

INSIDE | 2018 WISCONSIN FISHING REPORT

WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES

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Spring 2018 \$3.50



We're celebrating!

50 years of DNR

25 years of NRF field trips

A message from *DNR Secretary Dan Meyer*



BEN PIERSON

Welcome to the Spring issue of *Wisconsin Natural Resources*. In addition to the magazine now publishing four times a year with the seasons, we'll be adding a Secretary's Update column in each edition.

It's been six months since I became secretary of the Department of Natural Resources, an honor for which I am grateful every day as I interact with the dedicated professionals throughout this agency. I've been impressed and inspired as I've met more and more members of our talented team, who demonstrate such commitment to the values, goals and mission of the DNR. The scope of the department's work is striking. From what I've seen so far, I can tell you our state's natural resources are in excellent hands.

A lot has been going on during the past six months. We had a successful deer hunting season but more importantly a safe one. Our Forestry divisional headquarters has completed the initial move to our Rhinelander office and we're now gearing up for another camping season at our state parks and forests.

I also have spent time in my new role traveling around the state and meeting with our customers, the people of Wisconsin, and with groups such as the Sporting Heritage Council, Conservation Congress and Wisconsin County Forests Association, as well as attending events such as the Governor's Small Business Summit and World Dairy Expo. We at the department have some great partners, including the citizens of Wisconsin, and we are committed to working together to protect our valuable resources.

This is a milestone year for the department as we celebrate 50 years of service. We will be acknowledging our historic beginnings throughout 2018, especially in our four editions of *Wisconsin Natural Resources* magazine beginning with this Spring issue. In addition, 2018 also happens to be the 50th anniversary of what is now the Natural Resources Board. The citizen-based NRB was established by the Legislature in 1968. Our agency is proud of that five-decade history and will be taking time during the year to celebrate the many accomplishments achieved.

We've come a long way in 50 years and we as an agency still have work to do in the next 50 and beyond. I look forward to working with staff and stakeholders statewide to ensure that Wisconsin's exceptional natural resources, so important to the heritage and culture of our great state, remain an outlet for recreation, outdoor pursuits, tourism and economic success — and a source of pride for generations to come.



Dear Readers,

At *Wisconsin Natural Resources* magazine, 2018 is a big year. For one, we are adjusting to our new publication schedule — Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. Look for the magazine in your mailbox around the change in seasons.

We've made an addition to the magazine on Page 2, adding a regular letter (above) from Department of Natural Resources Secretary Dan Meyer, who will check in with seasonal updates. The "Back in the day" feature moves to the inside back cover.

We've also adjusted our back-page feature to broaden its reach beyond State Natural Areas and include all state properties. In 20 years of writing about SNAs, program director Thomas Meyer notes: "We took readers to 120 wonderful places and along the way taught them a thing or two — I hope — about Wisconsin's rare flora, fauna and natural landscapes. ... It's been a pleasure." Now the feature, renamed "Outside in Wisconsin," will seek to

bestow the same love on state parks, forests and trails as well, while still spotlighting SNAs on a regular basis.

But perhaps the most fun note from the new year involves a celebration. Around here, we are kicking off a year-long commemoration of the DNR's 50th anniversary. As the DNR reflects on a half-century of history, our magazine will look for opportunities to share anniversary-related stories and photos with readers.

It starts in this issue with a bit of a history lesson explaining the official emergence of the DNR in 1968 and related excerpts from that year's Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin. We also have a "Back in the day" offering on walleye fishing from that same year — timely since the annual Fishing Report is included with this issue.

Another story with historic ties examines the legacy of Gordon Bubolz, a legislative leader in the 1940s and '50s who championed public lands, including High Cliff State Park. And our cover photo and back page highlight the historic Elroy-Sparta State Trail, which is itself just about 50 years old. Subsequent issues this year will focus on other aspects of the DNR at 50.

In addition to all that, this issue contains the magazine's regular spring feature detailing some of the many great field trips offered by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin. As it happens, the NRF also is marking an anniversary: 25 years of these wonderful hands-on outdoor experiences.

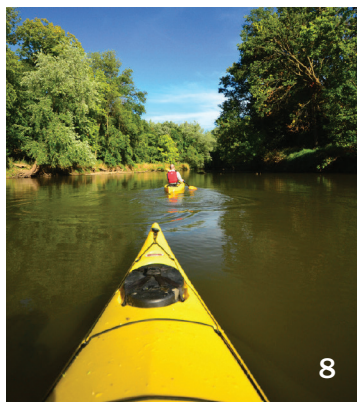
Thanks for coming along with us as we turn over a new leaf or two and celebrate some important milestones. And, as always, thanks for reading.

— WNR staff



RON SCHAEFER

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Elroy-Sparta State Trail

CENTER

2018 Wisconsin Fishing Report

FRONT COVER: Waiting out a surprise rainstorm is easier with a roof overhead, and these youngsters on the Elroy-Sparta State Trail don't seem to mind the delay as they duck inside one of the route's historic tunnels.

DNR FILES

BACK COVER: Known as the nation's first rail-to-trail project, the Elroy-Sparta State Trail dates back more than 50 years, slightly older than the Department of Natural Resources itself. In August 1967, longtime DNR photographer Dean Tvedt captured images of the trail for department promotional materials.

DEAN TVEDT/DNR FILES



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Printing Schumann Printers



PUBL-OC-018
ISSN-0736-2277

Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine (USPS #34625000) is published quarterly in Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The magazine is sustained through paid subscriptions. No tax money is used. Periodicals postage paid at Madison, WI. POSTMASTER and readers: subscription questions and address changes should be sent to Wisconsin Natural Resources, P.O. Box 37832, Boone, IA 50037-0832. Subscription rates are: \$8.97 for one year, \$15.97 for two years and \$21.97 for three years. Toll-free subscription inquiries will be answered at 1-800-678-9472.

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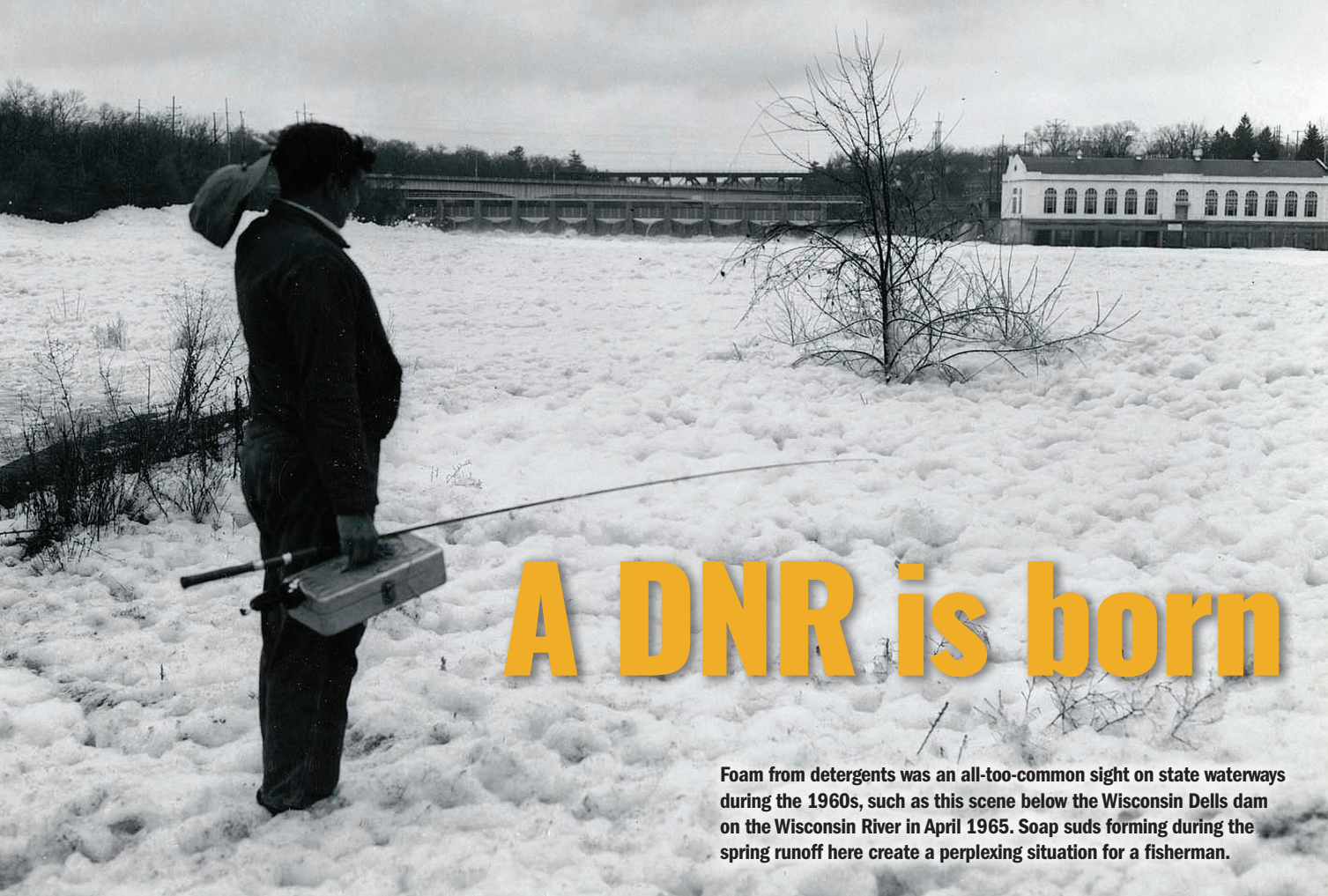
Contributions are welcome, but the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources assumes no responsibility for loss or damage to unsolicited manuscripts or illustrative material. Viewpoints of authors do not necessarily represent the opinion or policies of the State of Wisconsin, the Natural Resources Board or the Department of Natural Resources.

Printed in Wisconsin on recycled paper using soy-based inks in the interest of our readers and our philosophy to foster stronger recycling markets in Wisconsin.

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A DNR is born

Foam from detergents was an all-too-common sight on state waterways during the 1960s, such as this scene below the Wisconsin Dells dam on the Wisconsin River in April 1965. Soap suds forming during the spring runoff here create a perplexing situation for a fisherman.

DEAN TVEDT/DNR FILES

AGENCY EMERGED 50 YEARS AGO AFTER CONCERNS SPURRED ACTION, REORGANIZATION.

Andrea Zani

Not to oversimplify, but it might have been soap suds, of all things, that proved to be the biggest catalyst for environmental changes in the state during the 1960s — and what eventually led to the creation 50 years ago of the Department of Natural Resources.

To explain: Environmental concerns, especially regarding water quality, began bubbling up in Wisconsin in a big way in the early '60s, and nothing provided more of a visual example of the issues than, well, the bubbles themselves. Huge foamy piles of suds were not an uncommon sight on state streams and rivers, created by nondegradable detergents that at the time were released untreated into waterways.

A ban on “hard” detergents came in 1965, the first step in cleaning up the problem. That same year, with lakeside property owners’ support, Republican

legislator George Borg introduced a bill calling for one state agency to be responsible for maintaining clean water. A short time later, Gov. Warren Knowles, already known for his keen interest in protecting Wisconsin’s natural resources, called a special Conference on Water Resources Management.

The 600 experts, government officials and other leaders who took part in this bipartisan effort created the framework to guide the state’s approach not just to clean water, but to a variety of environmental issues moving forward. On many levels, the work went hand-in-



STABER W. REESE/DNR FILES

Warren Knowles was Republican governor of Wisconsin from 1965-71, a time of great progress in the state on issues of environmental concern and the era when the Department of Natural Resources was formed. An avid outdoorsman, Knowles — shown here on the South Branch Oconto River in 1966 — established the Governor’s Fishing Opener, which continues to celebrate the state’s fishing traditions.



hand with 1961's ORAP legislation — the Outdoor Recreation Act Program championed by then-Gov. Gaylord Nelson that generated conservation revenue with a penny-a-pack cigarette tax, most of which funded land acquisitions.

In 1966, a reimagined Department of Resource Development emerged to better complement the longstanding Wisconsin Conservation Department. A year later, Gov. Knowles signed the Water Pollution Control Act of 1967 and approved major funding for water cleanup efforts. More changes in the structure of state government also got underway that year following the formation of the Kellett Commission on Government Reorganization.

When dust from the Kellett Commission's work had settled and legislation it prompted was approved, the bottom line for environmental issues in the state was a merger of two agencies, the Conservation Department and Resource Development. Full of controversy at the time, the decision involved two steps.

Wisconsin's first Natural Resources Board included, seated from left: Russell G. Lynch, Wauwatosa, chairman; Herbert F. Behnke, Shawano, secretary; and Charles F. Smith, Wausau, vice-chairman. Standing from left: Gerard A. Rohlich, Madison; L.P. Voigt, DNR secretary; Arthur R. MacArthur, Janesville; Daniel K. Tyler, Phillips; and John M. Potter, Wisconsin Rapids.



DNR FILES

First was to combine members from the Wisconsin Conservation Commission and the Resource Development Board into a new seven-member entity known as the Natural Resources Board. This board would guide the work of a new agency formed by the merger of the Conservation Department and Resource Development.

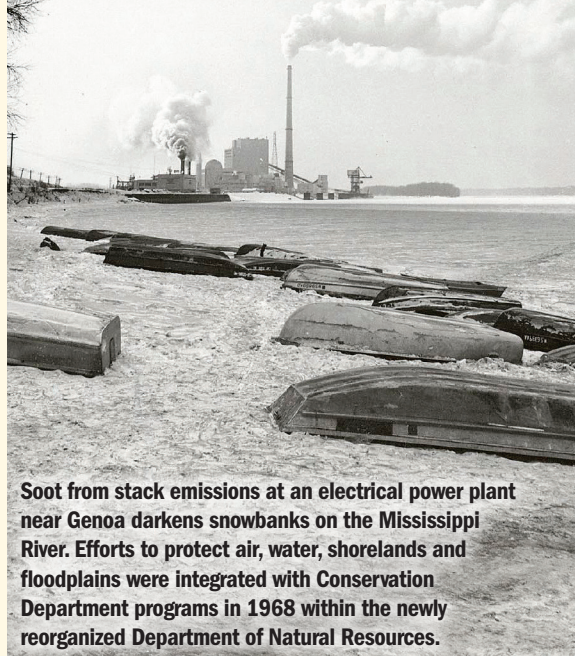
When the changes officially took place on July 1, 1968, the Department of Natural Resources was born.

What they said then

Fifty years ago, the Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin, precursor to this magazine, had plenty to say about the formation of the Natural Resources Board and DNR. The publication featured several pieces throughout the year addressing the changes brought on by the Kellett Commission as well as ORAP and the subsequent recommendations of an ORAP Task Force.

Understandably, it was a time of great excitement and anticipation, no doubt with plenty of trepidation thrown in the mix. How this new board and agency would function going forward was yet to be determined, though given the origins, methods and overall work ethic already in place, hopes were high.

As we look back now on a half-century of the NRB and DNR, it's worth revisiting some of what was written about the changes in real time. Let's head back to 1968 and the pages of the Conservation Bulletin, where we can check the pulse of the state Legislature's new creations with these excerpts.



Soot from stack emissions at an electrical power plant near Genoa darkens snowbanks on the Mississippi River. Efforts to protect air, water, shorelands and floodplains were integrated with Conservation Department programs in 1968 within the newly reorganized Department of Natural Resources.

STABER W. REESE/DNR FILES

Ready for the challenges ahead

Conservation Bulletin,
January-February 1968
By L.P. Voigt, DNR Secretary

By this time next year, I am sure we will be far along the "reorganization road" toward an efficient and effective Department of Natural Resources. While these are crucial times for conservation and management of natural resources as well as in other fields, I am hopeful for marked improvement through our new Board and Department and citizen interest and response.

When the U.S.A. passed the 200 million population mark the other day, it was a reminder of our new opportunities and people-related problems of the future. As land and water use pressures increase, so will intensity of the battle to preserve quality in our environment with open spaces, pollution control, conservancy zoning and better enforcement techniques.

At this moment, we face a severe challenge — but in the field of natural resource management that is nothing new. It has happened in the past and can be expected to happen even more often in the future.

Extensive powers and responsibilities delegated by the Legislature to the new Natural Resources Board make decisions of these seven members vitally important. They always must act with the future of all citizens at heart and without selfish motives or any direct control by private users of our natural resources. They must be accountable to the people at all times and welcome any public review of their actions.

Anyone who does anything constructive is subject to criticism by someone not favorable to the actions taken. Conservation of natural resources in Wisconsin is an action program — we have carried out many responsibilities assigned by the Legislature. Included among



DNR FILES

A 1938 photo of Conservation Department personnel at the Trout Lake Forestry Headquarters includes some of the “fiery young idealists” referred to in a 1968 Conservation Bulletin editorial. Notables are (standing, second from left) Ph.D. biologist Edward Schneberger; (third from left) forester F.G. Wilson; (fourth from left) C.L. Harrington, namesake of Harrington State Park; (fourth from right) Barney Devine, who became chief warden in 1954; (far right) Harley MacKenzie, then director of the Conservation Department and namesake of the MacKenzie Center; and (front row, left) Ernie Swift, who also went on to lead the department.

these is the controversial mandate we have had for acquisition of lands for state parks and outdoor recreation areas, fish and other wildlife habitat preservation, and for protection of scenic beauty, natural areas, wild rivers and water areas from pollution.

While we may have done our job too energetically or in some cases without sufficient public communications, yet the record will show both an honest effort and significant results. Reports by the several action bureaus will tell that story on several hundred project areas. Acquisition must be continued in the future to complete projects as the first step for all-important restoration and management work already well underway in many areas.

Reorganization efforts to coordinate and integrate the two major divisions of the new DNR — Conservation and Resource Development — are well underway. With an anticipated biennial budget of about \$60 million and almost 1,500 permanent personnel located throughout the state, this is an enormous undertaking.

Besides the former Conservation Department's program, it involves either expanded efforts in the fields of air and water pollution, shoreland and flood plain zoning, scenic beauty and scientific area concerns, comprehensive long-range natural resource protection and management planning, promotion of inter-agency cooperation on all levels of government, and enhanced enforcement duties with new powers through both legislation and administrative roles.

In 1867, Wisconsin's first Forestry Commission reported to the Legislature on the condition of our forests. In this significant year of our Conservation Centennial, the Governor's ORAP Task Force recommended doubling that effort with a highly desirable Outdoor Resources Action Plan.

The legislative act which will phase out our

nationally respected Conservation Commission and the Resource Development Board, formulating policies for the Division of Resource Development, will take effect on July 1, 1968. The new Natural Resources Board consisting of four of the former commissioners and three of the latter board members in staggered terms takes over completely on that date.

Conservation of natural resources always must be the pilgrimage goal for each of us and our firm determination to succeed will help decide mankind's future destiny.

Respected traditions continue

Conservation Bulletin,

July-August 1968

Editorial: The Command Changes

The Wisconsin Conservation Commission and the Resource Development Board went out of existence July 1. Replacing these policy-makers is the Natural Resources Board, which now guides the entire new Department of Natural Resources.

Changes in policy, if any, can be expected to be moderate, in the nature of evolution dictated by needs. Because all members of the Natural Resources Board are former members of the Conservation Commission and the Resource Development Board, they understand their responsibilities and the problems involved and they are interested in obtaining smooth continuity of accomplishment.

There will, however, be changes in organization. This is essential to eliminate duplication, effect coordination and otherwise promote maximum efficiency when formerly separate agencies are welded together.

The Natural Resources Board has its history largely ahead and it will be chronicled as it develops. At this moment, it is appropriate to pay respect to the phased-out Conservation Commission and Resource Development Board.

The six-man commission was established in 1927 to reform abuses that had shown up in Wisconsin conservation, that were prevalent in other states and that have continued to this day in some quarters.

Fiery young idealists of the 1920s who fought to set up the commission can rest easy. Their creation performed well. No other state conservation policy-making unit achieved more constructive progress or earned more respect than did the Wisconsin Conservation Commission in the past 41 years.

The Resource Development Board, much younger than the Conservation Commission, performed creditably during its relatively brief history and laid much groundwork for its successor to build on.

Ideals of 1927 are with us yet, for the new Natural Resources Board is designed on the same principles as the commission and board it succeeds. It is an unpaid citizen board, its members serving overlapping terms to assure that programs will evolve in an orderly and waste-free manner.

In effect, the Conservation Commission and Resource Development Board live on in their successor.

Reorganization is complete

Conservation Bulletin,

September-October 1968

Back page: The board decides (formerly called “The commission decides”)

On July 1, the Natural Resources Board took over responsibility for natural resources programs in accord with law. Also, merger of Conservation and Resource Development into the Department of Natural Resources was completed.

Planning to effect the necessary reorganization was underway for a year. Primarily responsible was the board's Reorganization Committee. Spadework to analyze needs, problems and possible solutions, and to come up with recommendations, was handled by an Intra-department Reorganization Committee appointed by Secretary L.P. Voigt.

The Natural Resources Board unanimously adopted a reorganization plan establishing six divisions. Eventually, there will be further reorganization affecting the field force, to implement the line-staff concept and to establish uniform districts.

These are the six divisions: Environmental Protection; Forestry and Recreation; Fish, Game and Enforcement; Tourism and Information; Services; Trust Lands and Investments. Two bureaus are operating under direct supervision of the department administrators rather than under divisions. They are Legal Services, and Planning and Aid Programs.

Responsibilities moving forward

Conservation Bulletin,
November-December 1968
By Thomas G. Frangos, Acting
Administrator, Division of
Environmental Protection

During the (1967) legislative session, the Kellett Bill, which reorganized all state agencies, became law. It merged the Conservation Department and the Department of Resource Development into a new Department of Natural Resources. In July 1968, Resource Development was redesignated the Division of Environmental Protection.

So much for history. What are this division's functions, and how does it operate? Briefly stated, its responsibilities include:

1. Maintaining safe domestic water supplies through supervision of public waterworks and private well drilling.
2. Controlling water pollution by requiring municipalities and industries to install approved waste treatment systems.
3. Protecting public rights and private property by flood control programs, dam inspections and investigations into applications for watercourse alterations before permits are issued.
4. Development of air quality standards and programs to protect against air contamination.
5. Control over proper disposal of garbage and trash through licensing of approved facilities.

As this brief summary indicates, the responsibilities of the division are still basically water-oriented. But air pollution and solid waste disposal programs are developing rapidly and will come in for increased attention soon.

The Legislature recognized that these forms of pollution are closely interrelated. An improperly located dump can cause pollution of surface or groundwater. Use of an incinerator may eliminate this problem but can cause pollution of the air. Water-spray filters can stop pollutants from going out the smokestack, but some means must then be found to remove these contaminants from the water.

Solution to any form of pollution must be weighed against their impact on the total environment. Thus the role of the division is, as its name states, to protect the environment — water, air and land. 60

Andrea Zani is an associate editor of Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine.



DEAN TVEDT/DNR FILES

In this 1969 photo, a UW-Madison laboratory technician tests a detergent sample for alkyl benzene sulfonate, known as a “hard” detergent for its resistance to biological degradation. ABS caused persistent foam in sewage treatment plants, streams and rivers.



JIM ESCALANTE/DNR FILES

The 1967 Kellett Bill that created the DNR recognized the interdependence of air, land and water. An improperly located dump, for example, could cause surface or groundwater pollution. Here, DNR environmental engineer Tim Krueger samples water at an industrial landfill in Menomonee Falls in 1979.



DEAN TVEDT/DNR FILES

Unregulated waste from a paper mill empties directly into the Wolf River near the Shawano dam in this 1959 photo. These and other growing environmental issues were a driving force in DNR's creation.



DEAN TVEDT/DNR FILES

Abandoned cars and illegal roadside dumps were a common sight in the 1960s. This 1968 photo was taken on U.S. Highway 12 near Lake Geneva.

25 years of ADVENTURE



With Department of Natural Resources professionals and other knowledgeable leaders at the helm, for the past quarter century we have visited all 72 counties of Wisconsin. We have hiked many thousands of miles through prairies, barrens, bogs and old-growth forests. We have seen and banded hundreds of warblers, owls, swans and other species, and have even tagged butterflies.

Whether it's hiking, paddling, biking or pontoon cruising, we hope you consider getting out on a field trip as we continue to reach new heights of learning and adventure together.

About the NRF

The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin is a nonprofit organization that provides sustainable funding for Wisconsin's most imperiled species and public lands, while helping citizens connect with our state's unique natural places. Since 1986, the NRF has:

- Contributed nearly \$7 million to public and private conservation efforts to protect the lands, waters and wildlife of Wisconsin;
- Developed an active membership of nearly 5,000 families dedicated to Wisconsin's natural heritage and conservation;
- Worked with private donors to create the Wisconsin Conservation Endowment, which currently includes nearly \$7 million in assets that permanently conserve lands, protect wildlife and promote conservation;
- Led thousands of participants on annual field trips throughout Wisconsin;
- Supported more than 620 grassroots conservation projects in every county of the state through grantmaking efforts.

In addition, the NRF has joined in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources to grow the Cherish Wisconsin Outdoors Fund to nearly \$500,000. This public endowment is dedicated to the care and management of public lands in Wisconsin and is funded through small donations made by hunters, anglers and campers when purchasing their annual licenses. Learn more or donate at CherishWisconsin.org.

Explore by kayak on trips 75, 98 and 130

SPANNING A QUARTER CENTURY, NATURAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION FIELD TRIPS HAVE SOARED TO NEW HEIGHTS.

Christine Tanzer

Launched with just three outings in 1993, the field trip program of the Natural Resources Foundation has soared to more than 200 trips a year. Over the last 25 years, nearly 50,000 attendees have joined the NRF on more than 2,600 field trips to learn hands-on and in-depth about Wisconsin's lands, waters and wildlife.

PATTY HENRY

Planning is easy as 1, 2, 3

1 Pick your field trips

Trips are color-coded to provide information about physical demands, from easy to extreme. Each trip has a registration fee listed; some are fundraisers to support conservation or have an additional fee for equipment rental.

2 Become a member of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin

Field trips are only open to members of the Natural Resources Foundation and their guests. Easily become a member online at WisConservation.org with a \$25 tax-deductible donation. Your membership donation supports conservation projects across the state. (Note: Receiving or subscribing to this magazine does not mean you are automatically a member of the NRF.) Trips fill quickly, so for the best trip selection become a member before registration opens.

3 Register for your trips at WisConservation.org starting at noon, March 28

Click on the "Register for Field Trips" link. The NRF does not accept phone or email registrations.


Approximately two weeks before each of your trips, you will receive an email with details and driving directions. Then it's time to get outdoors and get to know Wisconsin!

2018 FIELD TRIPS

Get ready!
Registration opens
March 28
WisConservation.org

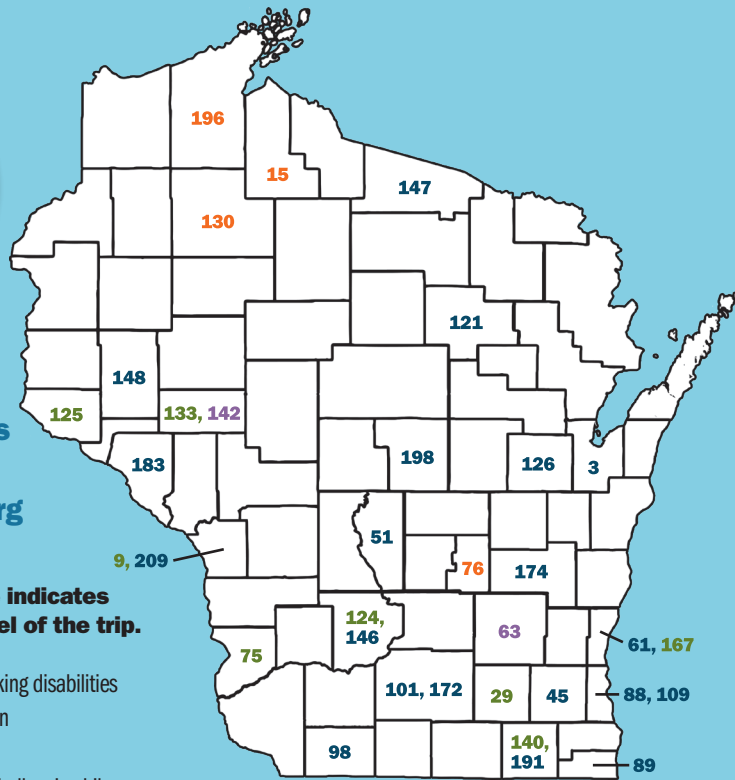
The color of the trip title indicates the physical demand level of the trip.

- 1 Accessible to people with walking disabilities
- 2 Easy, short hike on level terrain
- 3 Average hike with some hills
- 4 Steeper terrain, long hike or challenging hike

Child-friendly trips are identified with this symbol:  Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Questions?

Visit the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin's website at WisConservation.org, call toll-free 866-264-4096 or email FieldTrips@WisConservation.org.



Only a selection of trips is included here, with numbers that correspond to the full list. There are more than 150 additional field trips in the lineup that span the entire state. View all trips and register online at WisConservation.org.

CHECK OUT THESE FIELD TRIP HIGHLIGHTS AND FIND MORE ONLINE



3. MAKING MAPLE SYRUP

Learn all aspects of making maple syrup, from tree to bottle, including how to tap trees and cook sap into syrup. Enjoy a hayride through the sugarbush woods to view gravity flow and bucket collecting. Sample syrup, too! Ages 5+ Saturday, April 14, 10 a.m.-noon De Pere, Brown County
Leaders: Theresa Baroun, Jon Baroun and Don Van Deurzen
Limit: 30 / \$15 adult, \$5 child



9. FROGS AND TOADS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Start in the classroom learning to identify all 12 Wisconsin frog and toad species by sight and call. Then venture on a dusk hike through the La Crosse River Marsh to practice your new ID skills. See how easy it is to become a citizen scientist for the Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey. Ages 10+ Friday, April 27, 7-9 p.m. La Crosse, La Crosse County
Leader: Andrew Badje
Limit: 40 / \$15 adult, \$5 child

15. SPRUCE GROUSE IN THE BOREAL FOREST

Spruce grouse and boreal forests are rarities in Wisconsin, and this trip has both! Hike off-trail through balsam firs in a mossy boreal forest for intimate views of the secretive and threatened spruce grouse in resplendent courtship display. Fundraiser for the Bird Protection Fund. Friday, May 4, 6-10:30 a.m. Clam Lake, Ashland County
Leader: Ryan Brady
Limit: 20 / \$75 per person

29. BIRDS, PRAIRIES AND PARTNERSHIPS: PRIVATE CONSERVATION IN ACTION

See yellow-headed blackbirds, various waterfowl species and more at this eBird hot-spot on 331 acres along the Bark River. Discover prairie restoration efforts and partnerships with universities in small mammal research, drone-based mapping, fen restoration and geofencing. Saturday, May 12, 9 a.m.-noon Cold Spring, Jefferson County

Leaders: David Adam and Michael Adam
Limit: 25 / \$15 per person



45. LITTLE TYKE HIKE ON THE ICE AGE TRAIL

Explore the Ice Age National Scenic Trail on a slower-paced, family-friendly hike focused on exploration, discovery, service learning and natural play. Enjoy time along the Bark River and have fun pulling garlic mustard, too. Best for ages 4-8. Saturday, May 19, 10 a.m.-noon Hartland, Waukesha County
Leader: Peter Dargatz
Limit: 25 / \$15 adult, \$5 child


51. KIRTLAND'S WARBLERS UP CLOSE

Explore the carefully protected pine barrens to learn about the Kirtland's warbler life history and management initiatives — and with a bit of luck, see or hear this elusive and rare bird. Also look for barrens wildflowers, reptiles and other birds such as the clay-colored sparrow. Fundraiser to support

Kirtland's warbler conservation.
 Wednesday, May 23, 6:45-10 a.m.
 Rome, Adams County
 Leaders: Kim Grveles, Sarah Warner,
 Barry Benson, Davin Lopez, Amy and
 Rich Staffen
 Limit: 36 / \$45 per person

61. FISH PASSAGE ALONG THE MILWAUKEE RIVER

Years of hard work have reconnected more than 130 miles of rivers and streams in the Milwaukee River Watershed, allowing native fish access to high-quality spawning habitat. Discover this important project on a historic river as we visit dam removals, habitat restoration projects and a fish passage with an underwater camera. Ages 10+
 Friday, June 1, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
 Thiensville, Ozaukee County
 Leaders: Matt Aho, Andrew Struck and Kristina Kroening
 Limit: 20 / \$15 adult, \$5 child

 **63. HORICON: PONTOON AND HIKE**
 Birds and wildlife abound on this enjoyable naturalist-guided pontoon tour of the famed Horicon Marsh, home to more than 300 bird species. Venture on a boardwalk hike to enjoy more birding and a different perspective of the marsh. Ages 10+
 Two session options on Saturday, June 2, both 7:30 a.m.-noon.: **63-A**, pontoon then hike; or **63-B**, hike then pontoon.
 Horicon, Dodge County
 Leaders: Elizabeth Herzmann, Jeff Bahls,

Marc and Gayl Zuelsdorf
 Limit: 40 / \$34 adult, \$24 child

75. PADDLE THE "BIG MUDDY": MISSISSIPPI RIVER BACKWATERS

Enjoy a paddling journey through the scenic backwaters of the Mississippi River with two DNR biologists in the lead. Compile a bird list, search for mammals and learn about river habitat. Must bring your own canoe/kayak. Ages 10+
 Friday, June 8, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
 De Soto, Crawford County
 Leaders: Brenda and Scott Kelly
 Limit: 25 / \$15 adult, \$5 child

76. BIKING FOR BIRDS IN WHITE RIVER WILDLIFE AREA

Like biking and birding? Combine the two for double the fun! Pedal 13 miles through the White River Marsh on a Rustic Road that crosses lowland forest, shrub-carr, sedge meadow and cattail marsh. Enjoy many stops to spy bitterns, rails, cuckoos, flycatchers, wrens, and sandhill and whooping cranes. Fund-raiser for the Bird Protection Fund.
 Saturday, June 9, 5 a.m.-noon
 Berlin, Green Lake County
 Leaders: Thomas and Wendy Schultz
 Limit: 12 / \$35 per person

88. KINNICKINNIC RIVER CORRIDOR: MANAGING STORMWATER AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Green infrastructure such as rain barrels, rain gardens, bioswales and green alleys are used to manage stormwater

and reduce the risk of flooding. Enjoy a walking tour along the Kinnickinnic River highlighting green infrastructure and ongoing revitalization efforts in the heart of Milwaukee's South Side neighborhood.
 Friday, June 15, 2-4 p.m.
 Milwaukee, Milwaukee County
 Leaders: Amanda Milford and Kelly Moore Brands
 Limit: 25 / \$15 per person

89. DISCOVER WISCONSIN TURTLES

How much do you know about this ancient group of reptiles? Search Bong Recreation Area by foot and car to find turtles and learn about their ecology, ID and conservation. Ages 7+
 Saturday, June 16, 10 a.m.-noon
 Brighton, Kenosha County
 Leader: Beth Goeppinger
 Limit: 30 / \$15 adult, \$5 child

98. PECATONICA RIVER PADDLE: IN SEARCH OF AQUATIC INVASIVES

Enjoy a lovely paddle down the scenic Pecatonica River. Learn to ID and record aquatic invasive plants on a trip that will help inform future management plans of this beloved river. Bring your own canoe/kayak or rent a canoe onsite.
 Saturday, June 23, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
 Calamine, Lafayette County
 Leaders: Matt Krueger and Jeff Jackson
 Limit: 30 / \$20 per person

101. WONDROUS WORMS, AMAZING ARTHROPODS, FASCINATING FLORA

How versed are you in the creepy and crawly of Wisconsin forests? Venture into the depths of the UW Arboretum to search for interesting bugs, wiggly worms and problematic plants, while learning how they affect our forests. Fun for kids! Ages 4+
 Saturday, June 23, 9:30 a.m.-noon
 Madison, Dane County
 Leaders: Michael Hillstrom and Bernie Williams
 Limit: 30 / \$15 adult, \$5 child

109. LAKESHORE STATE PARK: URBAN OASIS

Lakeshore is one of the newest and most urban of Wisconsin's State Parks. Located on a Lake Michigan peninsula in downtown Milwaukee, it sports spectacular views of both the city and lake. Hike short-grass prairies to learn about ecology and marvel at the surprising diversity of wildlife, plants and birds.



Family-friendly canoeing can be found on trip 75.

PATRICK SHEAHAN



Trips 121 and 191 feature an up-close look at raptor rehabilitation and education.

Friday, July 6, 10 a.m.-noon
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County
Leader: Tom Kroeger
Limit: 25 / \$15 per person

121. TOUR THE RAPTOR EDUCATION GROUP INC.

View spectacular birds up-close during a behind-the-scenes look at Raptor Education Group Inc., one of Wisconsin's most important bird rehabilitation and research facilities specializing in bald eagles and other raptors. Ages 8+
Two session options on Friday, July 13: **121-A**, 9-11 a.m.; or **121-B**, 1-3 p.m.
Antigo, Langlade County
Leaders: Marge Gibson and Elise Schuler
Limit: 20 / \$20 adult, \$10 child

124. NORTH AMERICAN MODEL OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Hike and discover the natural history of the scenic Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area. Discuss how wildlife conservation is managed and funded, and learn about the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.
Saturday, July 14, 9-11:30 a.m.
Baraboo, Sauk County
Leader: Marty Moses
Limit: 25 / \$15 per person

125. TROUT STREAM HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

Trout streams in the northern Driftless

Area are receiving extensive habitat improvements thanks to volunteers and groups partnering together. Join scientists to visit several restored streams and discover the insect life, wild trout, and native plants, birds and animals now thriving in this scenic landscape.
Ages 8+
Saturday, July 14, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
River Falls, Pierce County
Leader: Perry Palin
Limit: 25 / \$25 adult, \$15 child

126. MONARCHS AND MILKWEED: AN ESSENTIAL RELATIONSHIP

Venture to Mosquito Hill for a hands-on program to learn proper handling, feeding and sanitizing techniques to raise healthy monarch butterflies. Hike into grasslands to document monarchs and milkweed for a citizen science project.
Ages 6+
Saturday, July 14, noon-3:30 p.m.
New London, Outagamie County
Leader: Jessica Miller
Limit: 30 / \$17 adult, \$7 child

130. CHIPPEWA RIVER PADDLE TOUR

Paddle 11 miles of the scenic Chippewa River as it curves and winds from Moose Lake to the Chippewa Flowage. Hear stories of the history and geology from a local historian and learn about river ecology, with a seine net demonstration, from a fisheries biologist. Intermediate level paddle due to length.

Must bring your own canoe/kayak.
Saturday, July 21, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
Hayward, Sawyer County
Leaders: Kelly Nechuta, Tom Heinrich and Frank Pratt
Limit: 26 / \$40 per person

133. MODERN LANDFILLS: CREATING RENEWABLE POWER AND COMPOST

Learn how an innovative landfill is constructed and operated, and how the gas collected can be used to create renewable power. This facility also leads the way in commercial food waste collection, turning it into rich compost.
Ages 10+
Saturday, July 21, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County
Leader: Mark Vinall
Limit: 15 / \$15 adult, \$5 child

140. UW-WHITEWATER: SUSTAINABILITY GARDENS, PRAIRIE AND STREAM MONITORING

From a campus garden that grows food for the local food pantry, to stream monitoring, to a 100-acre nature preserve of woodlands and restored prairie, learn how UW-Whitewater keeps an eye toward sustainability while engaging the campus and community in maintaining local ecosystems.
Two session options, both times 9 a.m.-noon: **140-A**, Saturday, July 28; or **140-B**, Saturday, Sept. 22.
Whitewater, Walworth County
Leader: Wesley Enterline
Limit: 15 / \$15 per person

142. NATIVE BUTTERFLIES UP CLOSE

See more than a dozen of Wisconsin's native butterfly species in the Beaver Creek butterfly house and caterpillar rearing lab. Learn about butterfly life cycles, migration, ecology and the garden plants that attract them. Ages 8+
Saturday, July 28, 9:30 a.m.-noon
Fall Creek, Eau Claire County
Leader: Jim Schwiebert
Limit: 20 / \$23 adult, \$13 child



Monarchs and other butterflies take center stage on trips 126 and 142.

ART WALASZEK

SCOTT MAURER



CHRISTINE TANZER

Tour Dane County's historic Cave of the Mounds on trip 172.

146. EXPLORING NORTH AMERICA'S WILD WATERFOWL

Enjoy a tour of the Flyways Waterfowl Experience birding museum, where you'll see world-class dioramas, waterfowl art, a show in the Duck Blind Theater and U.S. conservation history displays. Then visit the Fairfield Marsh Waterfowl Production Area to birdwatch and learn more about current habitat management efforts. Ages 6+
Friday, Aug. 3, 9-11:30 a.m.
Baraboo, Sauk County
Leaders: Bruce Luebke, Nichol and Craig Swenson
Limit: 20 / \$20 adult, \$10 child

147. BAT ECOLOGY AT NORTH LAKELAND DISCOVERY CENTER

Learn about Wisconsin's bat populations, including their ecological benefits, current threats and ways you can help them thrive. Then search for bats in the night sky using two types of acoustic monitoring equipment.
Friday, Aug. 3, 8:30-10 p.m.
Manitowish Waters, Vilas County
Leader: Licia Johnson
Limit: 10 / \$15 per person

148. TREASURES OF THE CHIPPEWA RIVER: NATIVE MUSSELS

Wade in the cool waters of the Chippewa River to search for one of our state's most diverse yet hidden treasures: freshwater mussels (clams). Learn about our 52 native species, their fascinating

life cycle and contributions to the history of Wisconsin. Great fun for kids and adults! Ages 5+
Saturday, Aug. 4, 9 a.m.-noon
Meridian, Dunn County
Leaders: Lisie Kitchel and Jesse Weinzinger
Limit: 25 / \$15 adult, \$5 child

167. LAKE STURGEON REINTRODUCTION PROJECT

Lake sturgeon can live for more than 50 years and grow to 9 feet long! Once common in the Great Lakes, they were absent from the Milwaukee River for more than a century — until recently. Learn about sturgeon biology, tour a rearing facility and get hands-on to explore the river from the standpoint of this ancient fish. Ages 8+
Two session options Saturday, Aug. 25:
167-A, 9 a.m.-noon; or **167-B**, 1-4 p.m.
Newburg, Ozaukee County
Leader: Mary Holleback
Limit: 20 / \$20 adult, \$10 child

172. CAVE OF THE MOUNDS: TOUR AND HABITAT RESTORATION

Tour the Cave of the Mounds and marvel at this amazing underground gem. Also enjoy a hike through restored prairie and woodlands to learn about land management practices and the history of the property. Ages 10+
Saturday, Sept. 8, 9-11:30 a.m.
Blue Mounds, Dane County
Leader: Kim Anderson
Limit: 50 / \$27 adult, \$14 child

174. SMALL PRAIRIE RESTORATION, THE EASY WAY

Join a landowner to learn how you, too, can start and maintain a small prairie. Hike the 7-acre upland and lowland prairie to see 90 native plant species. Learn how to attract kestrels, monarch butterflies, mason bees, snakes and frogs to your property.
Saturday, Sept. 8, 10 a.m.-noon
Waupun, Fond du Lac County
Leaders: Darrel, Jerry and Ruthann Gunderson
Limit: 30 / \$15 per person

183. TRAIN RIDE AND BLUFF PRAIRIE HIKE: TIFFANY WILDLIFE AREA

A full day of fun! Enjoy a morning walk in the Five-Mile Bluff Prairie State Natural Area for amazing views of the Chippewa and Mississippi rivers as we learn about glacial geology, goat prairie management and timber rattlesnakes. Then it's off to the tracks for an open-air train ride into the remote areas of the Tiffany Wildlife Area, stopping for short hikes into prairies, savannas and flood plain forests. Fundraiser for Lower Chippewa River conservation.
Saturday, Sept. 15, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Durand, Buffalo County
Leaders: Mark Rasmussen and Dean Edlin
Limit: 64 / \$48 per person



191. TOUR HOO'S WOODS RAPTOR CENTER

Go behind the scenes at Hoo's Woods. Learn about raptor rehabilitation and see birds such as a golden eagle, snowy owl, peregrine falcon and other species. Weather permitting, witness a flight demonstration, too! Ages 4+
Two session options, both times
10 a.m.-noon: **191-A**, Saturday, Sept. 22; or **191-B**, Saturday, Oct. 6.
Whitewater, Walworth County
Leader: Dianne Moller
Limit: 40 / \$25 adult, \$13 child

196. MOTHER NATURE'S FOREST MANAGEMENT: PORCUPINE LAKE

Unlike most Wisconsin forests, the Porcupine Lake Wilderness Area has been untouched by human influence since 1984. Hike 4 miles down the scenic North Country Trail to learn about forest ecology and see the benefits of Mother Nature's management techniques.
Saturday, Sept. 29, 10 a.m.-noon
Cable, Bayfield County
Leader: Ron Weber
Limit: 15 / \$15 per person



198. SAW-WHET AND LONG-EARED OWL BANDING

Have your own close encounter with Wisconsin's smallest owl! Experience how the experts mist-net and band these birds at Linwood Springs Research Station, which bands up to 700 migrating owls annually, with a chance to see long-eared owls, too. Ages 7+
Six session options, all 7:30-10 p.m.:
198-A, Friday, Oct. 5;
198-B, Friday, Oct. 12;
198-C, Wednesday, Oct. 17;
198-D, Friday, Oct. 19;
198-E, Saturday, Oct. 20;
198-F, Saturday, Oct. 27.
Stevens Point, Portage County
Leaders: Gene and Lorraine Jacobs
Limit: 40 / \$35 adult, \$25 child



209. WATERFOWL ID: MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Get to know the ducks, geese and swans of the Mississippi River flyway. Learn ID tips indoors, then venture outside to hone your skills during the peak of waterfowl migration. Ages 12+
Saturday, Oct. 27, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
La Crosse, La Crosse County
Leaders: Brenda and Scott Kelly
Limit: 30 / \$15 adult, \$5 child



LOIS BALLARD

See saw-whet owl banding on trip 198. Multiple sessions are offered for this popular outing.



DIANNE MOLLER

Visit Hoo's Woods Raptor Center in Walworth County on trip 191, with a flight demonstration if weather permits. Find 150 more field trips and register online starting March 28 at WisConservation.org.



Wander these *little wild spaces*

Menomonee Park

COME ALONG AND SEE SOME OF MILWAUKEE AREA'S
MANY FIELDS OF GREEN.

Story and photos by Ron Schaefer

Look around you, those of you who are city dwellers, and see where urban civilization fades away and the primitive landscape creeps in — and I don't mean the weeds that spring up in your flower pots or squeeze between the gaps in your sidewalk.

We who have grown up amid asphalt and concrete, manicured lawns and rows of street lamps too often forget there once was a wilderness here upon which we've imposed ourselves. So it does some good for our memories and our souls to recall where we came from and just who is in charge of things.

You don't need to go far to reach into the wild, nor wait for a tornado to blow through to realize nature is still the driving force on Earth and not us.

Look around, urbanites, and you might find wilderness right inside your own municipal limits, allowed to remain there by thoughtful predecessors.

That's what I did. Years ago, I made a documentary film about the wild spaces in Wisconsin through the four seasons. I included my hometown of Milwaukee and was surprised to find just how many undeveloped places there were. In the daily routine of work, family activities, errands and

other time commitments, one can forget such spots exist.

Recently, I decided to revisit such spaces in Milwaukee and the surrounding area and found there were even more than I remembered when doing the film. Some places remain untouched as nature reserves; others have been incorporated into city parks. Still others are reclaimed lots originally set aside as farmland, federal institution or factory backlot.

Begin in the middle

Starting at approximately the city's geographic center, the first place we come to is the Menomonee River Valley, once the home of dozens of factories, some of which remain. Miller Park baseball stadium is here, and Three Bridges Park.

The two spots are linked by the Hank Aaron State Trail, largely a renovated railroad line with bridges that span the Menomonee River, which merges with the Milwaukee River before emptying into the city's harbor. Thoughtful work has made this route mostly green. Also along the trail is Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory, the county-run site often known as The Domes.

Just north in the central city is Hawthorn Glen, an aside that industrialization somehow missed. To the south, Honey Creek Parkway wanders through Wauwatosa's old town and works to attach itself to the bigger downtown tributaries, notably the Kinnickinnic. This third main waterway heading to the harbor includes a green stretch of Kinnickinnic River Parkway, with the 113-acre Jackson Park and lagoon.



Traveling southeast adjacent to General Mitchell Airport, visitors will find the Cudahy Nature Preserve, and not far from that is Falk Park. Both are essentially forests that seem to be cut into the landscape near freeways and airport runways, and both are basically accessed by footpaths. Falk has a bike path through its southern extension.

East to the shore of Lake Michigan is the 381-acre Grant Park, which includes an 18-hole golf course along with picnic area, tennis courts and soccer fields on the north end. But keep going south and you are into deep forest where it couples with Oak Creek Parkway.

Farther south also on the lakeshore is Bender Park, which like Grant Park caters to tourists with boat launches, beaches and fishing piers. But the greater amount of the 303-acre landscape is a mix of wetlands, forest and prairie with only trails available for access. The south tip is accessed by a side street whose eastern end is closed to traffic, allowing the forest and prairie to eat right through the asphalt, reclaiming what was once a service road.



Public garden and preserves

Head west and the Root River Parkway seems to follow you everywhere as it snakes down from its origins near West Allis. Sections may be set aside for picnics and play areas, but most of this is untouched shore.

Whitnall Park in Hales Corners is a 660-acre mix of city park, golf course and the Boerner Botanical Gardens. It also contains the Wehr Nature Center, which is just about every area grade-school child's first field trip destination. Set up as both a reserve and education center, Wehr combines forest, prairie and lake in one setting.

Further west and into Waukesha County is Muskego, a city still largely green because of its two large lakes: the Big Muskego and Little Muskego. Big Muskego Lake is, well, bigger — 2,194 acres, but with a maximum depth of 23 feet it is shallower than Little Muskego Lake, a 470-acre body of water that measures as deep as 65 feet. Each has a park that in summer fills with tourists attracted to the beaches, along with public boat landings.

Immediately north in New Berlin is Stigler Nature Preserve. This is a space easily missed because it is accessed via a short driveway off a side street. Only foot traffic is allowed from its tiny parking lot.

Still north and west are the adjoining Fox Brook and Mitchell parks in Brookfield. The Fox River runs through the eastern side of this combo, while Fox Brook Lake — with a swimming area, park, hiking trails and 178 acres of wetlands with wildlife viewing areas — is to the west.



Hartung Park



Estabrook Park

Rivers run through it

Having gotten to the village of Menomonee Falls, one finds the undeveloped Tamarack Preserve, very little of which can be accessed in this marsh-based forest. Immediately west is the town of Lannon with its popular Menomonee Park. This former quarry is now a public beach but large sections are being reclaimed by nature.

Back to Menomonee Falls, take up again with the Menomonee River as it winds through town. Visitors will find a park with picnic areas and a multipurpose trail along the way.

From here, the Menomonee runs southeast back into Milwaukee County, with plenty of green space all around. The branch Little Menomonee River is here, too, boasting the Little Menomonee River Parkway — 868 acres of wooded park land and a segment of the county's 100-plus-mile Oak Leaf Trail.

Nearby is Hartung Park, which not long ago was still a quarry. The neighborhood wanted it renovated, and now the outskirts are a children's play area, but its

interior is reclaimed prairie, with some of the best views of prairie in the city.

Farther down the Menomonee River toward Wauwatosa is County Grounds Park, which like Hartung is reclaimed prairie amid an area of freeway near County Medical Center.

A plethora of parks

Moving east back into the city, we find Havenwoods State Forest, former U.S. Army Reserve property now in the hands of the DNR. It is, as the name implies, a haven for nature inside the Milwaukee city limits.

East of Havenwoods, another green stripe runs along the Milwaukee River, with a series of parks including Kletzsch, Lincoln, Estabrook, Kern, Pleasant Valley and Gordon, almost in one long string. On the south end of this stretch we reach Riverside Park, where we find the Urban Ecology Center and the Rotary Centennial Arboretum.

People still canoe and fish along this whole route, now that the river has been through a major cleanup. Much river-

front along the way has been left wild.

Back to the Lake Michigan shore north of downtown is the Shorewood Nature Preserve, a favorite of bird watchers. Heading north, other lakeside parks — big and small — include Atwater, Buckley, Big Bay, Silver Spring and Klode.

Finally, at the county's northern edge, is Doctors Park and the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center in Fox Point. The 185-acre site is a partner of the National Audubon Society and features numerous programs for children and adult visitors.

All in all, it might be surprising to learn just how green the city of Milwaukee and its surroundings actually are. The areas noted here and many others make up thousands of acres in what might be thought of as strictly urban landscape. Keep that in mind the next time you want to plan an outdoor getaway — and look for all those little wild spaces near you. 🌿

Ron Schaefer is an author, producer, stage and film director. He is the founder of Solar Wind Media Group based in Milwaukee.

>>> TELL US YOUR FAVORITE

Readers, what are your best-loved little wild spaces? In cities and towns around the state, there are swatches of green set aside for enjoyment — whether it's a city park, nature preserve, botanical garden or simply an off-the-beaten-path pathway. We're looking for details on outdoor spots where the busy hum of urban life can be tuned out, if only for a while.

Send your suggestions for our list of little wild spaces — and a photo, if you can — to: Readers Write, WNR magazine, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707, or email dnrmagazine@wisconsin.gov.



Hatching success at State Game Farm

Pheasant chicks newly hatched at the State Game Farm need about 8 to 12 hours to dry before they are counted, sorted by sex and moved to rearing facilities.

KELLY MAGUIRE

UPGRADES MODERNIZE THE DNR'S PHEASANT-REARING FACILITY.

Nolan Stracke

Pheasants have been hatching at the State Game Farm for more than 80 years, but it will only be in the coming production season that the process won't be a completely arduous and time-consuming affair. That's thanks to a new hatchery building and equipment finally ready at the facility in Poynette — bringing the Department of Natural Resources' pheasant-rearing operation into the 21st century.



A new hatchery building houses upgraded equipment at the State Game Farm in Poynette.



A pipped egg indicates the start of the hatching process by a pheasant chick, which takes about 24 hours to rotate and chip its shell in order to break out completely.

KELLY MAGUIRE PHOTOS

The new 5,000-square-foot hatchery and modern equipment, including automated egg washers and upgraded incubators, are part of a \$1.7 million project to improve the State Game Farm's efficiency, streamlining the pheasant production process while also ensuring better biosecurity. It brings the facility, first opened in Poynette in 1934, in line with current poultry industry standards for energy use, pheasant disease risk mitigation and accessibility requirements.

It also will make daily operations a little bit easier at the busy site, which hatches about 250,000 pheasant chicks each year to stock public and private lands for hunting and birding.

The labor-intensive task of egg washing, for example, which used to take a staff member eight hours or more per day for 5,300 eggs, will now be done in half the time. And placing the eggs in incubators will go from a two-person all-day job to about a three-hour process, said Kelly Maguire, supervisor of the State Game Farm.

"With the equipment in the new hatchery, the egg washer should cut disinfecting time in half while the number of eggs trayed in an incubator over a two-day period will now only take three hours," Maguire said. "Equipment is up to industry standards. Cleaning is a breeze now."

Perhaps even more importantly, Maguire said, there will be far fewer breakdowns with the new equipment — something that had plagued the outdated and difficult-to-repair old incubators, which had been in use since the 1950s.

"No more late-night checks on machines because the part needed to fix it correctly isn't made anymore," Maguire said.



During a test run of new equipment last year, workers at the State Game Farm move newly hatched pheasant chicks from hatching baskets to transfer crates to recover and await the move to rearing facilities.



These pheasant eggs have been removed from incubators and are awaiting transfer to hatching baskets.

While improved production was not a primary goal of the new hatchery, it will nonetheless be an outgrowth of the new and improved equipment. Already, hunters have seen a benefit in the form of a bonus brood of pheasants produced during a test run of the new hatchery last year. That resulted in the stocking of about 1,500 pheasants before the holidays in December.

"At the time of the initial test, we began to realize the full potential of the hatchery," Maguire said. "The incubation and successful hatching of eggs is both an art and a science."

When it became known that extra pheasants would be available in the winter, the DNR saw an opportunity to get hunters out of the house and into the field before the deep freezes of January — Christmas pheasants for hunters. For many on holiday vacation, it was an opportunity that wasn't to be missed.

"I received many positive comments from hunters who were thankful for the extra stocking before the holidays," DNR upland game ecologist Mark Witecha said. "Initial reports indicate hunters were out in full force and made the most of this one-time hunting opportunity."

Improved opportunities

Each year, the DNR stocks about 75,000 pheasants, while partner groups add another 23,000 of these birds to the landscape. Initially, pheasants were stocked to increase the wild pheasant population for the purposes of hunting. But modern research has proven that, over time, stocked pheasants do not have the means to contribute to boosting a wild pheasant population, so current stocking efforts aim at providing quality hunting and

birding opportunities on public lands rather than increasing populations.

Pheasants are stocked on wildlife areas weekly throughout the fall. Some properties also are stocked in the month of December.

The State Game Farm is a key player in the stocking process. About 280,000 eggs are incubated each year, and weekly hatches go for three months, from early April through the beginning of July. At the end of the hatching season, about 250,000 chicks will be hatched.

Many of the pheasant chicks stay at the Game Farm. About 72,000 chicks are raised in two early-1980s brood-rearing barns until they are 6 weeks old. At that time, they are transferred from the indoor rearing facilities to the outdoor range fields until they are stocked onto public lands in the fall.

Other chicks from the State Game Farm go to conservation clubs as part of the Day-Old Chick program, dating to 1936, which partners with clubs throughout the state to rear day-old rooster pheasant chicks for release in the fall. A number of hen chicks also are made available for purchase by the general public.

"The modern role for the State Game Farm is a put-and-take system," Maguire said. "The State Game Farm's goal is to produce quality pheasants to be released for the enjoyment of both pheasant hunters and birders. Several projects are utilized to achieve this goal: Day-Old Chick clubs and pheasant stocking."

Maguire said the Day-Old Chick program stocks approximately 25,000 pheasants each fall on public wildlife areas and some private lands opened to pheasant hunters. The primary stocking program has 83,000 pheasant chicks hatched and

reared at the State Game Farm each year. About 7,000 hens and 700 roosters are chosen for the next season's breeding stock while the remaining pheasants are stocked on 92 state wildlife areas.

Favorite pastime for decades

The DNR's pheasant-stocking program has evolved to support continuing demand for quality hunting experiences in the state. Pheasant hunting in Wisconsin has been a favorite among both experienced and novice hunters for almost 100 years, and for good reasons.

"Pheasant hunting is a favorite pastime for many Wisconsin hunters," Witecha said. "It's an exciting activity — you get to be up and moving, and nothing gets the adrenaline pumping like having a bird flush at your feet."

"Pheasant hunting is very easy to get into, as it requires minimal investment. All one really needs is a shotgun and shells. It can be done alone or as a group activity with friends and family. And for many hunters, myself included, it is an extremely fun and rewarding experience to pursue game with your hunting dog. The fact that pheasants are such great eating doesn't hurt either."

The ring-necked pheasant, originally from Asia, has been a staple of Wisconsin upland game hunting since the early 1900s. In Wisconsin, a series of introductions began in the late 1800s, with Gustave Pabst, son of Pabst Brewery founder Frederick Pabst, largely responsible for successfully establishing pheasants in Waukesha County around 1916.

The first pheasant hunts in Wisconsin took place in 1927 in Jefferson and Waukesha counties. A favorable habitat across the state's landscape led to an

expansive wild pheasant population by the 1940s.

Over the ensuing decades, though, loss of habitat due to increased farming, urbanization and reforestation led to significant declines in the wild pheasant population. Today's pheasant population is most common in the west-central and southeastern regions of Wisconsin.

In response to habitat loss and population decline, the DNR's Pheasant Stamp program was created in 1991 to provide funds for habitat restoration and management. The successful management of ring-necked pheasants in Wisconsin is in large part thanks to revenues generated from stamp sales.

"The Pheasant Stamp provides about \$200,000 a year for creating and enhancing grassland habitat," Witecha said. "This funding not only benefits pheasants, but a whole host of other grassland wildlife species as well."

Habitat projects funded by Pheasant Stamp dollars along with contributions from partners such as Pheasants Forever, Wings Over Wisconsin and state conservation clubs have allowed for preservation, restoration and management of thousands of valuable acres of nesting and winter habitat for pheasants. Add that to what's happening at the State Game Farm, and it's a bright outlook for pheasant hunting and birding in the state.

Ring-necked pheasants are a favorite game of many hunters (and perhaps their canine companions), and the work of the State Game Farm helps to maintain healthy stocks.

Help from volunteers

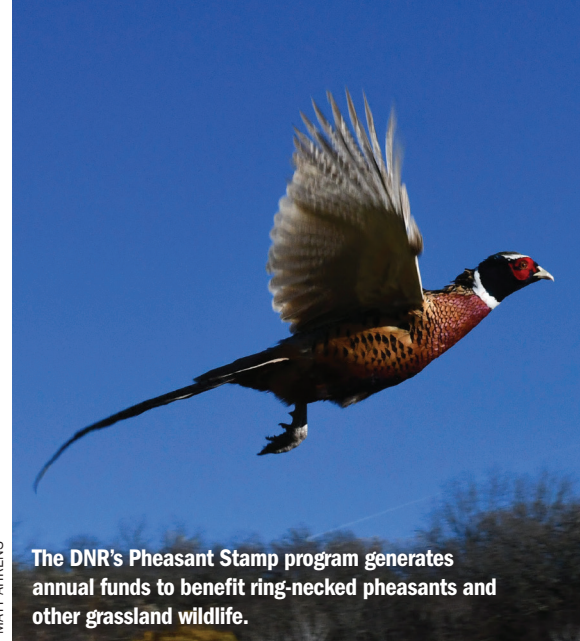
The State Game Farm's origins go back to 1928, when the first program for pheasant propagation was created at Peninsula State Park in Door County, marking the beginning of the DNR's stocking program. Back then, the farm was known as the Wisconsin Experimental Game and Fur Farm. Staff there conducted breeding and propagation research on multiple species of pheasants along with grouse and prairie chickens.

The facility was moved to Poynette in 1934. The highest number of pheasants produced there in a year was in 1957, when 270,000 pheasants were reared. Now, with the new hatchery and equipment, the Game Farm is poised to continue successful pheasant-stocking efforts into the future.

Notably, none of the work would be possible without the help from volunteers, Maguire said, and even with the recent upgrades, those duties will continue. Volunteers perform specialized functions, with worker numbers carefully determined to maintain biosecurity.

"Like any farming operation, the work here is labor-intensive. Staff will always be needed to care for the birds, collect eggs and raise birds. What the new hatchery brings is more time to do this," she said.

"Volunteers play an important role at the State Game Farm. Hatch days during



The DNR's Pheasant Stamp program generates annual funds to benefit ring-necked pheasants and other grassland wildlife.

MATT AHRENS

the spring and stocking in the fall can overwhelm our small staff. Volunteers are brought in on hatch days to assist with counting and determining the sex of each chick."

Experienced volunteers also are utilized in autumn, she added, when the pheasants are rounded up and shipped out.

"During the fall stocking season, thousands of adult pheasants are caught and put in crates each week to bring to wildlife areas for stocking," Maguire said. "The help of volunteers during these times is invaluable to the program."

Through the work of State Game Farm staff, volunteers and partners, Wisconsin bird hunters can take advantage of hunting on public lands with suitable habitat for pheasants. It's a unique element of the state's autumn landscape. With the purchase of a Pheasant Stamp, hunters contribute key support to the restoration and health of valuable grassland habitat, as well as to the stocking program itself.

And with the new hatchery finally completed in Poynette, the pheasant-rearing program has ensured a bright outlook for Wisconsin hunters and birders alike. ❧

Nolan Stracke is a communications specialist in the DNR's Division of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

>>> MORE INFORMATION

For details about the State Game Farm, including photo slide shows, hatching and release videos, and contact information for the Day-Old Chick program and other operations, go to dnr.wi.gov and search keywords "Game Farm."

KOREY O'DAY



Rooted in the past, a sanctuary grows



LARRY F. HORSFALL

FAVILLE GROVE IN JEFFERSON COUNTY PRESENTS TIMELESS VISION OF HOW LANDS ONCE LOOKED.

Doreen Pfost

At a stone outcrop near the Crawfish River, not very far upstream from the buried ruins of ancient Aztalan, a visitor can stand on a hillside beneath the outstretched limbs of a great oak tree and gaze down at the river, then northward across acres of tallgrass prairie. Sandhill cranes trumpet in the distance and a red-tailed hawk wheels overhead.

Two miles away, cars and trucks on I-94 rush east and west between Madison and Milwaukee, cities that seem to grow closer each year as homes and businesses spring up between them. But here on the Crawfish, it's possible to imagine time has stood still.

The reality is a bit more complicated. The outcrop and the prairie are

part of Madison Audubon Society's Faville Grove Sanctuary, a 675-acre mosaic of prairie, wetlands, savanna and woodlands just north of Lake Mills in Jefferson County. The sanctuary offers a glimpse of the once-vast Crawfish Prairie that extended for miles along the Crawfish, a tributary of the Rock River.

A portion of the riverside grassland is virgin prairie — never broken by a plow or even grazed by cattle — but most of the diverse habitats at Faville Grove are the result of a decades-long and ongoing effort by the Madison Audubon Society, its partners and volunteers. The goal is to bring native plant communities back to lands that over the course of the 20th century had been plowed, leveled, drained or otherwise altered for agricultural production.

Beginnings led by Leopold

The transition was well underway in the 1930s when a group of graduate students, supervised by their professor, Aldo Leopold, worked on a study aimed at helping a group of landowners improve wildlife populations on their lands west of the Crawfish River. One of those students was Robert McCabe, who in 1978 published an article for the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters detailing Leopold's efforts to persuade the university — or some other conservation champion — to purchase and thus protect what was described as "one of the largest and best remnants of unplowed, ungrazed prairie sod left in Wisconsin."

Ultimately, a parcel of about 60 acres was purchased by two Madison benefactors, Mr. and Mrs. Philip E. Miles, who later conveyed it to the UW Arboretum. The donated land was named the Stoughton Faville Prairie Preserve, to honor the farmer-conservationist who had aided the research project and even housed students in his home.

Other parcels were sold one by one to individuals who saw the land's value for agriculture, but not its importance to wild species. It must have seemed that, aside from the Faville preserve, the rest of the prairie would be lost for good.

And it might have been. But 20 years ago, at a June 1997 meeting, the board of the Madison Audubon Society voted to establish a sanctuary along the Crawfish River. The Audubon chapter was already experienced in sanctuary management, having founded Goose Pond Sanctuary, north of Madison in Columbia County, in 1969.

In 1998, Madison Audubon purchased 50 acres adjacent to the Stoughton Faville Prairie Preserve and, using many of the techniques pioneered by Leopold and refined by those who followed him, began the long process of turning a former cornfield back to wetland and prairie.

Growth means more to see

The first steps included cutting the trees that choked the field edges, re-excavating wetland basins that had been filled in to accommodate farming, and filling ditches that had been draining off water and thus drying out what had formerly been a wet — or floodplain — prairie. Then in the fall of 1999, volunteers and interns, carrying 5-gallon buckets of native plant seed, walked to and fro, tossing out seeds that had been collected at Goose Pond Sanctuary and at nearby Department of Natural Resources lands.

Since then, the sanctuary has grown many times over, as neighboring landowners offered to sell land to Madison Audubon. The state-funded Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program has been instrumental in helping to fund these acquisitions, with matching funds from Madison Audubon donors and partner organizations.

Today, visitors will find nearly 200 acres of restored floodplain prairie and wetlands on the banks of the Crawfish River adjacent to the native Stoughton Faville Prairie Preserve, which Madison

Audubon now manages on behalf of the UW Arboretum. Here, the kaleidoscope of wildflowers is ever-changing, from dainty purple spiderwort in late spring to the striking orange of Turk's-cap lilies in July, followed by the yellow blossoms of compass plants and prairie dock.

Where the land rises to the west, additional restored prairie is across the road from the Lake Mills Ledge, the outcrop of pre-Cambrian rock that overlooks a spring-fed wetland. Among the widely spaced white oaks and bur oaks on the ledge, you might spot the black-and-white flash of a red-headed woodpecker, or perhaps a rose-breasted grosbeak.

Southwest of the Lake Mills Ledge, a separate portion of the sanctuary straddles Highway 89 and includes grasslands, wetlands, woodland and savanna. Habitat on recently acquired acres in this segment have been undergoing restoration. In addition to the land it owns, Madison Audubon has cooperated with neighboring landowners to help them restore, protect and manage habitats, bringing the total area of wildlife-friendly land to nearly 1,200 acres.

Best of all, the Madison Audubon-owned lands are open to the public for wildlife viewing and quiet enjoyment. Sanctuary brochures encourage visitors to roam off-trail — to see and feel the land up close.

Visit and volunteer

Grassland birds and wildflowers are attractions in the spring and summer. And fall also is a delightful time to visit Faville Grove, to see the russet hues of the prairie's tall grasses, to let the grass run through your fingers, and to listen as the dry seed heads rustle in the breeze.

Visit on your own or join one of Madison Audubon's regular field trips. On an April 5 field trip, visitors can watch for the springtime displays of woodcock and snipe. Other outings later in the year include birdwatching and plant identification.

One of the best ways to get to know Faville Grove is by volunteering for one of many habitat-related projects. For example, on a sunny day last July, a group of volunteers and interns walked back and forth across the 25-acre Snap-

A yellow compass plant — *Silphium laciniatum*, in the aster family — is among the native flowers found at Faville Grove.



DOREEN PROST



LARRY F. HORSFALL

A survey at Faville Grove last July (opposite page photo) found a record number of eastern prairie white-fringed orchids, *Platanthera leucophaea*, a state-endangered and federally threatened species.

Turk's-cap lilies, *Lilium superbum*, brighten the fields of Faville Grove, where the perennial can grow up to 6 feet tall each summer.



LARRY F. HORSFALL

per Prairie to survey for eastern prairie white-fringed orchids. Surveyors found a record number of this state-endangered and federally threatened species that grows on two portions of the sanctuary.

Along the way, they also found the fluffy white blossoms of meadowsweet, spiky Culver's-root and hundreds of leathery, upright leaves of prairie dock, while song sparrows provided musical accompaniment.

Each fall, volunteers are busy harvesting ripened seeds from prairie plants. No expertise is required. If the target on a given day is prairie cord grass, say, or stiff gentian, coordinators will point out the seed heads and demonstrate the method of collection. In addition to learning about these plants, volunteers become part of the rebirth of Faville Grove by contributing to the stock of seeds that will be used in future restoration plantings.

Time didn't stand still at Faville Grove, but through the efforts and vision of Madison Audubon Society members and leaders, volunteers, partner organizations and conservation-minded neighbors, we can get a glimpse of how the land once looked. We get a hint of how it once sounded, how it smelled, how it felt. And we can feel hope for its future. 🌿

Doreen Pfost of Elroy is the author of "This River Beneath the Sky: A Year on the Platte." She met her husband on a volunteer work day at Faville Grove.



TAKE A TRIP TO FAVILLE GROVE

Madison Audubon Society's Faville Grove Sanctuary is in Jefferson County in southcentral Wisconsin. From I-94, take exit 259 and drive north on State Highway 89 about 2 miles to County Highway G. Turn right and continue about a mile and a half to Prairie Lane. A sanctuary map and brochures are available at the information kiosk. Maps and information also are available at madisonaudubon.org/faville-grove. Madison Audubon Society field trips, generally open to the public, are a good way to see the sanctuary. To learn more, visit madisonaudubon.org/field-trips. In addition, volunteer projects at Faville Grove and elsewhere are listed at madisonaudubon.org/volunteer.



BRANDON KAMINE

Suckers might have had a poor reputation in the past, but smart anglers such as author Nicholas Saiia know the value of these abundant fish.

Learn to love a sucker

IF THERE'S ONE BORN EVERY MINUTE,
THAT'S A GOOD THING.

Nicholas Saiia

It was a fine April day as I drove to one of my favorite streams, one of those first truly nice days of spring when instead of 45 degrees and rainy, it was finally sunny and in the 60s. Unfortunately upon getting out of my car, my first breath was not that of sweet spring air, but rather the gag-inducing stench of rotting fish.

The source of this smell? Dozens of dead suckers that were caught, then left to die and decompose on the stream bank.

Let's face it, treating suckers this way isn't something new and it's a mindset that might be shared by many who fish. I must admit that years ago, I also thought these odd-looking horse-lipped fish were nothing but a garbage species.

Why have these fish often been treated with such disdain by so many, especially in the past? Likely, it's because of the way we were taught collectively by others to view these fish. They are bottom feeders ... they eat walleye, bass and perch eggs ... they are invasive ... they taste bad and you'd never want to eat one ... they are full of pollutants ... they only live in dirty water. The list of criticisms have gone on and on.

Educated anglers already know the

value of suckers to their local ecosystem. But let's put all of the lies — or at the very least greatly exaggerated misconceptions — about these fish to rest once and for all.

Identifying a sucker

To address many of the myths regarding suckers, you first have to get to know the sucker family.

The Wisconsin Fish Identification guide (wisfish.org), lists five species of fish known as suckers. In addition, six species of fish known as redhorse also are grouped here (Catostomidae family), along with a handful of others such as quillback, carpsucker and chubsucker. Despite their resemblance to the invasive carp, all are native to Wisconsin waters.

The fish generally are distinguished by their coloring with a few differences also in scales, body pattern, fin and lip. This

extended “sucker” family gets its obvious name from the downward-facing vacuum mouth and, on some species, almost eerily human lips.

Before fishing, anglers need to be aware that some suckers are on the state endangered-threatened species list and these may not be harvested. That includes the black redhorse, which is endangered, and the blue sucker and river redhorse, both of which are threatened. The ability to identify species when fishing is a must.

For the sake of simplicity, this article will mostly apply to two of the major family members: the common or white sucker, and a couple of species in the redhorse clan.

Myths busted

Now that we’ve addressed what makes a sucker, let’s talk about those myths.

They eat fish eggs: This one has some truth to it, yet has been greatly exaggerated. Yes, suckers do eat the eggs of other fish, but the majority of eggs consumed by suckers are their own, eaten during their spawning run. When they do eat other eggs, it’s usually random and not shown to harm those fish populations.

They are bad-tasting bottom feeders: Yes, suckers do feed on the bottom. With that mouth, they are built for it. But does that translate to them tasting bad? Not necessarily.

The description of “bottom feeder” conjures a visual of a fish shoveling muck and pollutants into its mouth like a hungry hippo. But that simply is not so. The stream where I do my sucker fishing, for example, happens to be part of a classified trout stream, so suckers here are eating mayfly larvae, earth worms, caddis fly larvae, hellgrammites, minnows, crayfish and other small invertebrates. I’ve even seen suckers turn themselves upside-down to suck adult mayflies from the surface of the stream.

There is another fish with a diet like that — the revered trout. It’s also the diet of the bluegill, perch and crappie, and what northern, walleye and bass eat as juveniles. So the diet of the sucker isn’t that much different than that of the gamefish we love to catch and eat. The sucker just has a different mouth to go about its eating business.

They’re not good eating: This idea is incorrect as well. Suckers, especially those caught in the cool waters of spring, are great eating.

There is one shortcoming they do admittedly have: They are quite bony. But there are ways around the bones to get to their sweet flesh. Fish patties made with potatoes, onions, egg and ground sucker meat are a true springtime delicacy.

Another method involves scoring the sucker fillets with a fillet knife every half inch or so, then frying them. The oil penetrates between the score marks and cooks the bones into nonexistence. Suckers also are fantastic when smoked or pickled.

When to find them

Suckers can be taken almost any time of the year, even through the ice. However, the most common season to fish for suckers is in the spring. That’s when these fish congregate by the thousands, perhaps even tens of thousands, depending on where you are fishing.

The run usually reaches its peak for suckers and redhorse in late March through late April, depending on location and the species that’s prevalent. Waters to the north typically warm later than those in the south, so factor that in to your planning.

Suckers and redhorses are among the most abundant and widespread fishes in the state. Basically, every tributary to Lake Michigan and Lake Superior, along with the Mississippi, Wisconsin, Rock and Fox rivers and many feeder creeks to large lakes will have some kind of sucker run. But your chances of finding suckers in large numbers go way up when you can find a dam, natural or manmade, where they might congregate.

The beauty of fishing for suckers is its simplicity. Just half a crawler, weighted to the bottom, is all you need to fill a cooler.

Respect is learned

Because so much negativity may have

surrounded the sucker in the past, it’s easy to overlook the positives they bring to the waters and ecosystems in which they live. Smart anglers know suckers are a big food source for walleyes, northern, catfish and other gamefish. Contrary to popular belief, all suckers, especially the redhorse species, need clean water to survive, and their presence is a barometer of stream health and cleanliness.

I remember the first time I decided to go sucker fishing and hooked my first one, a silver redhorse. I was amazed at how hard the fish fought, every bit as game as a smallmouth bass. And when I finally landed the fish — yes, that mouth takes some getting used to, but the fish itself is beautiful, especially those in the redhorse family with their large, transparent scales and blood-red fins.

As I caught and kept several large suckers, all bigger than 20 inches, my respect for what I once viewed as an ugly bottom feeder grew. Now whenever I catch a nice redhorse, I don’t see an ugly, bad-tasting, rough fish; I see a beautiful gamefish.

Every spring my friends and I eagerly await the sucker run. Fishing for this species has become a tradition, a chance to get out into the spring air again for the first time, listen to the red-winged blackbirds, and have a blast filling our coolers and our smokers with fish.

I encourage you to try sucker fishing this spring. You’ll quickly see there is no shame in catching and eating these great fish, which don’t deserve being thoughtlessly thrown on the bank to die. Instead, they should be respected as the great fish and natural resource that they are. 🐟

Nicholas Saiia writes from Mukwonago.



DNR FILES

Fishing for suckers requires little more than half a nightcrawler, weighted to the bottom, as bait.



Natural LEADER, Nature CHAMPION

The Gordon Bubolz Nature Preserve in Appleton is one of numerous sites throughout the Fox Valley that can be traced to the preservation work of the one-time Wisconsin legislator whose name it bears.

DAVID HORST

NUMEROUS SITES BEAR THE STAMP OF GORDON BUBOLZ, WHO MASTERED THE BUSINESS OF LAND PRESERVATION.

David Horst

For most Fox Valley residents, Gordon Bubolz is simply a name on the sign at a nature center near Appleton. The Gordon Bubolz Nature Preserve is indeed named for the man responsible for that 775-acre chunk of white cedar swamp being set aside for environmental education and enjoyment of nature.

But it would take 10 signs to mark all of the land preserved for future generations by this former Republican state senator and second-generation insurance executive.

In 1991, a joint Wisconsin Assembly and Senate resolution was passed following the death of Bubolz the previous year, recognizing him for his extensive work in setting aside lands for public use. Bubolz saw no problem carrying the labels of conservationist and conser-

vative together; protecting the Earth and promoting efficient government were both part of his agenda.

The Legislature honored Bubolz for raising funds and helping to acquire what are now four nature centers, four county parks and High Cliff State Park. Those sites, along with one other not on the Legislature's list, account for 4,600 acres of valuable habitat and scenic areas preserved for the public largely through Bubolz's handiwork.



This uncredited photo of Gordon Bubolz appears in his autobiography, which notes it is from Singer Island, Florida, circa 1972.

Bubolz's background

Gordon A. Bubolz was born in 1905 and grew up on a farm in the Seymour area. That's where he developed his love of nature, according to his daughter, Milly Rugland, and son, John Bubolz, both of Appleton. Their father's refuge as a child was a swampy woodlot on the farm, where he would go to reflect and observe nature.

"That's where his ethic began," John Bubolz said.

The family enjoyed nature-centered vacations in northern Wisconsin and the western U.S., and also made an annual trip to the farm to plant trees.

As a boy on the farm, Gordon was in charge of raising chickens and was allowed to keep any prize money he won for showing them. He used that money to help pay his way through Lawrence University in Appleton, Rugland said.

After graduating from Lawrence, Bubolz studied business at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School and earned a law degree from the University of Wisconsin. He eventually took over the family business, succeeding his father, Julius, as president and CEO of Home Mutual Insurance Co. Under Gordon's watch, the business grew into SECURA Insurance Companies, a \$400 million property and casualty insurer based in Appleton.

In 1945, Bubolz won election to the Wisconsin Senate, defeating Republican party favorites in a primary on his way to general election victory. He served in the Senate until 1953.

During his eight-year tenure in the Senate, Bubolz chaired the state Conservation Commission and the advisory council of the Department of Resource Development, predecessors to the Department of Natural Resources. He also advocated for regional planning commissions and helped bring efficiencies to several state departments, including in welfare and state investment practices.

But it was after his government service — working through a nonprofit organization he founded in 1974 called Natural Areas Preservation Inc. (NAPI) — that Bubolz became a land-acquiring force for nature. He used the cordial approach and cunning deal-making skills developed in years of politics and business to preserve special places he thought the public should be able to enjoy.

Bubolz's approach was simple, his son said: Identify a site to be preserved, then generate the local support, raise the necessary funds and negotiate with the appropriate government entities to seal the deal.

Bubolz's daughter added that he never quibbled over an owner's asking price for land he wanted to preserve, unless it

was outrageous.

"He wouldn't lose needed land forever to save \$5,000," she said.

Acquisition skills on display

Bernie Brouchoud saw Bubolz's land acquisition techniques up close. Brouchoud, whose passion for birding spans decades, was leading an early-1970s effort in Manitowoc County to acquire an area of wooded swales that offered prime birding territory. He met Bubolz when the executive came for a brat fry at the shack Brouchoud and his wife used as their getaway in the woods.

"Wonderful guy," Brouchoud said.

As additional land became available for what had officially turned into Woodland Dunes Nature Center and Preserve, Bubolz would buy it through NAPI and Brouchoud would go about raising money to pay back the group.

"I was never a fundraiser," Brouchoud said, "but I learned in a hurry."

Using that approach, Woodland Dunes grew to 1,200 acres, with more than \$1 million raised for land acquisition. Bubolz had an undeniable presence, Brouchoud said, but took a gentle approach in his dealings regarding Woodland Dunes.

"We did kitchen-table deals," Brouchoud said. "We paid what the owner wanted."

When Woodland Dunes opened,



High Cliff State Park, established with the help of Gordon Bubolz in the 1950s, is the only state-owned recreational area on Lake Winnebago and includes a marina with more than 100 slips available for rent.

DAVE BENISH



KRISTINE SCHUETZE PHOTOS

A new \$5.5 million educational building at the Gordon Bubolz Nature Preserve provides expanded exhibit space, a nature nook public library and student research center, toddler play-and-learn area, meeting rooms, banquet facility and more.

Brouchoud became its first executive director. Bubolz also created a title for Brouchoud and put him on the payroll of Bubolz's insurance company. The arrangement existed for more than 18 years until Bubolz's death.

Bubolz's goal, Brouchoud said, was for every county in northeast Wisconsin to have at least one nature center. His style was to be friendly with everyone, but outlasted by no one, his daughter added.

"He never gave up," she said.

Pushing for parks

Examples of Bubolz's successful negotiations are many. In one case in the mid-1960s, he was working with Wisconsin Electric Power Co. on the donation of a picturesque section of the Embarrass River in Shawano County, where the company had abandoned a dam and hydroelectric power plant. County commissioners wanted the land for a park but were worried about possible liability they would incur for a waterfall included in the acquisition.

Bubolz raised the issue with officials of the utility and convinced them to throw in \$1,000 for future claims, and the 54-acre Hayman Falls County Park was created.

In perhaps his most important acquisition, in 1956, Bubolz wanted the state to acquire land along the north shore of Lake Winnebago from a limestone operation that had shut down. He raised \$27,000, a portion of the purchase price, through the High Cliff Forest Park Association but was told the state had no funds to cover the balance.

As Bubolz described it in his autobiography, "Once Upon a Time — Gordon A. Bubolz, His Life and Vision," he convinced the chairman of the state Conservation Commission that the high ridge overlooking the lake was technically part of the northern Kettle Moraine area. That allowed the commission to tap into \$4.5 million in reserves the state had set aside for that area.

The state acquired the first 288 acres of what became High Cliff State Park, including 10,000 feet of Lake Winnebago shoreline, from Western Cement and Lime Co. for \$245,000.

Bubolz didn't always get his way. When the land near Appleton known as "Center Swamp" was purchased by NAPI for a nature center, Bubolz resisted a suggestion that it be named for him. The NAPI advisory committee met on

the subject and members insisted that Bubolz step down temporarily as group chair and leave the room.

When Bubolz was called back, he was informed they had voted for the name Gordon Bubolz Nature Preserve, and he was then able to reassume his position as NAPI chair.

Allies across the aisle

In his dealings through the years, Bubolz didn't hesitate to work with people along the political spectrum. Among frequent visitors to the Bubolz home, his daughter said, were Democrat Gaylord Nelson and Republican Warren Knowles, both colleagues from the state Senate and eventual Wisconsin governors. Nelson also went on to serve in the U.S. Senate.

To young Milly and John, Nelson and Knowles were just dad's co-workers. Rugland said the three would talk together about how to accomplish the things they wanted to benefit the people of Wisconsin. Bubolz was outspoken about his beliefs, his children said, and they considered their father an environmentalist at the time.

"He'd basically give a speech to anyone who would listen," Rugland said.

One of the topics Bubolz was most passionate about was the need to clean up the Fox River as it flows from Appleton north to Green Bay. He drew the ire of fellow businessmen from the region's dominant paper industry, which used the river to dispose of industrial waste. Rugland recalled at one point having to be taken to high school in an unmarked police car because of threats against her father and his family.

Bubolz was named Wisconsin Conservationist of the Year in 1977 and was honored by the UW College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in 1978. At UW-Stevens Point, a scholarship is named for him within the College of Natural Resources.

Rugland also remembers her father being nominated by Nelson for a National Wildlife Federation award. Rugland attended the awards ceremony with her dad, who told Nelson she was a good daughter — except, he said, that she insisted on voting for Nelson, a Democrat. 60

David Horst is a former newspaper writer, editor and nature columnist now working at a nonprofit in Appleton. He has a blog about the outdoors, "Up on the Sandhill," found at uponthesandhill.blogspot.com.

>>> LEGACY OF GORDON BUBOLZ

Here is a list of state natural treasures that can be attributed to the efforts of Gordon A. Bubolz.

Gordon Bubolz Nature Preserve: This important lowland forest area was known as “Center Swamp” because of its location in the town of Center. The original investment in the property came from Bubolz’s Natural Areas Preservation Inc. (NAPI) in 1971 — \$33,000 to purchase 488 acres. The preserve now features 775 acres and operates without any government subsidy, as Bubolz preferred. A new \$5.5 million, 18,000-square-foot nature center building has been constructed, with funds raised through a capital campaign. Contributions have included \$100,000 from the Fox Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau and \$250,000 from Menasha Corp. Foundation. In addition, local electrical contractor Faith Technologies Inc. has constructed and donated a microgrid system integrating solar, battery and micro-turbine power in what is expected to make the nature center energy-independent; 4815 N. Lynndale Drive, Appleton, bubolzpreserve.org.

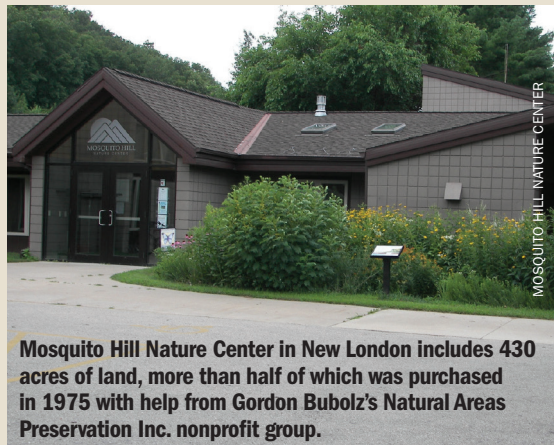
High Cliff State Park: Bubolz led a private effort in the mid-1950s to acquire the land on the north shore of Lake Winnebago after a limestone mining operation there closed. The state acquired the first 288 acres, including 10,000 feet of shoreline, from Western Cement and Lime Co. for \$245,000 in 1956 and High Cliff State Park opened in 1957. The park has since grown to 1,187 acres with a campground, harbor, effigy mounds, observation tower and 16 miles of trails; N7630 State Park Road, Sherwood, dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/name/highcliff.

Fallen Timbers Environmental Education Center: The 440-acre nature center between Black Creek and Seymour is owned by six school districts and primarily used by area school groups. It was acquired for \$60,000 in 1975, mostly from Fort Howard Paper Co. The woods there had been hit hard by Dutch elm disease and the sale of standing dead timber helped to pay for the land’s acquisition. Its unusual name came from the students who often heard limbs dropping from the dead trees; W4531 Robin Road, Black Creek, www.cesa6.org/services/fallen-timbers.

Woodland Dunes Nature Center and Preserve: Local advocates worked with NAPI to acquire the first 40 acres of this preserve near Manitowoc in 1974 at a cost of \$6,000. None was more influential than Bernie Brouchoud, an avid birder who became the nature center’s first executive director, serving until 2004. Today, Woodland Dunes comprises more than 1,300 acres, including 387 acres of the Woodland Dunes State Natural Area; 3000 Hawthorne Ave., Two Rivers, woodlanddunes.org.

Waukau Creek Nature Preserve: This walleye spawning grounds on Rush Creek near Omro connects Rush Lake with the upper Fox River through steep-walled ravines. NAPI bought the land and gave it to Winnebago County, and a 50-acre park was dedicated in 1975, with Bubolz in attendance. There are now 64 acres with trails and ravines down to Rush Creek; 2987 Delhi Rd., north of Waukau, www.co.winnebago.wi.us/parks/nature-preserves/waukau-creek.

Hobbs Woods Nature Area: In the 1970s, NAPI along with the Winnebago County Conservation Club raised \$14,000 of the \$55,000 purchase price for 50 acres along Parson’s Creek, with Fond du Lac County covering the balance. The land, near Fond du Lac, features a trout stream through a climax hardwood forest, plus trails for hiking and cross-country skiing. Overuse in recent years has raised concerns regarding the property, and maintenance efforts have been ongoing; N4197 Hickory Road, south of Fond du Lac, www.fdlco.wi.gov/departments/departments-n-z/parks-trails/county-parks/hobbs-woods.



Mosquito Hill Nature Center in New London includes 430 acres of land, more than half of which was purchased in 1975 with help from Gordon Bubolz’s Natural Areas Preservation Inc. nonprofit group.

Mosquito Hill Nature Center: This striking geologic feature rising above the otherwise flat area of Outagamie County was formed by ancient volcanic activity. More than 40 years ago, a 238-acre tract was up for sale for \$25,000. After county officials determined it was only worth \$14,000 of public money, NAPI kicked in the remaining \$11,000 and Outagamie County acquired the land as a county park in 1975. It now covers 430 acres near the Wolf River and includes three miles of trails for hiking and snowshoeing, as well as space for meetings and educational programs; 3880 Rogers Road, east of New London, mosquitohill.com.

Hayman Falls County Park: A 54-acre parcel on the Embarrass River in the Shawano County community of Caroline was donated by Wisconsin Electric Power Co., following negotiations facilitated by Bubolz. The abandoned hydroelectric dam left by the power company has since been removed. The park name implies the presence of a waterfall, but the American Whitewater Association says it’s actually a half-mile rapids, usually rated at Class III, depending on water level; N4386 Hayman Falls Lane, Marion, www.co.shawano.wi.us (type “Hayman Falls” in search line).

Mount Morris Hills County Park: At 383 acres, this wooded park accounts for more than half the county park land in Waushara County. It was acquired in the early 1960s through the efforts of a local group known as Mount Morris Hills Inc., aided by Bubolz, who at the time was chairman of the Wolf River Basin Regional Planning Commission. Supporters hoped it would eventually become a state park but instead it has retained county status; N3876 County Road G, Wild Rose, www.co.waushara.wi.us/pView.aspx?id=14527.

Mukwa Wildlife Area: Not on the list in the 1991 state Senate resolution honoring Bubolz is this marshy waterfowl hunting area outside of New London, created with help from Bubolz and NAPI. The Wisconsin Conservation Commission originally acquired it in 1964 to develop a waterfowl impoundment, but prohibitive costs and flood implications for the city of New London prevented the impoundment from moving forward. The state-owned wildlife area now features 1,300 acres, including the 171-acre Mukwa Bottomland Forest State Natural Area; County Highway X, west of New London, dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/wildlifeareas/mukwa.html.

HAPPY YOUNG HUNTER

Here are pictures of Adeline's nine-point buck that she bagged on Oct. 7 while hunting with her dad, Derek Frank. The deer was taken in the town of Sampson (youth hunt in northern Chippewa County).

Addie has been a lucky hunter so far. Besides this very nice buck, she bagged a 350-pound black bear last year and a very nice tom turkey.

Wayne Frank
Chippewa County



CRANE SPOTTING

I took some pictures of a pair of whooping cranes with a new addition over the summer. Not sure where you can use them in the magazine but I thought they were pretty neat.

Nick Checolinski
Appleton

SANDHILL'S PLEIN AIR APPEAL

Just finished reading the terrific article about the origins of the Sandhill Wildlife Area by Julie Hess and Anna Hess (October 2017). It seems to me SWA is one of the unsung successes of marshland preservation in Wisconsin. I "discovered" it two years ago when looking for plein air painting locations. As one of the artists of record for the Tribune Building redevelopment project in Wisconsin Rapids, I was looking for places that celebrate the strengths of Wood County. I found that in spades at SWA.

Kudos to the Granges for their insight and hard work. It is great to know the back story of this area. Thanks for another wonderful issue of *Wisconsin Natural Resources*. I pray Wisconsinites will continue to value our natural resources for generations to come.

P.S.: Attached is a copy of one of the plein air paintings I did at SWA.

Jan Norsetter
Verona



TABLE FOR TWO?

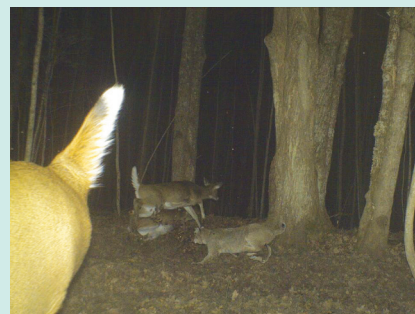
I captured these two bull elk fighting over the picnic table!

Jim Wallace
Winter

OH, SNAP!

I did my preseason scouting — lots of deer signs, no other hunters around. Wrong!

There are three deer in this photo. That something you see on the ground by the back legs of the deer in the center is another deer that has been knocked over onto its back with the white belly exposed. I can only imagine the young deer was knocked over in a panic escape by the other deer.



The bobcat is in full stride and moments away from its prey. I did not go looking around for blood to see if the cat was successful because I did not view the camera card until later when I was home. I was then able to zoom in on the photo and observe what was captured.

Tom Long
Marengo



ABCS OF BUMBLE BEES

Reader Mike Fetting shared an email letter and photo, which were forwarded to the DNR's Natural Heritage Conservation Program for response. Follow the correspondence below.

Hi. Last August my friends and I camped on the Willow Flowage (Oneida County). The picture is one of hundreds of endangered rusty patched bumble bees that were bouncing between the flowers at our campsite. They appeared to be thriving and couldn't care less that we were there.

From the NHC: This is not a rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*) but a tricolored bumble bee (*Bombus ternarius*). Tricolored bumble bees are a common bumble bee across the northern half of Wisconsin. The rusty patched bumble bee is a federally endangered species and hasn't been seen in Oneida County since 1975. Thanks for your observation. To help researchers better understand the current bumble bee distribution across the state, please submit your observations to Bumble Bee Watch, bumblebeewatch.org.

I've since looked online — the similarities are so unfair! I was aware rusty patched bumble bees are very uncommon so was pretty excited. I was not aware of the tricolored before so didn't realize there was something so similar. Thanks for the quick and informative response!

Mike Fetting
Whitefish Bay

OUR SENTIMENTS EXACTLY

I enjoyed Ron Weber's article in the December *Wisconsin Natural Resources* magazine ("Driven by memories"). I know many readers will enjoy the piece, be able to relate to it and agree with his sentiments.

David Nelson, Editor
New York State Conservationist

I enjoyed reading Ron Weber's reflections on past deer hunts with brothers and friends, all of whom have now passed away. Weber describes so well the special memories of hunting with special people without regard to whether deer were taken.

I share similar special memories of many years of memorable and enjoyable Wisconsin deer hunts with my brother-in-law, who also passed away a few years ago. I am fortunate in that I am still able to hunt with my brother in Minnesota. However, I do miss my brother-in-law and those many, many special times in the field.

Norm Hanson
Roseville, Minnesota



PATRON'S PRAISE

I am a Conservation Patron and now my son is as well. I have enjoyed your magazine for many years now and am very happy to hear this publication will continue. My wife and I came across this scene in October in Cottage Grove, as we were coming home from church on a Sunday morning. What a beautiful classic fall Wisconsin scene! Feel free to use it in your publication if you feel it is of interest.

Cory Nelson
Cottage Grove

HANDLE TROUT WITH CARE

I fish alone many days and have struggled on a proper photo technique for that nice trout I just caught. Slime coat removal (from too much handling) and the trout basically holding its breath while you get that perfect shot are serious problems. If you are going to let that trout go, please let it be healthy after you have finished your photo.

This is the way I do it. First off, I have an adequate net. Many nets out there are woefully inadequate. It must have a deep, non-tapered bag. The net must be easy to unfasten from your back with your weak hand. When I land my trout I immediately unhook the trout. A fish thrashing in the net with a hook still in its mouth can cause serious damage. Here comes the reason for the deep, wide net. That trout can revive after the battle submerged in the water and not be rubbing the sides of a small, non-tapered net and injuring itself.

You can do two different methods of preparation. First method is to stick the handle of the net into the soft bank with the trout in the net and totally submerged in the water. Ready your camera, take off the lens cap and focus. Reach into the net, wetting your hand, and take out the trout. Hand placement is crucial here. Don't place your hand near the front of the trout and grip hard. You want to avoid crushing the organs. Take ONE photo, then revive the trout and let it go. This should take about five seconds of the trout being out of the water.

The other method involves placing the net handle between your knees instead of sticking it into the bank. All the other steps are the same. That net can get quite crusty after a few trout are landed in it, so rinse it thoroughly after each netting.

A short, sweet synopsis: Proper net, wet hand, minimal time out of water, hold trout gently, ONE photo and revive it before you release.

Len Harris
Richland Center



ATOP THE BIRD FEEDER

This little boy with the chickadee on his head is one of our grandsons, Max Spiegel. He was 6 years old at the time we took him to Peninsula State Park to feed the chickadees at the nature center. Max loved every minute of it.

Tim Sweet
Appleton



OMAHA TRAIL THROUGH THE SEASONS

These photos were taken at the entrance of the tunnel on the Omaha Trail.

Barb Harris
Richland Center

Editor's note: The Omaha Trail is a paved bike trail maintained by Juneau County that runs south for 13 miles from Camp Douglas to Elroy. The 300-foot tunnel is located at the halfway point. Visit www.co.juneau.wi.gov/trails.html for more information.



WISHIN' FOR FISHER'

As a longtime subscriber I enjoy seeing the magazine's pictures of people who love Wisconsin outdoors. In this photo from summer 2017, Claire Schnoor Loftus, age 4 with tackle in hand, contemplates a few of her family's big catches on Minocqua Lake.

Her grandfather, Dr. Jerald L. Schnoor, is an environmental engineer on faculty at the University of Iowa. I married his sister 36 years ago. We've all been enjoying Minocqua Lake for decades now, as did the generation before us. We feel blessed to have the opportunity to enjoy such beauty and appreciate the role your magazine plays in promoting awareness of our unique and precious natural resources.

Fred Oaks
Nashotah



COMPARING APPLES AND FISHERS

I got these images from my trail cam on my property on Big Trade Lake (Burnett County), and am curious as to what animal this is. It looks like a wolverine to me, but I know they're very rare, and I'm not sure. What is it?

Paul Lammert
Grantsburg

Thanks for sharing this great photo of a fisher. Fishers are in the same family as wolverines, which are much bigger and now only found in parts of Canada. Catherine Dennison, a research assistant at DNR's Rhinelander office, confirmed that based on the animal's size (in comparison to the apples in the background) and the pelage (or fur), this is indeed a fisher.



ALL SMILES IN THE FIELD

I thought I would pass along this picture of my daughter Madison Skalecki (left) and her cousin Jessica Chittendon during last year's November firearm deer hunt. It is good to see women in the field these days, especially how much they are enjoying the activity.

Mike Skalecki
Savage, Minnesota

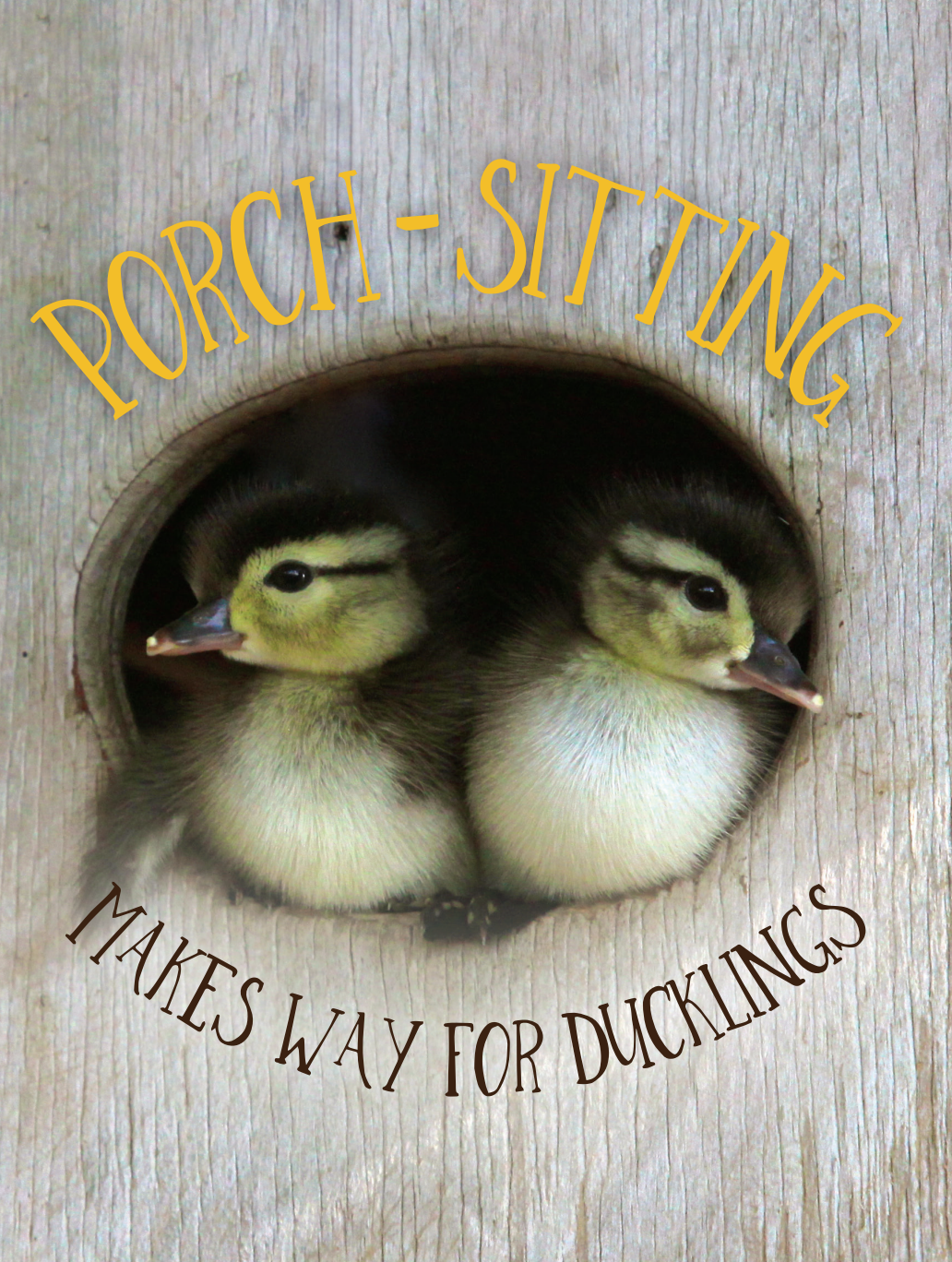


COMMENT ON A STORY?

Send your letters to: Readers Write, WNR magazine, P.O. Box 7921, 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.



HARLAN ALBERS

WITH A FLURRY OF FUZZ BALLS, LITTLE WOOD DUCKS HEAD OUT ON LIFE'S ADVENTURES.

Dorothy Kruse

Porch-sitting is a wonderful pastime and one at which I am quite proficient. Porch-sitting in the Flambeau River State Forest, with a view of the Flambeau River, takes top honors in that category. You never know what you're going to hear or see.

Actually, hiking or fishing tops porch-sitting for me, but the number of flying and biting insects determines the pastime of the day. It was one of those warm spring days, where bugs were

just waiting for a victim to appear. I was not interested in playing that victim so I decided to sit on the screened porch that jutted out between the trees and catch up on some reading.

I had been reading for about an hour when I was suddenly aware of a rhythmic, low-pitched background sound coming from somewhere between the porch and the river. Laying my book aside, I concentrated on the location of the sound and determined it was near a tall pine about halfway between the porch and the river.

As I was looking at the tree, I thought I saw a little ball drop to the ground. The mystery sound in the dense undergrowth seemed to pick up in intensity as the ball disappeared in the tall ferns at the base of the tree. Then, one by one, more balls dropped.

I looked up the tree trunk hoping to find the source. About 15 feet up, I saw the wood duck nesting box my husband, Charlie, had mounted a few years earlier. The little balls were falling out of that box.

The balls had to be ducklings and that had to be Mom at the base of the tree, encouraging her babies to jump. Time had come for them to make the trek to their grown-up home, the Flambeau River.

Knowing how a wood duck box is constructed, I had an idea of what was going on inside the box. The box is perhaps 12 inches deep, with the entrance/exit about three-quarters of the way up. Inside the box and below the hole, Charlie had nailed hardware cloth specifically for the ducklings' exit.

I envisioned the awkward little fuzz balls with tiny webbed feet trying to climb that wire mesh toward Mom's beckoning call. I wondered how many times they fell back down and had to start all over before they finally made it out the hole.

Once they made it to the hole, they had to free-fall down to Mom hiding below. After living in that dark, cramped box, the light of the outside world must have been blinding to their little eyes and terribly intimidating. Talk about a leap of faith.

It was an unforgettable experience and, even though the box is still used by either wood ducks or mergansers each year, I have never experienced their exodus again. For the best porch-sitting, you really do have to be in the right place at the right time. 🦆

Dorothy Kruse writes from Oregon, in Dane County, where she patiently awaits her next visit to the cabin on the Flambeau River.

Back in the day

Key on color, cast, timing in tangling with walleye.

Kathryn A. Kahler

In spring 1968, fish managers across the state were concerned about the state of walleye fishing. Complaints they received suggested that “not everybody is using good fishing technique for catching walleyes.” Much like they do today in this issue’s annual Fishing Report insert, they got together and wrote an article in that year’s March/April issue of the Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin to offer their best advice on how and where to catch Wisconsin’s most revered game fish.

Collectively, they stressed that “whatever the variations are, if you can keep in mind the basic habits of the fish, you should have a good chance of success.” In individual accounts, they offered tips on lures, bait and the best times and places to find walleye.

Richard F. Harris, then-fish manager from Oshkosh, gave this advice for landing ol’ marble eyes.

The color of the bait is extremely important. The same kind of spoon in yellow and black many times will outfish 10-to-1 a spoon of red and white — or vice versa. I strongly urge those who wish to fish walleyes consistently and steadily not only to change bait but to change colors as well.

You can prove this to yourself if you hit a good walleye fishing day. Catch two or three fish on a certain bait and then change to another color — the same bait and size — and note the results. Many times you will be surprised at the difference in your fishing.

Many walleye fishermen lose prize walleyes because they do not react to a strike with a good hook-setting movement. Whether trolling, drifting or spin casting, react to a snag on the bottom or a fish strike with a hard, hooking motion. This will serve you in good stead in keeping from getting snagged too often, and also hook the hard-mouth walleye when he strikes your slow-moving bait. This is much more important in walleye spin casting than northern because the northern hits hard and hooks himself,

while the walleye seldom hits your slow-moving bait with the speed or pressure of a northern pike.

Many become discouraged spin casting or casting on a reef or bar for walleyes because in retrieving the bait slowly from the cast, they snag many times and need to move the boat to recover their lure. A tip on this might be helpful: Anchor the boat and cast from the rear. In this way you are throwing with the wind and achieve better distance and further, it allows you to un snag most of your lures without moving the boat.

During the hot summer months in shallow lakes, the speed of the retrieve, which is generally slow, can be increased somewhat.



A quartet of fishermen show off their haul of walleye from the Wolf River in this 1971 photo from the Department of Natural Resources archives.

DEAN TVEDT/DNR FILES

This is a period when the bottom is quite moss-covered and weedy, and it is difficult to scrape bottom without fouling up your bait. At this time you definitely can speed up so as not to touch bottom as regularly and still catch fish.

When is the best time to catch a large trophy walleye? Unquestionably, early in the season, as this is the time of the year when large fish have finished spawning and are eating ravenously. If you drop the right bait in front of a “momma” walleye early in the year when she is trying to recover from carrying a load of eggs, your chances of catching that trophy walleye from 20 to 30 inches is much better than later in the summer.

Unfortunately, some of the better walleye fishing comes during bad weather conditions. Most of the time that you tangle with big walleyes, you need to dress as though you were going duck hunting or ice fishing. 60

Kathryn A. Kahler is an associate editor of Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine.



ELROY-SPARTA STATE TRAIL

In 1964, a Chicago and North Western railroad route known as the Elroy-Sparta line ceased operation. A year later, all tracks were removed. What remained was the start of something new: The steel and wooden bridges, tunnels, fencing and wide, flat railway bed were perfect for a recreational trail.

In 1965, the Wisconsin Conservation Department designated the abandoned railroad as a hiking trail, with bicycling added to the concept the following year, when the state's purchase of the trail right-of-way was completed for \$12,000. With that, the Elroy-Sparta State Trail was ready for use.



By 1970, the trail had been resurfaced with crushed limestone, and it

was officially made a National Recreation Trail by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1971. As the 1980s approached, 40,000 people were enjoying the trail annually.

These days, nearly 60,000 users each year find their way onto the Elroy-Sparta State Trail, considered the nation's first rail-to-trail project. Five small towns are located on the 32.5-mile route, which passes through prairies, farm fields, wetlands and unglaciated areas. Former train depots now serve as visitor centers.

The rock tunnels, more than 140 years old, are popular features; there are three along the way, including one that's three-quarters of a mile long. Bicyclists are encouraged to walk bikes through these dark and cool spaces—and bring a flashlight!

With 2018 marking the 50th year since the emergence of the Department of Natural Resources, it seems like a great time to celebrate the five-plus decades of the Elroy-Sparta State Trail, shown here in August 1967.

To learn more about this iconic state trail, including a map, trail pass requirements and a slideshow with more historic photos, go to dnr.wi.gov and search keywords "Elroy-Sparta." For information from the trail's Friends group, see elroyspartatrail.com.

—WNR staff

