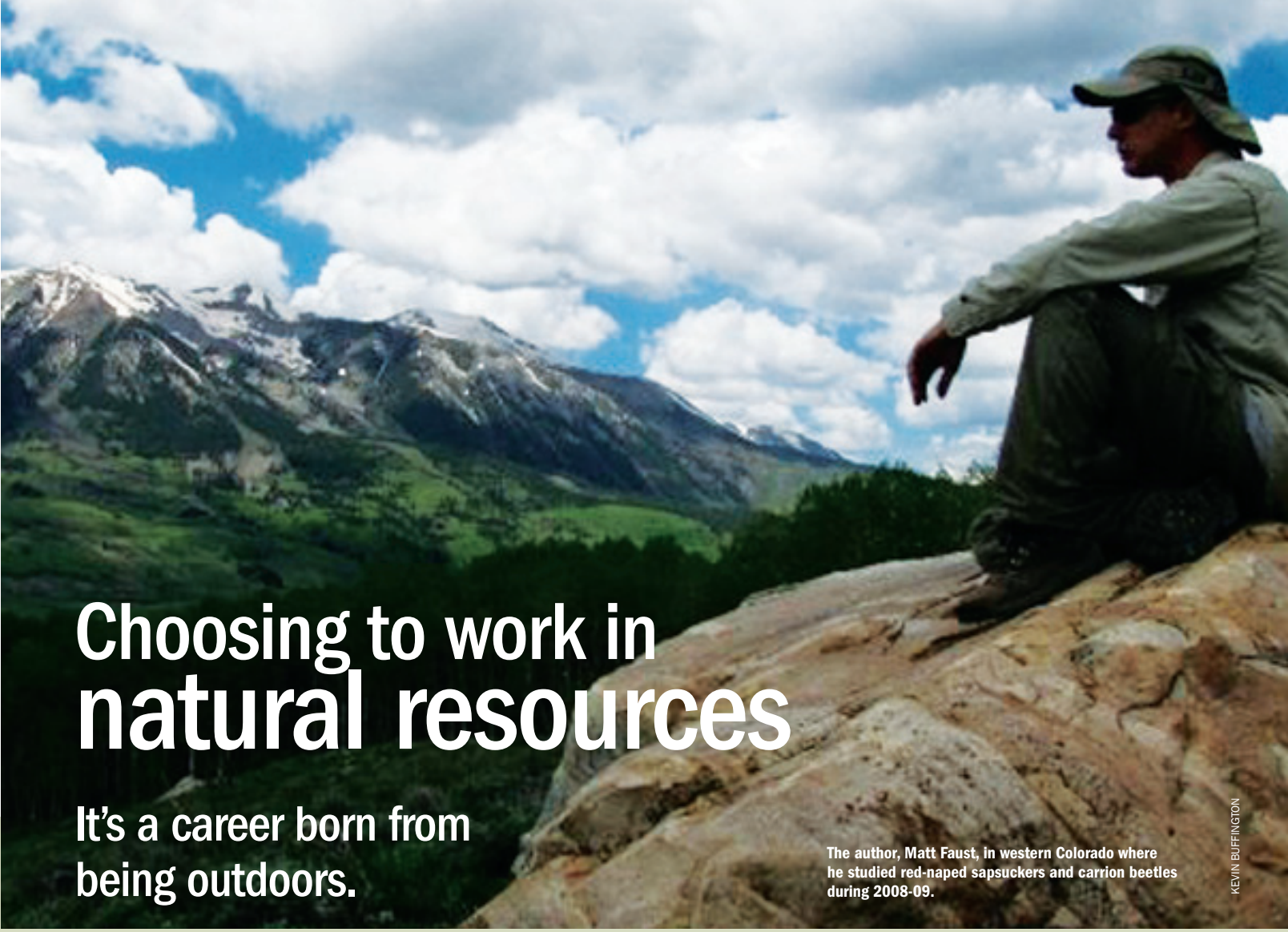
Unfortunately, one common trait of all groups working on invasive plant issues is insufficient funding. Very little state or federal funding is available for terrestrial invasive plant prevention or control. Therefore, cooperation and careful prioritization of projects is critical to success. By working together and sharing tools, supplies and people, very small amounts of money can go a long way. One of the benefits of cooperating regionally is being able to share resources. A few groups have obtained grants to stock a community tool shed, allowing landowners, organizations and work party leaders to borrow the tools they need to conduct their control projects.

How to get involved

Interested in working with your local CWMA or starting one in your area? The map shows areas with groups that are currently organized or being developed. For more information and contacts for any of these groups, see: ipaw.org/other_groups.aspx or dnr.wi.gov/ and search for "CWMA". For information about starting your own CWMA, see: mipn.org/cwma_resources.html For help finding others in your area who are interested, or for help getting a CWMA started, contact: Kelly.kearns@wi.gov

Working with your neighbors to contain the spread of invasive species can be fun and a great form of exercise. We can all be more effective when we work together. By having a CWMA organized, when a problem species shows up or a group requests a presentation, the partners know who to call and can quickly take action.

Kelly Kearns is DNR's Endangered Resources Invasive Plants Coordinator.



Choosing to work in natural resources

It's a career born from being outdoors.

The author, Matt Faust, in western Colorado where he studied red-naped sapsuckers and carrion beetles during 2008-09.

KEVIN BUFFINGTON

Matt Faust

Each year, countless students eagerly begin their collegiate education. Many arrive on campus unsure of their career aspirations, while others will switch majors after realizing that their original choice was not for them.

When I arrived at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire in the fall of 2005, I did not fit into either of the above descriptions. I knew that I was going to major in biology, with the intent of working in natural resources as a fisheries biologist to help manage and protect the resources that shaped me into the person I am today. While a lot has changed in my life since I began college that fall, my commitment to a career in natural resources has only grown stronger.

One question that many of my peers and I have been asked pertains to our decision to pursue a career in natural resources. Family, friends and new acquaintances alike have all asked me in one way or another, "Why natural resources?"

The answer to this seemingly simple question is often difficult for those outside the field to understand. Given the modest starting salaries and difficulty finding a permanent position in natural resources, especially in the current economic climate facing many states, why didn't I pursue a more lucrative career in business or medicine?

Most of us working in the natural resources field share a common characteristic — we were exposed to nature at a young age. I am no exception.

When I was a baby, my grandmother took an early retirement opportunity to babysit me after my parents returned to work. My father and grandfather had numerous old fishing magazines around their houses and one of my favorite activities as a baby was to sit on my grandmother's lap and page through those magazines looking at pictures of fish.

My grandmother would exclaim, "Look at the fish!" To her surprise one day I replied with my first word: "phissh."

While my first word was certainly an indication of things to come, it was not until I was old enough to tag along with my father fishing for bluegill that I became hooked. My family was fortunate to own land on a small lake in northern Wisconsin where we frequently spent our summer weekends visiting my great-grandmother.

During these vacations I learned to fish, chase frogs along the shoreline, listen for howling wolves and watch for deer in the surrounding woods. I can vividly remember the first northern pike that I had ever seen chasing my red spinnerbait up to the side of our boat and startling me before racing back to the weed bed that it had so suddenly appeared from.

Although my time spent on our land

in northern Wisconsin has shrunk considerably as I have grown and taken on commitments to school and jobs, this has made the time that I do spend up there all the more enjoyable.

My experiences growing up sparked my interest in the outdoors and sent me down the path of biology and natural resources, but it was my summers spent working in the field as a research technician that confirmed that I had made the correct career choice.

I began my career by helping with a graduate project in northern Wisconsin, where I spent a summer snorkeling with juvenile coho salmon in a coldwater tributary of Lake Superior.

My next two summers were spent in the Rocky Mountains of western Colorado walking through aspen woodland, searching for nest sites of the red-naped sapsucker and helping to set traps to detect carrion beetles.

My time as a research technician was far from glorious. Days typically consisted of spending long hours repeating the same few tasks over and over, while trying not to be carried away by mosquitoes or biting flies. Nights following a day in the field were filled with cold showers, long walks to outhouses, the joys of data entry and occasionally being awakened in the middle of the night by a porcupine making a meal out of my wooden cabin.

Although long hours and repetitive tasks may apply to any number of entry-level jobs (minus the biting insects and porcupines), natural resources had one major redeeming quality for me: I worked outside!

Conditions in the field were rarely the same from day to day, or even hour to hour. The fact that I could spend days or weeks repeating the same task, only to have one day where something totally out of the ordinary occurs, more than makes up for the periods of monotony and discomfort, and is something that people in other lines of work may never get the opportunity to experience.

I have been fortunate to have memorable days in the field where I glissaded down a snow-covered mountainside using my rain gear as an impromptu sled.

SHERRI FAUST

Faust not only works but plays in the outdoors. A muskie makes his day.

MATT FAUST

The Onion River where Faust studied juvenile coho salmon.

MATT FAUST

A black bear leaves evidence of his visit to Faust's field site on the Onion River.

I witnessed a large rockslide caused by a running marmot.

But my favorite experience took place after an utterly unremarkable day of watching coho salmon in northern Wisconsin. My partner and I were hiking downstream to a new site when we heard the loud, distinct noise of branches breaking in a stand of conifers about 20 yards from us. As we stood in the stream attempting to decipher the source of the noise, we heard more branches being broken, although appreciably closer to us. By this time, we were confident that the culprit was not a white-tailed deer or raccoon and decided that it would be best to leave our field site for the day and hastily make our way back to our vehicle. As we made our retreat, our mystery visitor continued to make its presence known by continuing to break branches and move off in the distance. Once back to the comfort and relative safety of our vehicle, we pieced together exactly what had happened: we had inadvertently gotten too close to a mother black bear and her cub. The initial noise was the cub scurrying up a tree as we approached, and everything that followed was the mother expressing her displeasure by escorting us away from her child (and our field site)!

When I graduated from Eau Claire in 2009, I accepted a graduate position at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. My graduate work took place entirely within an office setting, which may seem odd given my affinity for fieldwork until you consider the topic of my research: northern Wisconsin's muskellunge fishery. The opportunity to work with and contribute to the management of a resource that I had grown up caring about was a dream come true. Looking back, I can confidently say that my graduate research has ultimately been one of the most rewarding things that I have worked on, and is something that I look forward to continuing into the future.

As I begin my journey as a young professional I remain committed to my career goal. I hope that I have been able to provide some insight into why my peers and I have chosen to dedicate ourselves to careers in natural resources and shown that these precious resources are in capable, caring hands.

Matt Faust graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources and now works for the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. He lives in Ann Arbor, Mich.

Bringing our science to the people

GREG MATTHEWS

Jake Fries, Alan Crossley, Sharon Fandel, and Bruce Folley assembling prothonotary warbler nesting structures.

What's attracting wildlife professionals from around the world to Wisconsin?

Alan Crossley

My professional society, The Wildlife Society (TWS), is coming back to the Badger State to host its 20th Annual Conference, Oct. 5 to 10 in Milwaukee. (The Society's 12th Annual Conference met in Madison in 2005.)

The meeting (http://wildlifesociety.org/) is expected to draw 1,500 wildlife professionals from across North America and around the world. It's the continent's largest wildlife-focused conference to share the latest science and research related to wildlife management and conservation.

It seems only fitting to return to the birthplace of modern wildlife management as personified by the life and work of Aldo Leopold in Wisconsin. This year's conference theme, "Bringing Our Science to the People," will focus on how wildlife professionals can more effectively engage with the public and communicate the relevance of wildlife science.

Plenary speakers include Dominique Brossard, a professor in the Department of Life Sciences Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, who will discuss "the science of communicating science," particularly relating to controversial or emotionally charged issues such as wolf management, climate change and infectious zoonotic diseases.

A general session titled "Wolf Conservation at the Crossroads" will be sponsored by TWS's North Central Section, which comprises eight states including Wisconsin — a timely topic for our state. The conference will also feature more than 25 symposia, six panel discussions and more than a dozen workshops on a wide range of topics including elk ecology, chronic wasting disease, commercial deer harvest, ecotoxicology, white-nose syndrome in bats, landscape genetics, climate impacts, lead risks and more.

Founded in 1937, The Wildlife Society is a nonprofit scientific and educational association of more than 10,000 professional wildlife biologists and managers, dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education. Its mission is to represent and serve the professional community of scientists, managers, educators, technicians, planners and others who work actively to study, manage and conserve wildlife and its habitats worldwide.

I am one of several hundred members of The Wildlife Society in Wisconsin. When I got ready to go to college, I thought, "Hmmm, I'm kind of shy. I love to be outside. I want to work with animals and I don't really want to work with people. I think I'll go into wildlife management."

My dad, who was a blue collar worker who barely made it out of high school, told me that being a wildlife biologist was the stupidest thing he ever heard of.

But I couldn't think of anything else I'd rather do more, so I stuck with it through college, worked for the Missouri Department of Conservation for 18 months before going back for my masters at the University of Maine at Orono. While there I joined The Wildlife Society and as a graduate student found myself in the middle of a statewide referendum on whether or not to hunt moose. I became one of the spokespeople for the profession explaining why we could have a moose season and still have moose. I participated in debates, appeared on television and radio, and wrote press releases and magazine articles.

The referendum to repeal the moose season was defeated (and there is still a moose season today). It was that experience that confirmed my interest in wanting to work as a wildlife biologist for a state agency. I met a woman who was moving to Wisconsin and so I followed her in 1984, married her six months later and have been a wildlife biologist for the Department of Natural Resources ever since.

At this point in my career I don't get to spend as much time outside during work hours as I would have liked, the only animals I generally touch are dead, and I spend all of my time working with people. But I love it! My dad passed away in 1982 and never got to see what a great career path I had chosen or what a great state I've been able to work in for the last 30 years.

I'm excited to know that 1,500 of my brothers and sisters in conservation are all going to be convening in Milwaukee in October. I've served at all levels of governance in my professional society over the last 30 years and have gotten to know quite a few of them. They are (we are) a passionate, dedicated group of people who care deeply about our natural resources.

Aldo Leopold nailed why all of us have dedicated our lives to professional wildlife management in this quote that is found in the foreword to *A Sand County Almanac*:

"There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot. These essays are the delights and dilemmas of one who cannot.

"Like winds and sunsets, wild things were taken for granted until progress began to do away with them. Now we face the question whether a still higher 'standard of living' is worth its cost in things natural, wild and free. For us of the minority, the opportunity to see geese is more important than television, and the chance to find a pasque-flower is a right as inalienable as free speech."

See you in Milwaukee!

Alan Crossley has been a member of The Wildlife Society since 1981, is a Certified Wildlife Biologist®, past-president of the Wisconsin Chapter and North Central Section of TWS, and served on the national governing Council of TWS from 2007-2010. He has been a Wisconsin DNR wildlife biologist for nearly 30 years and will be retiring at the end of this year.

Readers Write

STURGEON TAGGING
I'm sending photos taken at Waverly Beach sturgeon tagging station on Feb. 21, 2013. In the photos are Robert "DNR Bob" Olynyk, Fishery Technician from the Oshkosh Office, and fisherman Leonard Buksyk, Menasha. The fish weighed 45 pounds and was 63 inches long.

Michael J. Cooney
Oshkosh

WINDSHIELD DRAMA
Driving on Wisconsin Hwy 33 between LaValle and Wonewoc is always a pleasure. The Baraboo River water chuckles its way over the stony bottom more or less southeast on one side while determined evergreen trees clinging to the craggy bluffs form a barrier to farming on the other side. A few small farms find land enough to provide feed for a herd of dairy cattle. In late May my sales duties took me there.

Attended by industrious bumblebees, the wild flowers bloomed in many colors on the slopes and roadsides. I admired them, feeling quite at peace with life in general. Suddenly a big bumblebee tumbled onto the windshield wipers. Righting himself, he prepared for take-off. Crouched, head down, legs braced, shoulders flexing, he looked like a winged bulldog in a yellow and black striped t-shirt preparing for the chase. Propelled by his stubby wings, he cast himself forward, only to be thrown back by the turbulent air in front of him.

My foot was on the brake pedal and I chuckled as I watched his recovery and preparation for the next attempt. After checking the air with his antennae, he gathered all of his mighty little power, revved up the tempo of his wings, and launched himself again. Same result. He tried again, this time seeming a bit dazed as he tumbled against the windshield. My foot pressed the brake pedal harder. The turbulence quieted. Once more he prepared for takeoff. This time he shot up into the air and off to a landing on the nearest buttercup. I drove on, just a little bit more pleased with the day and all things in it.

Russ Hunt
Lake Mills

QUELL SQUIRREL PILFERING
I read with interest the letter from Bruce Solberg ("Maple sap a squirrel delicacy," Readers Write, April 2013). We have been tapping our maple trees at a hobby level for over fifty years. This year, for the first time, squirrels bit through and emptied thirteen of our sixteen bags. We knew that they were the culprits because of the tracks. We replaced the bags, and sprayed them with "Squirrel Away," but the next day the bags were again chewed and drained, so we then smeared the bags with a mixture of Vaseline, red pepper and chili powder. This did the trick and we have had an adequate season.

Mary E Kimmel
Caledonia

NICE TOM
It didn't take Sam Vils of rural Mazomanie long to score a big tom when he shot this bird on opening day of the 2013 youth turkey hunt. Sam's father Tom Vils called the big bird in off of the roost and Sam did the rest with one shot from his 12-gauge Mossberg Bantam. The bird weighed 23 pounds, had a 10-inch beard and 1-inch spurs. Sam is 11 years old and attends Sauk Prairie schools. This was Sam's second turkey season as he bagged a 25-pound bird last year also with one shot from his trusty Mossberg.

Tom and Amy Vils
Mazomanie

WELCOME SURPRISE
I had quite a surprise during my annual bird house cleaning. As I reached in to remove a sparrow nest, something wiggled and out jumped a flying squirrel! I quickly replaced the bird house roof as the squirrel watched from a nearby tree. After allowing us to take some awesome photos, it glided back to the bird house and went inside.

Tom Vils
Mazomanie

WHICH BLUE HERON?
We read the article ("A true 'fisherman,'" April 2013) with memories of watching the same thing many times. We are fortunate to live across from the Mead Wildlife Area in Wood and Marathon counties where we get to see herons all the time in the summer. However, the great blue heron does not travel to our lovely state. The heron pictured in this article is the tri-colored heron which is quite common in these parts. We recently returned from a trip to the J.R."Ding" Darling Nature Preserve in Sanibel Island, Florida, where we saw these two breeds alongside one another. The great blue heron is pictured here.

David and Marie Tarnowski
Town of Day, Marathon County

We asked our bird expert, Andy Paulios, to help mediate this disagreement. Andy confirmed that the bird pictured in our April issue is indeed a great blue heron, a common resident and migrant to all parts of Wisconsin. He identified the bird in your photo as a little blue heron.

COMMENT ON A STORY?

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

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.

BUSH-CLIMBING COTTONTAIL
Recently, I was watching a robin with nesting material on my back deck to see where it was building a nest. I have cedar bushes around my deck and all at once one of the bushes near the robin started to shake. I figured that a cat or some other predator was after the robin. To my surprise, a cottontail rabbit popped out on top of the bush. I have included several pictures I took of the event as I had never seen a rabbit climb a bush.

George Wolard
Marinette

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET
While picking up trash near Gibraltar Rock in Lodi, my husband and I came across a flock of these tiny birds. They were kind enough to remain in the area while I went home to pick up my camera to take photos. We have never seen this bird in our area before and enjoyed our time with them.

Doreen and Jack Reinwand
Lodi

GERMANN ROAD FIRE
On Saturday, May 18, 2013, just two days after the Germann Road Fire was extinguished, I was at our lake home on the Eau Claire Lakes chain and decided to check out the area of the fire. There were three areas regarding this fire that I was amazed with. First off, I was amazed at how the fire impacted the different types of forest that were in its path. Most of the areas of the pine plantings were devastated while at the same time many of the hardwoods areas appeared to have suffered significantly less damage and it hopefully will come back from this fire very soon. Secondly, I was amazed at the efforts of the many firefighters who fought this fire. While it is very unfortunate for those that lost their homes and other structures and I sympathize with them for their loss, the firefighters did an outstanding job fighting this fire. It is hard to imagine how they saved as many structures as they did. You can see many areas that the fire burned intensely around the entire perimeter of the home but the home appears to have minor to no damage. We should all be thankful for the work that these men and women do on a daily basis. The final area that I was amazed with is how resilient nature itself is. Less than 48 hours after the fire ravaged through these areas I noticed green sprouts shooting up through the black charred forest floor. You can see the white tops of germinating ferns scattered over the ground. Wildlife did not disappear as I saw many birds, a black squirrel and several deer in the middle of this charred area. I have attached a picture that I took of a deer in the middle of this burned area. Overall this fire caused tremendous damage to a large area and many people suffered loss of some of their property but there were no casualties, it brought out the best in our emergency preparedness personnel and reminded us that while the land is scarred now, the future is bright for the flora and fauna in this area.

Tim Hoffman
Durand

CELEBRATED MAUSTON VISITOR
I was wondering if you would have any use for a few pictures (static and flight) of the great grey owl that was in the Mauston area this year?

Mark Jensen
Sun Prairie

LAKE ONALASKA PELICAN
I have attached some nice photos I took of a great grey owl (the Mauston bird), great horned owl(s) from Goose Island County Campground (La Crosse area) and a pelican (Lake Onalaska). Are these of interest to you?

Lisa A. Hodge Richardson
La Crosse

From birds to beagles

Continued from page 2

long as the dogs keep pressure on them. Thus, the hunter does not chase the dogs or the rabbit. Instead, the hunter tries to find the place where he or she expects the rabbit to return. It often takes a few laps by the rabbit to actually get a bead on it.

Beagles are bred for different hunting styles. Some beagles walk or slowly run the track, others run it at blazing speed, and there is just about everything in between. The slower dogs get just as excited as the fast dogs, but they do not put as much pressure on the rabbit and tend to have fewer losses. I prefer an upper-medium-speed dog that pours on the speed when conditions permit, but still manages to keep the situation under control when the rabbit makes a sharp turn. I find it more exciting when the dogs really get the rabbit moving.

The relationship between the hunter and beagle is different than between the hunter and bird dog. The desire to please the master is more refined in bird dogs than in beagles. A good bird dog must obey commands in the field even in the face of great temptation. Beagles are intelligent and capable of learning commands, but they are not known for being tuned in to the desires of the master in the field. When they get on a hot track they have tunnel vision. At that point, most of the communication with beagles is from the dog to the master rather than the other way around.

I miss pheasant hunting. But, having discovered the thrill of hounds and the opportunities for rabbit hunting in southern Wisconsin, I no longer really think about it. I am too busy listening to beagle music.

Rob Ruth, a Madison attorney and long-time outdoor enthusiast, lives in southern Wisconsin with his wife and seven children.

CREATURE

Comforts

Meet your neighbors at WisconsinButterflies.org

Story by Rebecca Deatsman and photos by Mike Reese

Getting to know your neighbors and learning their names isn't just good manners; it can help you feel connected to the place where you live. This is as true of our plant and animal neighbors as it is of our human ones. But you can't just ask a bird or a flower — or a butterfly — to introduce itself. Thankfully, a resource to help you learn more about Wisconsin butterflies is online.

Wisconsin Butterflies (wisconsinbutterflies.org) was created by Waushara County resident Mike Reese as a father-and-son project.

"My background is actually in botany," explains Reese, "but my son was interested in insects when he was young. I became involved with Cub Scouts, and the Cub Scout troop that I was with had a butterfly club."

The site began as a page on the website of the local school covering the butterflies found in the county, but it soon grew. Reese's son, David, helped develop and design the site.

Since 2000, Wisconsin Butterflies has grown into one of the best insect identification websites. Unlike other insect sites where users have to sort through photos of species only found in Florida and Texas, users will find a page devoted to each butterfly species found in Wisconsin, organized by family group.

Each species page includes photographs, a map of which counties it can be found in and a chart showing what time of year you're most likely to see it. The detailed butterfly descriptions include tips for how to distinguish it from other, similar-looking species, plus information on its habitat and life cycle.

Users can submit their own butterfly sightings and photographs and even create an account to track their sightings over time.

Though he's seen and photographed many of Wisconsin's butterflies, Reese definitely has a favorite. The frosted elfin isn't one of the big or colorful ones — actually it's the opposite, small and colored in subtle shades of brown — but it's special to him "just because it was so hard for me to find the first time. There's only one area where they're found in Wisconsin now — there might be some hiding out there somewhere, but basically the only ones we've found are in Jackson County."

Over four years, Reese visited the site more than 20 times trying to find the elusive elfin, making a two-hour drive each way.

"Some days the weather wasn't great, but I went anyway, because if I wanted to see them I had to go when they're flying. So that's always a special butterfly to me, and I lead a field trip there now, and that's one of the highlights because not many people get to see it. You wouldn't see it in any other part of the state."

If you're interested in getting to know the butterflies in your area, the release of the Wisconsin Butterflies database as a smartphone application has made it easier to carry the information into the field ($7.99, the app is compatible with the iPhone™, iPad™, and iPod™ Touch). The app was designed by Reese's son.

Technology has made it easier for people to learn about butterflies, but even more importantly it has allowed butterfly lovers to connect with each other.

"If you have some idea of what it is, it's nice to be able to look at photos online and compare yours to that, but also it's a lot easier to share your photos with other people, like an expert, and ask them questions," Reese says.

Why watch butterflies? Just like hunting, angling, or birdwatching, it's a way of getting outdoors and finding a connection with the natural world.

"You might be looking for butterflies, but you won't just see butterflies," advises Reese. "You might see a rattlesnake, or you might see a bird that's unusual, just because you're out in an area that's different from your backyard. Just get out and start looking!"

You could even discover something no one has ever seen before. Last summer, a user of Reese's website found a Brazilian skipper, a butterfly species never before observed in Wisconsin, at Schlitz Audubon Center in Milwaukee.

Next time you see a butterfly, snap a photo for Wisconsin Butterflies. Connect with butterfly enthusiasts and the next time you run into that butterfly you'll be able to greet your neighbor by name.

Rebecca Deatsman finished her master's degree in environmental education from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in May and has since relocated to eastern Oregon, where she is the Education and Projects Coordinator for the North Fork John Day Watershed Council in the tiny ranching town of Long Creek. You can find more of her wildlife writing and photography online at http://rebeccainthewoods.wordpress.com

Five cool Wisconsin butterflies

Harvester, *Feniseca tarquinius*
This small orange butterfly is the only one in North America with carnivorous larvae. Instead of plants, its caterpillars prey on other insects, such as aphids. Look for it near water in wooded habitat.

Mourning cloak, *Nymphalis antiopa*
These are often the first butterflies spotted in the spring because they overwinter as adults instead of eggs or caterpillars, burrowing under the leaf litter and pumping their bodies full of natural antifreeze.

Karner blue, *Lycaeides melissa samuelis*
This federally endangered subspecies depends on the wild lupine flower, the only plant on which it lays its eggs. The world's largest population of Karner blues is found in Wisconsin.

Frosted elfin, *Callophrys irus*
This is a tiny beauty, reddish-brown in color with a delicate "frosted" area along the edges of its wings. Like the Karner blue, it relies on central Wisconsin's wild lupines.

Giant swallowtail, *Papilio cresphontes*
The largest butterfly found in Wisconsin is this black-and-yellow giant that wanders north into our state in summer, which has a wingspan exceeding five inches. Watch for it gliding through the woods in the southern half of the state.

Meet you at the fair!

DNR FILE

T-shirt printing is a big draw at the Natural Resources Park at the Wisconsin State Fair.

Kathryn A. Kahler

Planning a trip to the Wisconsin State Fair, which runs Aug. 1-11 in West Allis? Be sure to check out the DNR exhibit located across Main St. just south of the cream puff pavilion. If you go, you'll find a welcoming oasis of shade trees, trickling stream and benches to rest your weary feet — a fitting tribute to this year's "Wellness" theme.

If you have children in tow, check in at the front desk and your kids will receive the DNR park scavenger hunt. Help them find items in the DNR exhibit area such as an aquatic invasive crime scene, an insect that lives in water and a fish with a nose like a paddle. Along the quiet path that loops through the park you'll learn the difference between white and red oaks, white and red pines, and the benefits of all Wisconsin forest trees. At Smokey's Schoolhouse kids learn a lesson from Smokey on the differences between good fires and bad fires, how to build a safe campfire and the importance of giving matches or lighters to an adult. Remember, only you can prevent wildfires. See Smokey's video at dnrmedia.wi.gov/main/Play/cf372d2f196545389e4178e78cf654d3

Stop at the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) tent where youngsters age 7 and older get a hands-on introduction to target archery. The tent opens at 10 a.m. each day and goes until at least 6 p.m. The program is taught in schools from 4th grade to high school and includes opportunity for practice and competition at regional, state, national and world tournaments. Almost 500 Wisconsin schools currently participate at some level. All equipment is provided.

Visit with "Spritz the Water Drop" and learn all about saving water. DNR water experts will hand out faucet aerators, toilet leak detection tablets and other tools to help you be water wise in your home. While you are visiting, try out the high efficiency faucets and showerheads in our display. If you can't visit us at State Fair, visit our Fix a Leak webpage to learn how to check toilets for leaks — and fill out the survey to be entered to win a DNR related prize! Visit dnr.wi.gov and search "fix a leak."

Visit the Endangered Resources display to see live native animals in their natural settings, learn about beautiful natural areas that you can visit and identify ways you can get involved to save Wisconsin's rare species and habitats. Wisconsin's native plants, animals and landscapes are a big part of what makes our state great. Preserving our natural heritage for this and future generations is our mission. Bald eagles, trumpeter swans and osprey, once on the brink of extinction, now soar in our skies thanks to our work with help from citizens, organizations, business and government.

Wrap up your visit with a stop at the DNR activity tent where the kids can unleash their creativity by putting fish-to-paint-to-fabric at the T-shirt printing table staffed by Interfaith. It's a souvenir they'll take home and cherish for years to come. The exhibit is coordinated and staffed every year by retired senior volunteers.

For general information on the Wisconsin State Fair visit: wistatefair.com

DNR FILE

Kids of all ages can learn about Wisconsin forests from DNR forest experts.

DNR FILE

Spritz the Water Drop shares water saving tips.

ADAM SENATORI

- Stop and visit the *Wisconsin Natural Resources* magazine at the State Fair. Let your friends and family know that the first 1,000 visitors to purchase a new subscription or new gift subscription will receive a canvas tote bag.

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

Wisconsin, naturally

CLOVER VALLEY FEN STATE NATURAL AREA

Thomas A. Meyer

Notable: Ecologists recognize a very special type of wetland called a "calcareous fen," characterized by having peaty soils with an internal flow of water rich in calcium and magnesium bicarbonates. These wet and springy sites are dominated by sedges, rushes and grasses, along with a host of distinctive plant species adapted to the alkaline conditions. Clover Valley Fen State Natural Area in the Kettle Moraine region is one such place. The 66-acre preserve features a series of peat mounds that rise eight feet above the surrounding lowland, each formed by the accumulation of partially decayed vegetation around slowly flowing springs. Radiocarbon dating of these and similar mounds in the area indicate that mound formation began about 11,500 years ago, after the retreat of glacial ice. Centered on the site is a large, L-shaped mound with four distinctive high points. This mound has many characteristic fen plants including valerian, swamp lousewort, Kalm's lobelia and the state-threatened tufted bulrush. The fen is in its floral glory in late summer and early fall when the colorful grass-of-Parnassus, Riddell's goldenrod and lesser fringed gentian are in bloom. In the southeast corner of the site are three small, "volcano-like" mounds, each with a distinct flora. Sedge meadow surrounds the mounds, and a small, sand-bottomed tributary to Whitewater Creek bisects the tract.

How to get there: From the intersection of US Highway 12 and County Highway P east of Whitewater, go south on Highway P two miles, then west and south on Hi-Lo Road 1.4 miles to the west loop access road into the DNR's Whitewater Lake Campground. Park at the entrance to the campground, and then walk west along the road to campsite #760. Continue walking northwest 200 yards through the woods and pine plantation to the unmarked southeast corner of the natural area. Visit dnr.wi.gov and search "Clover Valley Fen" for a map and more information.