

INSIDE

2016 WISCONSIN FISHING FORECAST

WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES

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April 2016 \$3.50

FIND FROGS

ON FIELD
TRIPS AND
SURVEYS

Wisconsin wetlands receive
international recognition

Spring turkey hunt tales

Motor-camping

Back in the day

When travel trailers were put to a test.

Kathryn A. Kahler

It started in the early 1930s, an unlikely time for a boom in a pastime considered by some to be a luxury. At a time when the country was just starting down the road to recovery from the Great Depression and its unprecedented levels of unemployment and homelessness, “motor-camping” took root and became a national craze attracting millions of enthusiasts.

Americans were feeling a new optimism and federal works programs were paving highways across the landscape, providing new access to public forests and parks. Companies began introducing travel trailers equipped with refrigerators, stoves, beds and bathrooms. Trailers with names like Air-float, Airstream, Roadmaster, Silver Streak, Covered Wagon and Vagabond carried families to national and state parks and forests for a couple of weeks of rest and relaxation each summer.

But travel trailers were not without their critics. In April 1935, E.P. Meinecke, a forest pathologist with the U.S. Forest Service, wrote a scathing memo to headquarters in Washington, D.C., about “The Trailer Menace,” and the threat he felt they posed to the



A trailer camper at the Northern Highland American Legion State Forest in September 1943.



EUGENE SANBORN

A camping area at Potawatomi State Park in June 1940.

natural resources of national parks and forests. He warned of how the “modern dwelling on wheels, a moving bungalow provided with beds, cooking stoves, sanitary equipment, running water, ice boxes and electric lights” would soon dominate campgrounds, crowding out “legitimate campers” and depleting park budgets that were forced to accommodate them.

Meinecke made a case that a “sharp line may be drawn between genuine campers and those who prefer city comforts,” and proposed that parks and forests be maintained for the former because the latter could find “ample provision in hotels, resorts and privately owned auto camps.” He went so far as to propose that it wasn’t too late to ban them outright.

When the United States entered World War II in 1941, one would think that summer vacations would have seen drastic cutbacks. Almost overnight, the country was plunged into war-time production and things like tires, cars, gasoline and fuel oil saw tight rationing. But in fact, leaders in Washington took the advice of Brits and Canadians who had already been immersed in the war for two years and promoted the value of recreation to the collective psyche and morale of the people.

In Wisconsin, C.L. Coon reported on the “Vacation Industry During the War,” in the February 1942 issue of the *Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin* (the predecessor to *Wisconsin Natural Resources* magazine). Coon was head of the Recreational Publicity Division of the Wisconsin Conservation Department, which a half century later would become

the Department of Tourism.

“It seems now only a few Sundays ago that the United States was so suddenly jarred by the news from Pearl Harbor,” Coon wrote. “However, in the few intervening weeks, the nation has settled down with unflinching resolution to the stern business of winning the war.

“This country, now strongly united and determined, is steeled to the firm conviction that a victory program should be ‘this above all,’ [but] that the tourist business is one industry which can continue, and perhaps even expand without impairing our war efforts...”

“Leaders in Washington advise that the war workers who have to back up the boys on the fighting fronts should keep fit for their war duty, and it seems sensible to believe that the workers can do a better job, work longer hours, and keep their morale at a higher level by combining their work with outdoor sports....

“Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes has recommended that civilian travel for purposes of relaxation should be continued, [providing] the essential ingredients for restoring health, rekindling enthusiasm and improving efficiency.”

So this summer as you confirm campground reservations, air out your tents and sleeping bags, and head out to Wisconsin’s state parks and forests, be thankful that planners over the years heeded the advice of Mr. Coon. And those pulling a pop-up camper or fifth-wheel behind your pickup? Thank your lucky stars that Mr. Meinecke’s advice went unheeded.

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



WISCONSIN LAND AND WATER
CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

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FRONT COVER: Frogs are featured on Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin field trips and are monitored through the Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey, now in its 35th year.

NATURAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION OF WISCONSIN FILE

BACK COVER: Wild lupine blooms at Wedde Creek Savanna State Natural Area in Marquette County. **INSET:** Karner blue butterfly on black-eyed Susan. To order a guidebook to State Natural Areas for \$18.00 (postage paid), send a check or money order payable to "Endangered Resources Fund - Guidebook" to: DNR, Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707. For more information about the SNA Program visit dnr.wi.gov and search "SNA."

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

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Get close to some amazing wildlife on field trips across the state.

There's so much to explore in Wisconsin!

CHRISTINE TANZER

GET STARTED WITH THE NATURAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION OF WISCONSIN FIELD TRIPS.

Christine Tanzer

With DNR professionals and expert naturalists as your guides, venture into the field to explore Wisconsin and the myriad of species and habitats it harbors. From frogs and turtles to butterflies and salamanders. From bogs and barrens to prairies and old-growth forests. With 188 field trips in the lineup this year, the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin's adventures span all corners of the state, giving participants the unique opportunity to learn about ecological riches and natural wonders. So, grab your hiking boots, bicycles and canoe paddles, and join us to explore Wisconsin!

The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin is a nonprofit organization founded in 1986. It secures private funding for our state's highest conservation priorities.

The Foundation also manages the Wisconsin Conservation Endowment, through which individuals and groups can create permanent funding for the places, species or conservation issues of most concern to them. The Wisconsin Conservation Endowment comprises 71 funds with a value of \$5.07 million.

The Foundation's newest initiative, in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources, is the Cherish Wisconsin Outdoors Fund, where individuals and businesses can give now so that our state fisheries, parks, wildlife areas and state natural areas can be cared for, forever. Learn more at CherishWisconsin.org.

Offering field trips is central to the Foundation's mission to connect generations to the wonders of Wisconsin's lands, waters and wildlife through conservation, education, engagement and giving. And, of course, the trips are a whole lot of fun!

Become a member or donate to the Foundation at WisConservation.org or call (866) 264-4096 for more information.

See page 10 in this issue to learn more about the Foundation.

Register online: WisConservation.org

Christine Tanzer is the field trips coordinator for the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin.

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. Trips fill quickly, so check the Foundation's website (WisConservation.org) for current availability.

2. BECOME A MEMBER OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION OF WISCONSIN.

Field trips are only open to members of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin and their guests. You can become a member at a discounted rate of just \$15 per family as part of your online registration. Or become a member online anytime at WisConservation.org. Your membership fee supports conservation projects across the state.

3. REGISTER FOR YOUR TRIPS AT WISCONSERVATION.ORG.

Click on the "Register for field trips" link. Enter the passcode JoinNRF to receive your discounted membership. You may register for up to four trips and bring up to five guests. The Foundation does not accept phone or email registrations.

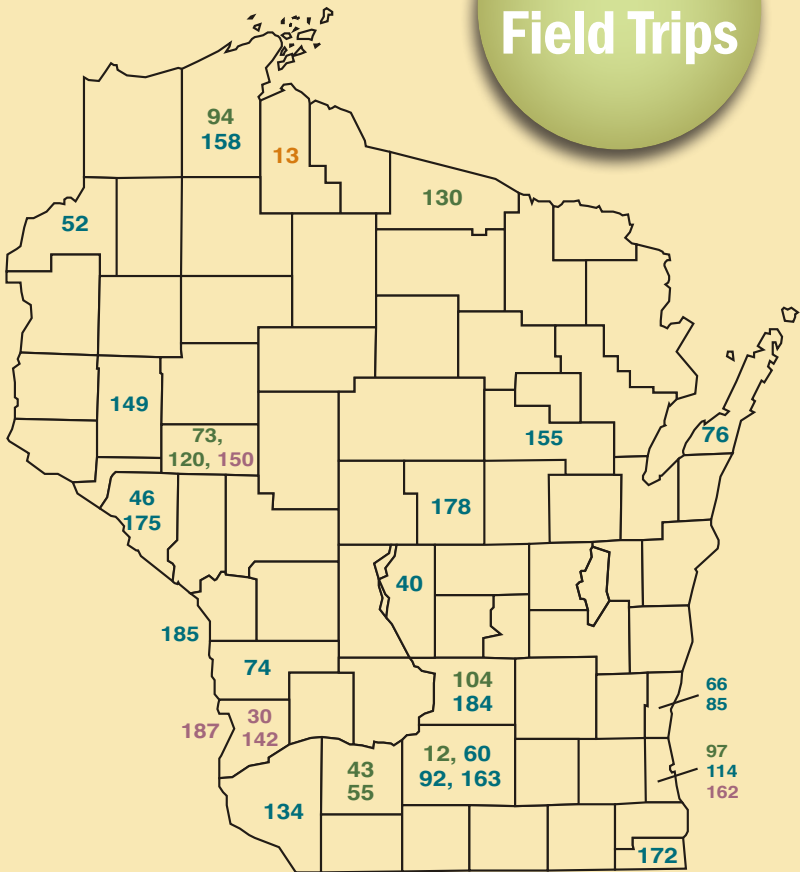
Approximately two weeks before each of your trips, you will receive an email with details and driving directions. Then it's time to get outdoors and get to know Wisconsin. Trips will fill fast, so sign up in April for best availability.

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



**Natural Resources
FOUNDATION**
of Wisconsin

2016 Field Trips



For a complete list of trips, visit 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
- 5** More extreme conditions, off trail and very steep or long hike

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



Questions? Call toll-free (866) 264-4096; or email:
FieldTrips@WisConservation.org.

Only a selection of trips is listed here. There are over 150 MORE field trips in the lineup that span the entire state. View trips and register online at WisConservation.org

Spy spruce grouse and boreal forests on trip 13.



BRUCE BARTELL



12. WATER TRANSFORMATION AT NINE SPRINGS

Where does our tap water come from and where does it go? Follow water as it flows through the Nine Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant and is transformed from harmful pollutant to helpful resource. Understand the impacts of water use and the role of wastewater treatment in the water cycle.

Ages 5+

Choose one session date to attend:

12-A. Thursday, April 28, 1 to 3 p.m.

12-B. Thursday, Sept. 29, 1 to 3 p.m.

Madison, Dane Co.

Leader: Emily Jones

Limit: 25

Cost: \$15 adult, \$5 child, per person

13. SPRUCE GROUSE IN THE BOREAL FOREST

Both spruce grouse and boreal forests are rarities in Wisconsin, and on this trip you get both! Hike off trail through balsam firs in a mossy boreal forest for intimate views of spruce grouse in resplendent courtship display. An exclusive chance to see one of the state's most unique, secretive and threatened birds. Fundraiser for the Bird Protection Fund.

Friday, April 29, 6 to 10:30 a.m.

Clam Lake, Ashland Co.

Leader: Ryan Brady

Limit: 20

Cost: \$75 per person



Explore the Tiffany Wildlife Area by train on trips 46 and 175.

CAIT WILLIAMSON



30. MISSISSIPPI RIVER EAGLE NEST AND WARBLERS BOAT CRUISE

Experience the mighty Mississippi during peak spring migration! Spy warblers, Neotropical migrants, otters and other wildlife of the backwater byways. Visit four eagle nests to see up close eagle parents fishing and feeding their nestlings. Enjoy it all from the deck of a semi-enclosed pontoon cruiser on this exclusive tour. Ages 8+
 Saturday, May 14, 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.
 Prairie du Chien, Crawford Co.
 Leader: Captain Annie
 Limit: 55
 Cost: \$36 adult, \$26 child, per person

40. KIRTLAND'S WARBLERS UP CLOSE

Chance to see/hear one of Wisconsin's rarest birds! Explore the carefully protected pine barrens to learn about Kirtland's warbler life history and ongoing management initiatives. Look for barrens wildflowers, reptiles and other birds such as the clay-colored sparrow. With luck and expert guidance, see/hear the elusive and rare Kirtland's warbler! Fundraiser for Kirtland's warbler conservation.
 Friday, May 20, 6:45 to 10 a.m.
 Rome, Adams Co.
 Leaders: Kim Grveles, Jon Robaidek, Davin Lopez and Amy and Rich Staffen
 Limit: 36
 Cost: \$45 per person



43. BLUEBIRD TRAIL HIKE

Learn about bluebird ecology as we hike an established bluebird nest

box trail. Peer into houses to see young hatchlings in various stages of development. Learn how you too can join the bluebird craze! Ages 6+
 Friday, May 20, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
 Muscoda, Iowa Co.
 Leaders: Dale, Doris and Russell Moody, and David Clutter
 Limit: 30
 Cost: \$25 adult, \$15 child, per person

46. TRAIN RIDE AND BIRDS: TIFFANY WILDLIFE AREA AND LOWER CHIPPEWA RIVER

All aboard! Take a ride on an antique open-air train into the most remote areas of the Tiffany Wildlife Area. Enjoy stops and short hikes into floodplain forests, wetlands, savannas and prairies. A chance to spy at least 75 species of birds during peak migration. Fundraiser for conservation efforts along the Lower Chippewa River.
 Saturday, May 21, 7 a.m. to noon
 Durand, Buffalo Co.
 Leaders: Dave Linderud, Steve Betchkal and Anne Geraghty
 Limit: 64
 Cost: \$38 per person

52. SPRING BUTTERFLY TREK: CREX TO THE BARRENS

Spring brings wildflowers, migrating songbirds and a burst of early-season butterflies to the pine barrens and bogs of Burnett County. From Crex to the Namekagon Barrens, join a butterfly enthusiast for a guided caravan tour of his favorite haunts. Venture amongst lupine, bearberry, blueberry, juneberry and cherry shrubs bedazzled in bloom

as we search for elfins, blues and dusky-wing skipper butterflies.
 Saturday, May 21, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
 Grantsburg, Burnett Co.
 Leader: Dean Hansen
 Limit: 18
 Cost: \$15 per person

55. PRAIRIES AND PIE AT SHEA VALLEY

Enjoy native prairie plants and wildlife while learning about preservation projects in the Shea Valley Prairie: a gem in the Military Ridge prairie complex. Enjoy an off-trail hike to see fens, mesic and dry prairies in bloom. Visit a hobby vineyard and savor a family-style lunch and homemade pie after the hike. Choose one session date to attend:
 55-A. Saturday, May 21, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
 55-B. Saturday, Aug. 27, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
 Barneveld, Iowa Co.
 Leaders: Shannon Shea Becker and Rich Henderson
 Limit: 20
 Cost: \$30 per person



60. STREAM ECOLOGY AT BLACK EARTH CREEK

Be a stream ecologist for a day! Get hands-on to learn about stream ecology and explore the waters of a beloved trout stream. Use sampling equipment to measure water quality and collect aquatic insects and fish. Great fun and learning for the whole family! Ages 7+
 Saturday, May 28, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 Black Earth, Dane Co.
 Leader: Mike Miller
 Limit: 20
 Cost: \$15 adult, \$5 child, per person



66. FISH PASSAGE ALONG THE MILWAUKEE RIVER

Years of hard work has reconnected more than 130 miles of rivers and streams in the Milwaukee River watershed, allowing native fish access to high-quality spawning habitat. See this amazing transformation firsthand. Visit dam removals, habitat restoration projects and a fish passage with an underwater camera. An important project on a historic river! Ages 10+
 Friday, June 3, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
 Thiensville, Ozaukee Co.
 Leaders: Matt Aho, Andrew Struck and Kristina Kroening
 Limit: 20
 Cost: \$15 adult, \$5 child, per person



73. TREE AND SHRUB ID: BEAVER CREEK

Can't tell oak from elm, or birch from beech? Here's a great chance to hone those ID skills! Hike Beaver Creek Reserve with an expert to learn many species of trees by their leaf, twig or bark — plus tricks to remember them. Learn some shrubs and vines too. Experience the forest as you never have before! Ages 12+
Saturday, June 4, 9:30 a.m. to noon
Fall Creek, Eau Claire Co.
Leader: James Schwiebert
Limit: 18
Cost: \$23 adult, \$13 child, per person



74. ECO-LOGIC FLY FISHING WORKSHOP

Understanding the ecology of trout streams makes for a richer angling experience and may even help you catch (and release) more fish. Learn about trout stream ecology, trout prey and the fly patterns that imitate them, and how to “read the water.” This workshop is for beginning through advanced fly fishers. Loaner fly rods available. Ages 12+
Saturday, June 4, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Avalanche, Vernon Co.
Leader: Mike Miller
Limit: 20
Cost: \$25 adult, \$15 child, per person



76. FROGS AND TOADS OF THE RIDGES

Learn to identify all 12 frog and toad species in Wisconsin by sight and calls. Then venture on a dusk hike through The Ridges Sanctuary in Door County to practice your new ID skills. See how easy it is to become a citizen scientist for the Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey! Ages 8+
Saturday, June 4, 7 to 10 p.m.
Bailey's Harbor, Door Co.
Leaders: Andrew Badje and Brian Forest
Limit: 40
Cost: \$15 adult, \$5 child, per person



85. CREATING WONDER: NATURAL ELEMENTS IN OUTDOOR PLAY SPACES

From whole trees to swimming holes, learn about natural play philosophy and the design elements of natural play spaces. Take a tour of Riveredge Nature Center's natural play areas and learn how you can incorporate natural elements into your park, day-care, school or home play setting. Ages 4+
Saturday, June 11, 1 to 3:30 p.m.
Newburg, Ozaukee Co.
Leader: Phyllis McKenzie
Limit: 24
Cost: \$15 adult, \$5 child, per person



92. WONDROUS WORMS, AMAZING ARTHROPODS, FASCINATING FLORA

How versed are you in the creepy and crawly of Wisconsin forests? Venture into the University of Wisconsin Arboretum and learn how diversity comes in all shapes and sizes! Search for interesting bugs, wiggly worms and problematic plants while learning how they impact our forests. Fun for kids! Ages 4+
Saturday, June 18, 9:30 a.m. to noon
Madison, Dane Co.
Leaders: Michael Hillstrom and Bernie Williams
Limit: 30
Cost: \$15 adult, \$5 child, per person

94. BIRD ATLASING IN MOQUAH BARRENS STATE NATURAL AREA

Hike Moquah Barrens SNA with rolling hills of open grasses and oaks in search of wildlife unique to pine barrens: vesper and clay-colored sparrows, upland sandpipers, chestnut-sided warblers, sharp-tailed grouse, thirteen-lined ground squirrels and dozens of butterflies. Learn how your bird sightings contribute to the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas project.
Friday, June 24, 7 to 11 a.m.
Iron River, Bayfield Co.
Leader: Ryan Brady
Limit: 20
Cost: \$15 per person

97. WHEELS AND WATER! BIKING MILWAUKEE'S HARBOR DISTRICT

At the confluence of three rivers, the Harbor District is a place where past meets future. Historic neighborhoods and century-old rail bridges meet high-tech manufacturing and world-class freshwater research. Our last remaining wetlands meet our newest fish ladders. Enjoy a bike ride through streets and trails with stops along the way to discover water resource history and future. You must bring your own bike.
Friday, June 24, 1 to 4 p.m.
Milwaukee, Milwaukee Co.
Leaders: Kevin Engstrom and Moranda Medina
Limit: 32
Cost: \$15 per person



104. WISCONSIN WILDLIFE AT THE MACKENZIE CENTER

Discover, identify and learn about Wisconsin's native wildlife. View nearly 20 different species of wildlife up close, hike through their native habitats and explore the tiniest of creatures in the study pond. Ages 3+



Paddle a Voyageur canoe to learn about mussels on trip 155.

GREG ZAHN

Sunday, June 26, 1 to 3:30 p.m.
Poynette, Columbia Co.
Leaders: Ruth Ann Lee and
Chrystal Seeley-Schreck
Limit: 25
Cost: \$15 adult, \$5 child, per person

114. LAKESHORE STATE PARK: URBAN OASIS

Lakeshore is one of the newest and most urban of Wisconsin's state parks. Located on a peninsula in Lake Michigan in downtown Milwaukee, it sports spectacular views of the city and lake. Hike short-grass prairies to learn about ecology and marvel at the surprising diversity of wildlife, plants and birds that inhabit this beloved park. Tuesday, July 12, 10 a.m. to noon Milwaukee, Milwaukee Co.
Leader: Tom Kroeger
Limit: 25
Cost: \$15 per person

120. MODERN LANDFILLS: CREATING RENEWABLE POWER AND COMPOST

Learn how a modern landfill is constructed, operated, and how the gas collected is turned into renewable power. This facility also leads the way in commercial food waste collection, turning it into rich compost. An important topic all citizens should know more about! Ages 10+ Saturday, July 16, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Eau Claire, Eau Claire Co.
Leader: Mark Vinall
Limit: 15
Cost: \$15 adult, \$5 child, per person

130. CATHERINE WOLTER WILDERNESS HIKE AND SERVICE

Hike remote areas of the beautiful Catherine Wolter Wilderness Area to

discover scenic trails and lovely vistas. Stop along the way to pull invasive plants and help make a significant difference in the ecological health of this beloved native landscape. Ages 12+ Sunday, July 24, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Presque Isle, Vilas Co.
Leader: Dan Wallace and
Waltrand Brinkman
Limit: 20
Cost: \$15 adult, \$5 child, per person

134. BREAKFAST WITH BATS: STONEFIELD HISTORIC SITE

Meet just before sunrise to marvel as nearly 4,000 bats swarm around their roost after a night out foraging. Enjoy a simple breakfast (provided) and interactive program to meet live fruit bats. Fundraiser for bat conservation in Wisconsin. Sunday, July 31, 4:45 to 7:30 a.m. Cassville, Grant Co.
Leaders: Jennifer Redell, Paul White
and Heather Kaarakka
Limit: 35
Cost: \$35 per person

142. SUNSET CRUISE ON THE MISSISSIPPI

Savor sunset as we cruise our way through the picturesque backwaters of the Mississippi near Prairie du Chien. Experience intimate encounters with birds and wildlife as they bask in the waning hours. Enjoy dessert and drinks aboard a semi-enclosed pontoon cruiser. Limited space available for this exclusive event, which is a fundraiser for the Foundation's field trip program. Saturday, Aug. 6, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Prairie du Chien, Crawford Co.
Leader: Captain Annie
Limit: 40
Cost: \$75 per person

149. 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 amazing contributions to the history of Wisconsin. Great fun for kids and adults! Ages 5+ Saturday, Aug. 13, 9 a.m. to noon Meridian, Dunn Co.
Leader: Lisie Kitchel
Limit: 25
Cost: \$15 adult, \$5 child, per person

150. NATIVE BUTTERFLIES UP CLOSE

Get up close and hands-on with native Wisconsin butterflies! See more than a dozen species of native butterflies in the Beaver Creek caterpillar rearing lab and butterfly house. Learn about butterfly life cycles, migration, ecology and the garden plants that attract them. Ages 12+ Saturday, Aug. 13, 9:30 a.m. to noon Fall Creek, Eau Claire Co.
Leader: James Schwiebert
Limit: 20
Cost: \$23 adult, \$13 child, per person

155. CANOE WITH MUSSELS ON THE WOLF RIVER

Adventure awaits! Paddle your way down the scenic Wolf River in a 10-passenger replica Voyageur fur-trade canoe. Wade into cool waters to explore freshwater mussels (clams) and other hidden life teeming on the riverbed below. Ages 10+ Saturday, Aug. 20, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Shawano, Shawano Co.
Leaders: Scott Koehnke, James Robaidek and Kay Brockman-Medaras
Limit: 18
Cost: \$15 adult, \$5 child, per person

158. BANDING BIRDS OF THE NORTHWOODS

Nothing like a bird in the hand! Using mist nets, we'll catch and band a variety of Northwoods songbirds. A great opportunity for bird lovers of all ages to see birds up close and hone their ID skills. Fundraiser for the Bird Protection Fund. Ages 10+ Saturday, Aug. 27, 7 to 10:30 a.m. Washburn, Bayfield Co.
Leader: Ryan Brady
Limit: 15
Cost: \$40 adult, \$30 child, per person



Capture and tag monarch butterflies on trip 172.

STEVE GLASS



Learn about freshwater mussels on trip 149 and others online at WisConservation.org.

VANESSA STEVENSON



162. MILWAUKEE'S WILDLIFE REHAB CENTER: BEHIND THE SCENES

Tour behind the scenes at the Wisconsin Humane Society's Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Milwaukee, which admits more than 5,000 injured, sick and orphaned wild animals each year. View some of the patients and visit with a peregrine falcon, eastern screech owl, big brown bats and more. Ages 12+ Thursday, Sept. 8, 2 to 4 p.m. Milwaukee, Milwaukee Co. Leader: Scott Diehl Limit: 40 Cost: \$20 adult, \$10 child, per person



163. CAVE OF THE MOUNDS: CAVE TOUR AND ABOVE GROUND TRAILS

Tour the Cave of the Mounds and marvel at this amazing underground gem. Resplendent and breathtaking natural wonders are around each bend! Then enjoy a hike through restored prairie and woodlands to learn about land management practices and the property's history. Ages 10+ Saturday, Sept. 10, 9 to 11:30 a.m. Blue Mounds, Dane Co. Leader: Kim Anderson Limit: 50 Cost: \$27 adult, \$14 child, per person



172. MIGRATING MONARCHS AT RICHARD BONG STATE RECREATION AREA

Discover how tagging unlocked the secrets to monarch butterfly migration, then go into the field to catch and tag monarch migrants that will fly all the way to Mexico for the winter! Ages 7+ Saturday, Sept. 17, 12:30 to 3 p.m. Kansasville, Kenosha Co.

Leaders: Beth Goepfinger and Jennifer Lois
Limit: 30
Cost: \$15 adult, \$5 child, per person

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

Enjoy a morning with a walk in the 5-Mile Bluff State Natural Area for amazing views of the Chippewa and Mississippi rivers, and learn about glacial geology, goat prairie management and timber rattlesnakes. Then off to the tracks for an open-air train ride into remote areas of the Tiffany Wildlife Area with stops for short hikes into prairies, savannas and floodplain forests. Learn why this is one of the most ecologically and historically unique areas of the state! Fundraiser for conservation along the Lower Chippewa River. Saturday, Sept. 24, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Durand, Buffalo Co. Leaders: Mark Rasmussen and Dean Edlin Limit: 64 Cost: \$48 per person



178. 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 adorable birds at Linwood Springs Research Station, which bands up to 700 migrating owls annually. Chance to see long-eared owls, too! Ages 7+ Time: all sessions 7:30 to 10 p.m. Choose one session date to attend: 178-A. Friday, Oct. 7 178-B. Saturday, Oct. 8

178-C. Friday, Oct. 14
178-D. Thursday, Oct. 20
178-E. Friday, Oct. 21
178-F. Saturday, Oct. 22
Stevens Point, Portage Co.
Leaders: Gene and Lorraine Jacobs
Limit: 40
Cost: \$30 adult, \$20 child, per person

184. CRANES, CROPS AND CONGREGATIONS

Back from near extinction in the 1930s, sandhill cranes are a conservation success story. Learn about crane ecology, long-term studies and potential conflicts with agriculture. Then observe thousands of cranes fly into roost for the evening. Fundraiser for the Bird Protection Fund. Friday, Oct. 28, 3 to 6 p.m. Portage, Columbia Co. Leaders: Steve Swenson and Anne Lacy Limit: 25 Cost: \$25 per person

185. MIGRATION ON THE MIGHTY MISSISSIPPI

A sight to behold! Expect to see more than 250 bald eagles and 100,000 waterfowl as we caravan to birding hotspots along the Mississippi River. See swans, pelicans, eagles, hawks and more at the peak of migration at this Globally Important Bird Area. Fundraiser for the Bird Protection Fund. Friday, Nov. 11, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Brownsville, Minnesota Leaders: Andrew Paulios, Steve Houdek and Jeb Barzen Limit: 50 Cost: \$45 per person



187. BOAT CRUISE THE MISSISSIPPI IN AUTUMN

Revel in the miracle of migration as we view many hundreds of migrating tundra swans, geese, ducks, pelicans and more than 100 bald eagles. Enjoy your perch on the deck of a heated pontoon cruiser on this exclusive tour of the famous Pool 9 in the Mississippi River Wildlife Refuge. Chance to see otters, minks and other wildlife too! Ages 10+ Choose one session time to attend: 187-A. Saturday, Nov. 12, 9 a.m. to noon 187-B. Saturday, Nov. 12, 1 to 4 p.m. Lansing, Iowa Leader: Captain Annie Limit: 55 Cost: \$56 adult, \$46 child, per person

A field trip guide leads a group of Foundation members at Bong State Recreation Area in 1994.

Connecting people to the wonders of Wisconsin

Celebrating 30 years of Conservation



Natural Resources FOUNDATION of Wisconsin

NATURAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION OF WISCONSIN.

NATURAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION OF WISCONSIN CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DNR.

Lindsay Renick Mayer

When members of the Natural Resources Board authorized the creation of a nonprofit to support the Department of Natural Resources' work in 1986, they put in place the building blocks for a bridge between private funding and public natural resources. Today, that nonprofit, the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, is a leader in providing support for state public lands, waters and wildlife. This year the Foundation celebrates three decades of partnership with the Department of Natural Resources and looks forward to another 30 years of sustaining Wisconsin's impressive conservation legacy.

"We know that Wisconsinites live here because of proximity to millions of acres of public land for camping, fishing, biking or birding," says Ruth Oppedahl, executive director of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin. "Our goal is to continue to be the conduit that channels our citizens' love for Wisconsin into support for the state's precious natural resources. This role is vital to the health of the public lands, waters and wildlife that we all cherish."

Since 1986, the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin has leveraged private support to provide \$3.8 million

to the department supporting conservation of rare and endangered species, and management of state natural areas and other state-owned public lands. That support has come through the Foundation's Wisconsin Conservation Endowment, which includes 71 endowment funds valued at \$5.07 million; the C.D. Besadny Conservation Grants Program, which has awarded \$446,800 in small grants to more than 550 projects throughout the state since 1989; and outright program gifts from individuals and various fundraising efforts for state-owned public lands and specific wildlife species. As a result, spe-

NATURAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION OF WISCONSIN.



Former DNR employee Steve Vetrano takes a close look at a trout during the Trout Management and Stream Shocking Demonstration field trip in 1996.

cies once considered near extinction are thriving, and the Department of Natural Resources is transforming public lands into healthy ecosystems.

Not just for the birds

Since 1989, the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin has provided more than \$1.5 million in direct support of rare and endangered species. These projects include Karner blue butterfly surveys and management, mussel monitoring, American marten monitoring and whooping crane reintroduction. Of those conservation projects that the Foundation has funded, the trumpeter swan recovery program has arguably been the most successful in bringing a species back from the brink.

Between 1987 and 2013, the Foundation provided more than \$238,000 for the DNR's efforts to rear swan cygnets, monitor trumpeter swan populations and rehabilitate injured swans. Only whooping crane reintroductions received more support from the Foundation. With the help of the Windway Capital Corporation, which provided \$42,250 in donated pilot and aircraft services, conservationists were able to collect swan eggs in Alaska and fly them back to the Milwaukee County Zoo. There they hatched in incubators, and then the chicks were placed into a captive-rearing program in preparation for re-introduction.

There are now more than 2,000 trumpeter swans in the state, making Wisconsin a national leader in trumpeter swan recovery. Just 20 years after the species was declared nearly extinct in North America, they were removed from the state endangered species list.

The Natural Resources Foundation has consistently supported bird conservation in Wisconsin, providing more than \$1 million to help care for birds in every stage of life. The Foundation's Bird Protection Fund supports species monitoring and reintroduction, habitat protection, and restoration initiatives.

"Without the Bird Protection Fund and the support the Foundation has provided for birds even before that fund was created, half of the conservation we've been doing in the state wouldn't have gotten done," says Kim Grveles, a DNR ecologist and coordinator of the Wisconsin Stopover Initiative, one of the bird-related projects that receives Foundation funding. "That funding helps us to be one of the leading states in bird conservation. We're recognized as being out in front in bird conservation and the Foundation has played an instrumental role in that."

This land is our land

In addition to supporting species recovery efforts, the Foundation has donated \$1.6 million since 1986 for managing and restoring state conservation lands, helping to ensure healthy habitat for wildlife. Through various endowment funds, such as the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Fund and the Lower Chippewa River Basin Conservation Fund, the Foundation has provided opportunities for individuals and organizations to protect in perpetuity the public places that they love.

In 2004 the Foundation began to raise money specifically for managing state natural areas, which represent the best



The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin played an instrumental role in the recovery of trumpeter swans in the state by providing support from 1987 to 2013 to swan recovery efforts.

DNR FILE



LINDSAY RENICK MAYER

The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin worked with DNR to identify more than 55 state natural areas with the greatest management needs and is working to raise needed funds.

of the last remaining vestiges of native plants and animal communities, including old-growth forests, bogs and bluffs, prairies and savannas. SNAs protect more than 60 percent of the state's endangered and threatened species and species of special concern. In addition, 91 percent of the state's endangered and threatened plant species grow in SNAs. Since 2000, the Foundation has donated \$1.3 million to managing SNAs. Today, the Foundation has identified more than 55 SNAs with the greatest management needs and is working to raise private funds to help the Department of Natural Resources accomplish its important work in these places.

"The Foundation has been really good about focusing its fundraising efforts on getting money specifically for land management, which allows us to purchase the right equipment and get boots on the ground to do the restoration work," says Thomas Meyer, a DNR natural areas conservation biologist. "I don't know of any other agency that has this kind of really close relationship with what is effectively a money-raising friends group. The model is wonderful and clearly successful."


Outdoor adventures

Perhaps the Foundation's most successful program to date is its field trip program, which connects thousands of Wisconsin residents every year with the state's diverse landscapes and wildlife. DNR biologists and ecologists often lead these trips, giving them a chance to highlight the importance of their work and inspire an even stronger conservation ethic in participants. Since 1993, the Foundation has coordinated 1,794 field trips for nearly 40,500 participants, often raising extra funds for conservation projects.

"We get so much good contact with the public for a limited amount of effort from DNR staff," says Mike Mossman, a DNR ecologist who has led a number of field trips for the Foundation. "They're high-quality field trips, they're very diverse and they often integrate history, wildlife and management issues. They also highlight partnerships. If it wasn't for the Foundation, this kind of program just wouldn't happen."

Looking ahead

Today, the Foundation has more than 4,000 members, an impressive 80 percent retention rate and is more important than ever before.

"The Foundation will continue to serve as the bridge through which Wisconsin citizens can have an even greater impact on conserving Wisconsin's natural resources," says Camille Zaroni, the Foundation's development director. "Wisconsin has a legacy of being a leader in conservation nationally, from Aldo Leopold to John Muir to the laws that were enacted for clean water and air. Through its leadership, the Foundation will help to preserve that legacy for the next 30 years and beyond." 

Lindsay Renick Mayer is the communications director for the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin.

The Great Wisconsin Birdathon

FROM YOUR BACKYARD.

Diane Packett

The May morning is warm and sunny. In the backyard, chilled goblets of orange juice sit next to lawn chairs that face a table laden with a sumptuous feast of peanuts, beef suet, white millet and black oil sunflower seeds. Binoculars are at the ready. Let the Great Wisconsin Birdathon begin!

Every spring since 2012, teams of birders have joined the Great Wisconsin Birdathon to tally as many bird species as possible in a day while collecting pledges and donations for the Bird Protection Fund. Through the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, the fund has supported the second Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas, whooping crane reintroduction, Kirtland's warbler monitoring (and other monitoring programs), and bird habitat protection and restoration initiatives in Wisconsin and abroad. Environmental organizations all over the country actually host hundreds of birdathons each year.

For many birders, the birdathon is an opportunity and a challenge to find as many birds as possible in 24 hours, and even engage in friendly competition with other teams. Top-notch birding skills and a well-planned route through diverse habitats are assets here, as is the ability to go without sleep. Timing the birdathon to coincide with peak migration, and good weather for birding, make for a thrilling and rewarding day.

But it doesn't have to be that intense. The point is to get outdoors, see birds, and raise funds, and there are many ways to do so. For a number of teams, the birdathon is about birding small, locally



Common yellowthroat

JEFF GALLIGAN



CAROLYN BYERS, MADISON AUDUBON SOCIETY

Fourth graders at Lincoln Elementary School in Madison spot birds in the neighborhood around their school as part of the Great Wisconsin Birdathon.

and leisurely. These birders may not be able to commit to a full day of traveling, want to bird "green" without fossil fuels, or prefer birding slowly.

In 2014, John Kraniak wanted to see which species were in his own neighborhood, so his team did their entire birdathon in his backyard.

"I'm interested in urban ecology," Kraniak says. "Nature isn't something that's

just up there in the Northwoods. It's right here in the city."

When he announced his plan, teammate Florence Edwards-Miller cautioned him that they might be lucky to see 20 species of birds. When they wrapped up their bird count, they had seen 50 — and it was only 11 a.m.

To be fair, Kraniak says he has "a singularly well-situated yard," next to the University of Wisconsin Arboretum, and there was a wave of migration the previous night that brought 20 species of warblers to one tree. He had also baited Baltimore orioles to the yard with orange slices over the previous two weeks.

"It was almost like cheating," Edwards-Miller jokes.

For those whose front yards don't include an arboretum, a walk through the neighborhood or local park can provide all the birds you need for a good day. Laurie Solchenberger's fourth grade class at Lincoln Elementary School in Madison has done just that, finding 39 species in the neighborhood around their school. The Great Wisconsin Birdathon has been part of Solchenberger's curriculum for several years, and last year her class took a different approach

to fundraising. Instead of asking their families to donate to their birdathon, students collected spare change over a period of three months and raised \$114. Half their earnings went back to the Madison Audubon Society, which worked closely with the class to teach environmental games to the whole school.

For 15 birders in Green Bay, the beautiful Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary was an obvious choice for a morning birdathon. Fueled by feet, not fossils, the GREEN Bay Birding team split into groups to hike about the sanctuary. Afterward, they gathered for a pizza lunch to share bird stories, and tallied up 87 species.

Clay-colored sparrow.



JEFF GALLIGAN

“It was definitely a social time, so we made sure we had fun,” says Nancy Nabak, who organized the event.

But perhaps the most relaxed birdathon happened entirely within a 17-foot-diameter circle. Anita Carpenter, a retired pharmacist, biologist and writer, has conducted the Great Big Sit for the last five years. Her bird count is part of BirdFest, a Bird City Oshkosh spring



JEFF GALLIGAN

Downy woodpecker.



JOHN KRANIAK, NATURAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION OF WISCONSIN

John Kraniak and Florence Edwards-Miller conduct a successful birdathon in Kraniak's front yard, spotting 50 species by 11 a.m.


event in Menominee Park. In 2015 the Big Sit doubled as a birdathon team, the Winnebago Warblers. From a vantage point with views of Lake Michigan and Miller Bay, Carpenter and friends have seen as many as 50 bird species.

“People walk by or bicycle through the park and stop and ask us what we’re doing,” Carpenter says. “We tell them about the birds and let them look through our scopes, and they say ‘Wow, I go through this park all the time and I never knew all these birds were out here.’ I get excited when people get excited. I might point out a Baltimore oriole, and it might be the first one they’ve seen. It’s a good way to teach people about birds and nature.”

This year, the Great Wisconsin Birdathon is working with Bird City Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology to encourage communities all over the state to participate by birding backyards and neighborhoods, parks and public lands. Organizations and Bird Cities that participate receive half their team’s earnings to use for their own conservation projects. Birding locally allows people to connect with the very birds and habitats that they are helping to conserve.

“Birdwatching makes you appreciate the exact spot that you’re in, and gives you a sense of place,” Edwards-Miller says.

This year, the Great Wisconsin Birdathon takes place from April 15 to June 15. The Natural Resources Foundation can help interested participants form a team and raise money. For more information, check out the birdathon website at WIBirdathon.org.

Then fill the birdfeeders, pull up a chair and enjoy the view. The bird you see could be the bird you save. 

Diane Packett is the Great Wisconsin Birdathon coordinator and a wildlife biologist specializing in migratory birds. She shares her Oregon, Wisconsin home with her husband, three (indoor) cats and two beehives.



Thanks to our Great Wisconsin Birdathon partners and sponsors: Bird City Wisconsin, Madison Audubon Society, Wisconsin Audubon Council, Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, *Birdwatching Magazine*, the Brookby Foundation, Eagle Optics, John J. Frautschi Family Foundation and We Energies Foundation.

Survey participants are treated to secondary benefits including nights filled with various wildlife sounds.

A male Blanchard's cricket frog calling. This is a state endangered species.

Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS OF MONITORING IN WISCONSIN.

Rori Paloski

It's an exciting year for frog monitoring in Wisconsin — it marks the 35th anniversary of the Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey (WFTS). The WFTS, coordinated by the Department of Natural Resources, monitors all Wisconsin frog species and is composed, almost entirely, of volunteers. The primary goals of the WFTS, the longest running amphibian monitoring project in North America, are to collect data on abundance, distribution and population trends of Wisconsin frogs.

Wisconsin is home to 12 frog species: one toad (American toad), five tree frogs (Blanchard's cricket frog, gray treefrog, Cope's gray treefrog, spring peeper and boreal chorus frog), and six "true" frogs (American bullfrog, green frog, pickerel frog, northern leopard frog, mink frog and wood frog). Many of these species are found throughout Wisconsin, while some, such as the Blanchard's cricket frog and mink frog, have very restricted ranges in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin frogs' habitat preferences vary as much as their ranges. The mink frog is almost exclusively aquatic and is rarely seen on the shoreline, while the northern leopard frog breeds in the water but spends the summers foraging up to a mile from water. Wood frogs, as their name implies, spend the majority of their time in wooded habitats while the Blanchard's cricket frog prefers open or semi-open canopy habitats. Species' susceptibility to human disturbance varies as well. Boreal chorus frogs are often heard calling in urban ponds and cattail

ditches, while the pickerel frog prefers less disturbed natural springs and adjacent waterbodies.

Survey history

The WFTS was created in 1981 by Ruth Hine and Mike Mossman of the Department of Natural Resources, in response to concerns over declining frog populations, primarily northern leopard frogs, Blanchard's cricket frogs, pickerel frogs and American bullfrogs. Mossman was involved with amphibian research at the time and Hine, a wildlife ecologist, had just finished editing Dick Vogt's classic book, "Natural History of Amphibians and Reptiles of Wisconsin." Hine decided to create a roadside survey to monitor frogs, similar to the highly successful federal Breeding Bird Survey.

In addition to noted declines in Wisconsin frog species, alarming declines in amphibian populations throughout the world have been observed for several decades.

"The decline of amphibian popula-

tions around the globe has been greater than that of any other vertebrate group," explains Tara Bergeson, a DNR amphibian specialist and conservation biologist. "There are a number of contributing factors, including habitat loss or degradation, chemical contamination, climate change, disease, deformities and non-native species introductions."

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point professor Ray Anderson and graduate student Debra Jansen, also assisted in designing the WFTS. Anderson and Jansen decided on three survey periods to cover each species' breeding period, as well as the call index, which is used to rate the strength of each species' calling on a scale of 0 to 3.

Frog breeding seasons, often considered a characteristic sign of spring, are easily recognizable as male frogs produce a breeding call that is unique to each species. The timing and duration of breeding periods also varies by species. Some species, like the green frog, call and breed over a period of several months, while other species, like the American toad, are considered "explosive" breeders — the species completes its entire breeding season within only a few weeks. Breeding call surveys, such as those used in the WFTS, are commonly used by researchers to survey for and monitor frog populations.

The first three years of the WFTS (1981 through 1983) were spent testing survey methods, especially regarding the number of stations that could be surveyed realistically in one night and the length of the survey period at each stop. Mossman

recounts the detailed work of setting up such a large scale survey, but also the interaction with the initial citizen volunteers.

“We spent a lot of time in the early years, with letters and phone calls to our current and potential volunteers, way before the advent of email — everything from the mundane reminders for everyone to carefully document their routes and station locations (no GPS!), to ensuring correct frog identification, eliciting feedback and just thanks,” Mossman says. “We learned a lot from one another.”

After three years of refining techniques, it was determined that each volunteer would conduct one survey during each of three survey periods (April 15 through 30, May 20 through June 5, and July 1 through 15) at 10 survey sites (wetlands, ponds, lakes, streams or rivers) for a period of five minutes per site. In addition to finalizing survey methods, additional statewide routes were added in 1984.

Mossman is extremely pleased with the success of the survey.

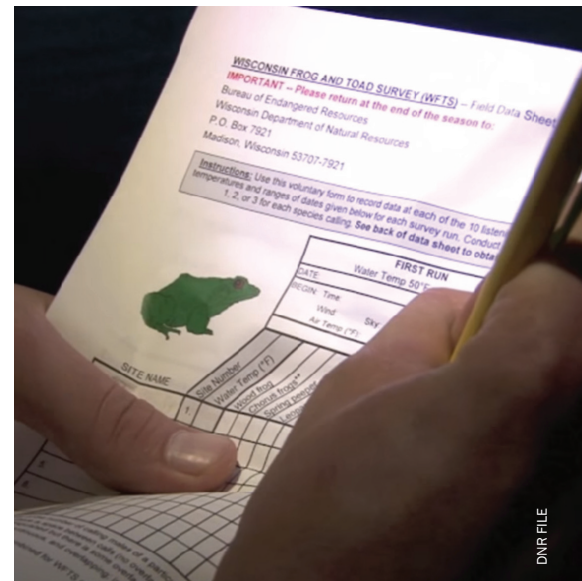
“Not only did we build the nation’s longest-running auditory, frog monitoring program, but we made great progress on one of the most important goals of the project from the outset: to get people out at night, patiently and quietly listening to frogs, engaging in the realm of nocturnal wildlife, and building deeper connections with these animals and the wetlands they rely on us to protect.”

Volunteers also often comment on these secondary benefits of survey par-

ticipation as well. Ron Eckstein, a retired DNR wildlife biologist and 30-plus year volunteer with the WFTS, enjoys contributing to the surveys, as well as “those wonderful nights that include common loons, barred owls, and whip-poor-wills with occasional northern lights and Milky Ways.”

The WFTS methodology has remained relatively unchanged since 1984, although the first calling period now begins on April 8 and is also adjusted occasionally to accommodate unusually warm or cool springs. To help monitor this changing phenology (i.e., the timing of annual biological events, such as when frogs start calling each spring), phenology surveys have also recently been added to the WFTS. Phenology surveys use the same call index and 5-minute calling period as the original surveys, but instead of visiting 10 predefined routes three times each year, volunteers select their own single site to monitor throughout the spring and early summer.

Volunteers may choose a pond on their own property, a lake they like to visit often or a stream crossing located on their commute home from work. Information collected as a result will help paint a better picture of the beginning and ending calling periods of each Wisconsin frog species, as well as how these periods may be shifting over time. A secondary benefit of adding phenology surveys is that additional volunteers can be involved in the WFTS. Standard WFTS surveys are limited to approximately two routes per county (although some



Volunteers conduct one survey during each of three survey periods.

counties have had additional routes grandfathered in). In contrast, the WFTS phenology surveys are open to an unlimited number of volunteers.

WFTS data are still heavily relied upon in the department’s amphibian conservation efforts today.

“One way that we keep our eye on the pulse of our native frog species is through the Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey,” explains Bergeson. “Because it is a standardized long-term monitoring effort, it helps us track trends for most of our species throughout the state. And, while the survey itself can’t tell us what is causing an observed change, it can give us early warning that something might be going on and that we need to investigate further.”

WFTS volunteer Heidi Conde says, “The most rewarding part of being involved in the survey is knowing that I am contributing data to a longstanding and important survey effort.”

Survey results

WFTS surveys have provided an abundance of data for all Wisconsin species and trend data for most Wisconsin species over the past 35 years.

American toads are commonly recorded during WFTS surveys but due to their short breeding season, they are likely missed during surveys some years. Toad populations appear to have been relatively stable over the past 35 years.

Gray treefrogs are one of the most commonly recorded species during WFTS surveys. Gray treefrog populations appear to have been stable or



A juvenile American bullfrog. This is one of the species whose decline initiated the WFTS.



A Blanchard's cricket frog.

RORI PALOSKI



An American toad nearly camouflaged.

MARK LABBERA

slightly increasing over the past 35 years.

Cope's gray treefrogs also are commonly recorded during WFTS surveys and their populations appear to have been relatively stable over the past 35 years.

Spring peepers and boreal chorus frogs are the two most commonly recorded species during WFTS surveys. Their populations appear to have been relatively stable over the past 35 years.

American bullfrogs, one of the species whose decline initiated the WFTS, are not often recorded during WFTS surveys. This special concern species is still considered to be somewhat rare in the state and is not often found in large numbers at any given site. Bullfrog populations appear to have been stable or slightly increasing over the past 35 years.

Green frogs are one of the most commonly recorded species during WFTS surveys and their populations appear to have been stable over the past 35 years.

Pickerel frogs, one of the species whose decline initiated the WFTS, are not often recorded during WFTS surveys, likely because this special concern species is still quite rare in Wisconsin. Pickerel frog populations appear to have been declining over the past 35 years.

Northern leopard frogs, another species whose decline initiated the WFTS,

are commonly recorded during WFTS surveys. Northern leopard frog populations appear to have been declining over the past 35 years.

Wood frogs are commonly recorded during WFTS surveys but due to their short breeding season, they are likely missed during surveys some years. Wood frog populations appear to have been relatively stable over the past 35 years.

Due to the extremely restricted range of the state endangered Blanchard's cricket frog and special concern mink frog, trend data cannot be calculated for these species. However, in addition to providing population trend information, WFTS reports of Blanchard's cricket frogs and mink frogs assist DNR researchers in other ways by identifying potential populations and helping focus research and monitoring efforts.

Since 1981, WFTS volunteers have conducted a staggering 78,914 site surveys throughout Wisconsin!

WFTS volunteer coordinator Andrew Badje believes, "The WFTS has the best citizen scientists out there." And given the longevity of the survey and dedication of the volunteers, that may just be true.

Rori Paloski is a conservation biologist in DNR's Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation.

>>> JOIN THE FUN

For more information on the WFTS or to participate in standard or phenology surveys, visit the Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey website: <http://wiatri.net/inventory/FrogToadSurvey/>.

There are currently 172 active original WFTS routes throughout Wisconsin.



Northern leopard frog

RORI PALOSKI

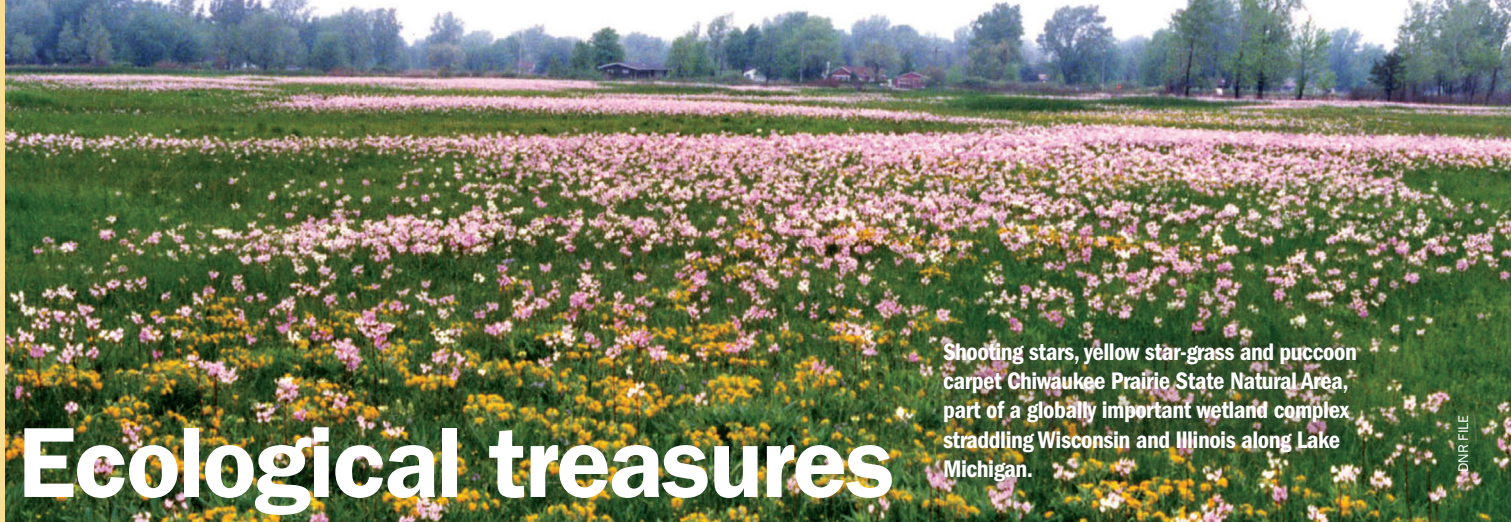
Did you know?

Amphibians include frogs, salamanders and the little-known caecilian, a legless animal that resembles a worm and is found throughout the world in tropical and sub-tropical habitats.

The Cope's gray treefrog and gray treefrog are so similar they were once considered the same species. The two species can only be definitively differentiated by their breeding call, through genetic testing or by chromosome number (the Cope's gray treefrog has two sets of chromosomes while the gray treefrog has four sets of chromosomes).

Wisconsin frogs use a variety of techniques to survive winter weather. Some species, like the American bullfrog, green frog, pickerel frog, northern leopard frog and mink frog overwinter underwater on the bottom of ponds, lakes, streams and rivers. Gray treefrogs, Cope's gray treefrogs, wood frogs, spring peepers and boreal chorus frogs freeze solid when they overwinter under leaf litter and other debris in the uplands — amazingly, a natural glucose-based antifreeze in their blood protects their cells from breaking! American toads burrow in the soil below the frost line to avoid freezing completely. And finally, the Blanchard's cricket frog cannot survive underwater and cannot withstand freezing so this frog seeks out crayfish burrows, small mammal burrows and other cracks and crevices in the soil near water that allow for a microclimate with air temperatures just above freezing.

Most species of tadpoles metamorphose (develop into juvenile frogs) over the summer and the entire population prepares to overwinter each fall as adult frogs. However a few Wisconsin species, such as the American bullfrog, green frog and mink frog may remain tadpoles for two or even three years before metamorphosing.



Shooting stars, yellow star-grass and puccoon carpet Chiwaukee Prairie State Natural Area, part of a globally important wetland complex straddling Wisconsin and Illinois along Lake Michigan.

DNR FILE

Ecological treasures

WISCONSIN IS HOME TO WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE.

Lisa Gaumnitz

Pam Holy grew up on Kenosha's south side in the 1950s, a few minutes' walk from Lake Michigan where towering sand dunes gave way to undulating wetlands and prairies.

"It was a magical place," Holy says. "As a child, I couldn't stay away."

The young teenager would swim, stroll the beach and watch swallows dive along the sand cliffs. Wild strawberries and wildflowers abounded.

Decades later, this magical place has drawn her back and won international acclaim as one of the world's ecological treasures.

On Sept. 25, 2015, the 4,000-acre complex of wetlands and prairies straddling the Wisconsin and Illinois state line was designated a "Wetland of International Importance" under the Ramsar Convention, an intergovernmental treaty for protection of exemplary wetland systems.

The area, called the Chiwaukee Prairie Illinois Beach Lake Plain, joins the Everglades in Florida and Chesapeake Bay in Virginia, as one of 37 U.S. sites in the global wetland pantheon.

It is the second Ramsar site designated in Wisconsin in the last year — the

other the Door Peninsula Coastal Wetlands. Three other Wisconsin sites — Horicon Marsh, the Upper Mississippi River Floodplain Marshes and the Kakegon and Bad River Sloughs along Lake Superior's south shore — are Wetlands of International Importance as well.

Their new status doesn't change who manages or regulates them nor how, but highlights their ecological significance and celebrates the hard work and perseverance behind their protection, says Katie Beilfuss, who spearheads the Wisconsin committee seeking designations for Wisconsin wetlands.

"What it does is gives us a reason to be super proud of the work we've already done and our conservation heritage," says Beilfuss, outreach program director for Wisconsin Wetlands Association.

In honor of their designations, and in celebration of May as American Wetlands Month, we share the stories behind Wisconsin's most recent additions to the world's crown jewels.

Piece by piece, a special place is secured

The Chiwaukee Prairie Illinois Beach Lake Plain includes six different wetland types, prairie and oak savanna, and is home to more than 930 native plant and 300 animal species. This abundant wildlife and scenic beauty attract more than 2 million visitors a year to the plain, the bulk of which lies in Illinois and all of which is open to the public. In Wisconsin, the designated area includes Chiwaukee Prairie State Natural Area and



KENOSHA NEWS PHOTO BY BRIAN PASSINO

Local citizens like Pam Holy lead the way in protecting lake plain wetlands and prairies.

has been managed as a partnership.

Holy returned to the area in the 1990s and now leads a volunteer group, the Chiwaukee Prairie Preservation Fund, that raises money and helps care for the site.

"This is a gem that is unequaled in the state," says Holy. Shooting stars carpet the prairie in May, gentians in September, and prairie grasses wave in the wind in autumn while monarch butterflies and hundreds of migrating bird species stop over to rest and fuel up.

"To have that much nature this close is a real special thing," she says. "It's so close and it's so magnificent."

That magnificent nature nearly met its match in the 1920s when developers planned a subdivision. The venture failed but the area was divided into hundreds of lots.

In 1965, a plan for a big marina on the site spurred local protection efforts.

"That's when volunteers got involved," says Holy. "People like Al Krampert, Phil Sander, Jim Olson, Gen Crema and others formed a committee and went to The Nature Conservancy for help. They raised \$5,500 to buy the first parcel to stymie the development. They recog-



Piping plovers, a federally endangered bird, are found in the lake plain and other Wisconsin wetlands recognized as globally important.

RYAN BRADY

nized what a special place it was.”

The committee incorporated as the nonprofit Chiwaukee Prairie Preservation Fund Inc. in the 1980s to better raise money and help care for the site. About that time, the Conservancy, the Village of Pleasant Prairie, University of Wisconsin-Parkside, and the Department of Natural Resources developed a land use plan that has led to the acquisition and preservation of more than 400 acres on the Wisconsin side.

“Chiwaukee Prairie is a great example of a dedicated group of local citizens literally doing everything for that place... field trips, bake sales, speakers’ talks and workdays,” says Steve Richter, the former longtime manager of The Nature Conservancy’s property in the lake plain.

“They would raise funds and we would buy the land. Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program funds were also critical to put that project together.”

The Nature Conservancy staff negotiated with more than 400 owners for land in the southern part of the subdivision platted in the 1920s and 1940s. Likewise the Department of Natural Resources worked with hundreds of owners to secure lots in the northern part.

“It has been this tenacious and patient effort over 50 years,” says Richter. “It’s inspiring. I tell the story of that place to a lot of people.”

Partnership across state lines

While work continues to acquire remaining lots in the subdivision from willing buyers, a big focus is controlling invasive species and runoff, says DNR wildlife manager Marty Johnson.

Frequent fires kept brush in check before European settlement; prescribed burns, along with brush mowing, are being used again to help maintain the prairie and oak savanna.

A DNR crew, a monthly volunteer workday hosted by preservation fund members, and volunteers from the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, the Illinois Youth Conservation Corps and Milwaukee middle and high school students have all helped control invasive species at the site.

As well, a growing partnership among Wisconsin landowners and Illinois conservation agencies and organizations is making a big difference.

“The partnership is not only resources and knowledge, it’s help from staff and communication,” Johnson says. “It’s a good coming together of a variety of agencies to work to benefit the lake plain.”



JOSH MAYER

The lake plain includes the region’s most robust population of prairie white-fringed orchid, a federally threatened plant.

Debbie Maurer of the Lake County Forest Preserve District led successful efforts to secure three grants to address runoff and hire a strike team of private contractors to nip new invasive species infestations in the bud. She also led efforts to secure the Ramsar designation.

Johnson hopes the lake plain’s status as a Wetland of International Importance will help attract a new generation of stewards and more stable funding.

“It’s important to know these things don’t just get saved because they’re there,” he says. “It takes active involvement and management.”

The beauty and diversity of the plants and wildlife that these partners protect offers visitors an endless opportunity to learn about the resilience of life in these diverse natural areas, says Jean Werbie-Harris, community development director for the Village of Pleasant Prairie.

“It is a significant and rare opportunity to be able to look back into our past and see what these small sections of the world looked like before human development approached.”

A sanctuary for wild things and for people

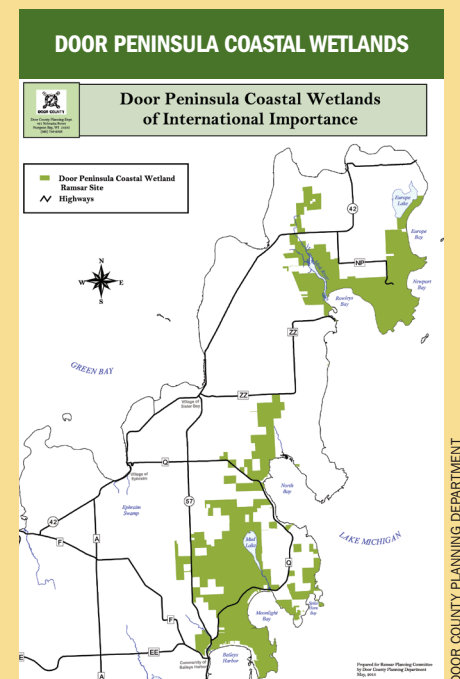
More than 11,000 acres of diverse wetlands comprise the Door Peninsula Coastal Wetlands, their variety captured in their names: Mink River Estuary, Ephraim Swamp, Mud Lake, Moonlight Bay Bedrock Beach and Bailey’s Harbor Boreal Forest state natural areas among them.

Over thousands of years, Lake Michi-

gan’s falling lake levels left behind former shorelines where sandy ridges alternate with wet areas known as swales. The lake now bathes the area in cooler, moister air later into the spring and warmer air later into the fall, creating a microclimate that allows boreal plants of the north to thrive as well. Together, the climate, geology and natural communities here make it the most biologically rich part of Wisconsin, with more plant and animal species found here than anywhere else.

Citizens, organizations and agencies have been working for nearly 80 years to acquire, preserve and manage this unique area as well as open it up to residents and visitors for recreation and contemplation alike.

The wake-up call came in 1937, when



DOOR COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT



PHIL MCGUIRE

The Lukes after receiving the Bronze Passenger Pigeon award at the 2010 Wisconsin Society of Ornithology convention.



MARK GODFREY, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Nature lovers find much to explore at North Bay Preserve and other gems in the mosaic of open wetlands, streams, small lakes and forest along Door County's Lake Michigan coast.

Door County started to build a trailer park on 40 acres along Bailey's Harbor featuring ridge and swale topography. Local residents Olivia Traven and Anna McArde heard the construction noise, investigated and sounded the alarm. They contacted Dr. Albert Fuller, the Milwaukee Public Museum director who often brought people to the area to study its 25 orchid species. He wrote to the local paper and spoke to groups to agitate against the project.

"Fuller slammed his fist on the table and said, a city like London would pay millions to have a place like this," says Charlotte Lukes, who together with her husband Roy have devoted their lives to the site. "The Ridges Sanctuary grew out of that."

The organization raised money to expand the protected acreage and became the state's first land trust.

Roy Lukes became the first full time manager and chief naturalist in 1964. Charlotte met him in 1971 while visiting Door County to test out her new camera. She fell in love with the man and the place.

"I was fascinated with the entire environment — it was so different from the city," says Charlotte, who was living and working in downtown Milwaukee as a dental hygienist.

The couple married in 1972, lived in the light keepers' house on the Ridges property, and worked together giving naturalist programs, caring for the site, and highlighting its history, geology and living treasures.

Roy Lukes wrote a popular nature column and several books on the site while Charlotte Lukes became an expert in my-

cology, the study of mushrooms. She has identified 550 mushrooms in Door County, documenting and photographing them.

Even after Roy retired in 1990 the couple continued to lead hundreds of hikes, birding trips, and workshops for Door County residents and visitors alike. In 2000, they helped start a friends group for Toft Point State Natural Area, undeveloped land next to the Ridges featuring ridge and swale topography, a unique cobble beach and old-growth pine.

The Toft family, including Emma Toft, a founder of The Ridges Sanctuary, had sold the land to The Nature Conservancy, which gave it to the University of Wisconsin System. Now, the Lukes and other volunteers keep the trails open there and provide trail docents.

"There are people who love this place. They are dedicated and vigilant," says Bob Howe, who directs the Cofrin Center of Biodiversity at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. "I don't see how we could manage the place effectively without them."

One time on a field trip with the Lukes, a Hine's emerald dragonfly, a federally endangered species, landed on Roy's shoulder, "as if it was placed to order," recalls Howe.

The site's wildness and scenic beauty hits him when he looks for frogs late at night as part of his research or stands along the cobble beach on Toft Point.

"The feeling that comes to anybody is the sense of the power and strength of the lake — and the serenity and aesthetics of the coastal beach and surrounding wetlands and woodland," Howe says.

The wetlands provide a rich classroom


for students and faculty alike.

"Every time we study that area for some obscure group of organisms something special turns up," rare spiders, native bees, and four-toed salamanders among them. "I think we're probably just scratching the surface," Howe says.

Like Holy in southeastern Wisconsin, Terrie Cooper has returned home to care for this special area, "a living geology and ecology laboratory. The Great Lakes and its ecosystems are among the youngest in the world — created as the glaciers receded 25,000 to 10,000 years ago. It's so recent, you're still watching succession happen before your eyes with the rise and fall of the lake levels."

"I'm extremely bonded to this landscape," Cooper says. "And growing up at a time when the county was changing from being very rural to a burgeoning tourist economy, it nudged me into what we can do to balance protection of resources and accommodating the 2.4 million people coming up here every year to enjoy the beauty."

As director of land programs for the Door County Land Trust for the last 17 years, Cooper has worked with public and private partners to acquire land and increase awareness, a mission that led partners to pursue the Ramsar designation.

"It's about bringing attention to what we have up here and the resources of the Great Lakes," Cooper says. "We are reminded what we have here and the responsibility we all have together to take care of this resource." 

Lisa Gaumnitz writes for the DNR's Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation.



ROBERT J. HURT LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

Upper Mississippi River floodplain marshes.

RAMSAR DEFINITION AND SITES IN WISCONSIN

WHAT IS A RAMSAR WETLAND OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE?

More than 160 countries came together in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971 to agree to work together in nonregulatory ways to protect the world's most significant wetlands. That includes designating sites as Wetlands of International Importance through a formal nominating process that documents the site's scientific, historical and cultural significance.

Nominations must include letters of support from all landowners within the site boundaries, from the local or state wildlife or natural resources agency, and from one member of Congress representing the area nominated. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must approve sites before they are submitted to the international Ramsar body. Worldwide, more than 2,193 sites have been designated Wetlands of International Importance. In Wisconsin, a committee led by the Wisconsin Wetlands Association has worked to nominate sites. That organization received The Ramsar Convention Award in 2012 in recognition of its work to increase Ramsar sites.

CHIWAUKEE PRAIRIE ILLINOIS BEACH LAKE PLAIN

Where: 3,914 acres straddling southeastern Wisconsin and northeastern Illinois along Lake Michigan.

Significance: Largest intact coastal prairies in the Great Lakes, includes six globally rare wetland communities and supports the region's most robust population of prairie white-fringed orchid, a federally threatened species. Critical migratory stopover habitat for at least 310 migratory bird species and rare and declining species including the Franklin's ground squirrel, red-tailed leafhopper and prairie milkweed.

Landowners: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, Village of Pleasant Prairie and University of Wisconsin-Parkside in Wisconsin; and the Lake County Forest Preserve District, Village of Winthrop Harbor, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Zion Park District and Waukegan Park District in Illinois.

DOOR PENINSULA COASTAL WETLANDS

Where: 11,443 acres in Door County, including 22.55 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline and the Mink River Estuary, Newport Beach State Park, The Ridges Sanctuary and multiple state natural areas.

Significance: Supports the highest plant and animal diversity in the state, including uncommon animals such as colonial-nesting water birds, wetland-dependent breeding and Neotropical migratory birds, Great Lakes migratory fish and wetland-associated mammals and amphibians. About 150 species of birds nest here or stop over during migration. It's a hotspot for warblers with 23 species documented and it's home to the largest known population of the federally endangered Hine's emerald dragonfly, and to a substantial population of a globally rare plant, the dwarf lake iris.

Landowners: Door County, Door County Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, The Ridges Sanctuary, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Department of Natural Resources, and two privately owned properties with lands permanently protected by easements.

KAKAGON AND BAD RIVER SLOUGHS

Where: 10,760 acres located at the mouths of the Bad and Kakagon rivers on the south shore of Lake Superior.

Significance: Largest and possibly most pristine remaining intact wetland on Lake Superior and largest remaining wild rice habitat on the Great Lakes. Gray wolf and Canada lynx, a federally threatened species, are known to inhabit the area and the site is one of only two remaining Wisconsin nesting sites for the federally endangered piping plover. Critical aquatic and land habitats support migrating birds, hosting tens of thousands of songbirds, raptors, shorebirds and waterbirds. Trumpeter swans, sandhill cranes, golden and bald eagles all frequent the site. Pristine and increasingly important spawning habitat for lake sturgeon due to pollution affecting other spawning areas along Lake Superior's south shore. The site is the first Ramsar site owned by a Native American tribe. Access is by permission from the tribe.

Landowners: Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.

HORICON MARSH

Where: 33,000 acres in state and national wildlife refuges in northern Dodge and southern Fond du Lac counties.

Significance: One of the largest intact freshwater wetlands in the United States and one of the largest cattail marshes in the world. Important staging area for migratory birds, especially for Canada geese and mallards; 80 percent of the Mississippi Flyway population of Canada geese (around 1.1 million birds) use the site during their fall migration. Habitat for staging, nesting or feeding site for other bird species including bald eagles, whooping cranes and the yellow-throated warbler. Over the years 300 species of birds have been sighted and it's not unusual to find up to 100 species of birds on Horicon Marsh alone! Important for maintaining the biological diversity of the region given the rapid loss of wetlands in Wisconsin; (estimated 50 percent loss since 1850 in most of Wisconsin and as much as 90 percent in southeastern Wisconsin.)

Landowners: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER FLOODPLAIN MARSHES

Where: 302,000 acres of federal and state lands and waters along the Upper Mississippi River floodplain, including the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin.

Significance: Natural floodplain backwaters of the Upper Mississippi River in the U.S. Upper Midwest were enlarged and enhanced by construction of locks and dams in the 1930s to improve commercial and recreational navigation. Today the site consists primarily of flowing main and side channel habitats, large shallow to moderately deep backwater marshes, flooded floodplain forests and shrub-dominated communities. Perhaps the most important corridor of fish and wildlife habitat remaining in the central United States, supporting significant populations of more than 100 native fish species and the federally endangered Higgins' eye pearlymussel. Sits at the core of the Mississippi Flyway, through which 40 percent of North America's waterfowl migrate.

Landowners: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state lands of Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota.

A kindergartner's winning poster.



Drawing the future of conservation

STATEWIDE POSTER CONTEST GIVES STUDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN ABOUT CONSERVATION.

Scott Hennelly

A poster can promote the next president, advertise a product and excite moviegoers. But can it teach kids about conservation? Many teachers, county conservationists and parents think so. Which is why they are telling their kids about the National Conservation poster contest. Organized by the National Association of Conservation Districts, states across the country submit their best posters to the annual contest, with kids competing from kindergarten through high school.

Wisconsin has participated in the contest for 59 years, with the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association's (WI Land+Water) Youth Education Committee taking the lead on organizing the competition on the state level for the past three. The poster theme changes annually, with the 2015 theme having been, "We All Need Trees." And while the posters are judged primarily on their conservation message, the contest has been entering art rooms, science labs and agricultural classes across the state.

Sprouting artists

Around the start of the school year in August is typically when teachers receive the email that reveals the year's poster theme. That is when Kelly Antoniewicz, art teacher at Richfield Elementary School in Washington County, starts planning her lessons to incorporate the contest into her curriculum. Her classes have been submitting posters for six years.

Following a presentation about the importance of trees, Antoniewicz helped

her students design their posters using an artistic eye.

"We are focused on making sure that it is colorful, balanced and uses the elements of art and principles of design," says Antoniewicz. "We talk more art related on how to get this message out."

As an art teacher, Antoniewicz loves how the contest promotes art within Richfield Elementary and gives her student artists statewide recognition.

"Although arts around the state are being cut, we are choosing to engage students through art. So art and the environment coming together is great," Antoniewicz says.

But Antoniewicz is not the only one enthusiastic about the contest; her students are as well. She can recall one student who told her that he still remembers how he

drew Spider Man hanging from a tree in his winning poster more than four years ago.

While these posters do require an artistic eye, they need to combine lessons in art and science to really go far. But combining art and science is not too daunting. Just ask Antoniewicz, who is the assistant advisor for the Rocket Club, and opens up her art room to students who want to build rockets.

New branch of science

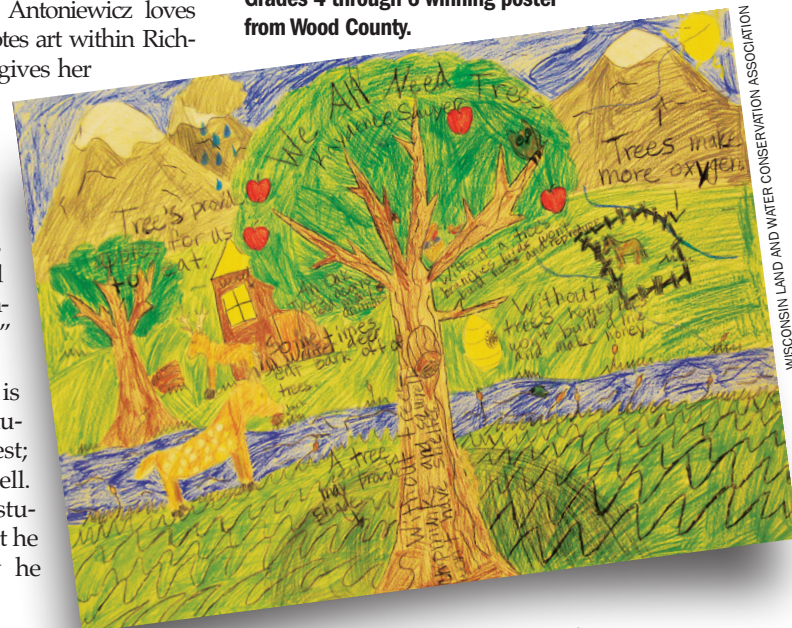
Across the county from Richfield Elementary is West Bend High School. With the poster contest being open to high schoolers, Paul DeLain, advanced placement environmental science teacher at West Bend, gives his students a chance to make a poster for extra credit. While Antoniewicz focuses on color, balance and other art principles, DeLain likes to discuss the science behind each year's theme.

"There's an opportunity every year to have discussions. In 2014 [the theme being pollinators], I went off that first day and talked about how one-in-three bites comes from a pollinator and most of them being from the honey bee and then we talked about what's currently wrong with the honey bee population," says DeLain.

DeLain knows the importance of good visuals in science. His classroom is covered with science posters, globes, models and gadgets that make science come to life and caters to those students he sees as less science oriented.

"There are kids in here who are more artsy — who think with the other side of the brain. So I look for opportunities when I'm teaching to allow them to pres-

Grades 4 through 6 winning poster from Wood County.



WISCONSIN LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

WISCONSIN LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

ent in more ways than just a lab report,” says DeLain.

The idea of offering an alternative assignment is important to DeLain; it is how he became a science teacher. During his senior year in high school, DeLain built a model of the Borax Team (a team of 20 mules that transported borax out of Death Valley) instead of taking a normal test. He then entered it into a competition at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville and received firsthand lessons about science and geology from his science teacher as they drove to drop it off.

“I became a teacher because of that guy. That idea of doing something different than the norm put me on a different path,” says DeLain. “That’s what I think of and tell my students when they do this poster competition. It’s a simple thing, but it could be one of those things that changes somebody.”

Roots in rural areas

Over 100 miles away, at the geographic center of Wisconsin, is Pittsville High School in Wood County. Surrounded by paper mills and cranberry bogs, and with a population under 1,000, students in Pittsville come from a more rural background. Bill Urban, the agriculture teacher at Pittsville High School, brings the poster contest to his eighth grade classes to supplement other conservation lessons.

“I teach a fish, forestry and feathers class one year and the next I teach wildlife and conservation. The poster contest plays into the conservation part — just getting kids interested in it,” says Urban.

A native of Pittsville himself, Urban likes to tell his students the advantages of growing up in a rural place, such as knowing firsthand where your food comes from.

“What I really like about the contest is that it makes these eighth graders focus a bit. They think about the concepts and have a realization that ‘Hey, trees are important.’ or ‘I didn’t realize how important honey bees are,’” Urban says.

Approximately 50 posters are submitted in Wood County every year, with over half coming from Urban’s class. While this is a small number compared to other counties, Tracy Arnold, the conservation program coordinator for Wood County, thinks the contest is making a lasting impact on those who participate.

“There are not many schools that participate in Wood County, but the ones that do see a real benefit with the teachers and students,” says Arnold. “The

students can relate to it because they’re outdoor kids. They’re ag kids. They can relate to the natural resources.”

Youth education plants the seed

In addition to being Wood County’s conservation program coordinator, Arnold is also chair of WI Land+Water’s Youth Education Committee. Arnold devotes one-third of her time to youth education, including the poster contest.

“I really see the contest growing and the reason is because of the passion of the people who want to keep it going. Like me, if they have an extra minute, it’s something they are volunteering to put on their plates,” says Arnold.

Being WI Land+Water’s largest committee, Arnold and her committee are never short on passion. After just three years, the committee has ramped up youth education around the state, promoting additional projects such as Envirothon, conservation camps and a speaking contest.

Success of these programs comes from passionate county workers like Stephanie Egner, project technician in Washington County. Egner devotes a portion of her work schedule to focus on youth education, occasionally dressing up like a farmer or beekeeper to teach lessons about conservation in schools around her county. Most of her invitations from schools come as a result of participating in the poster contest, Egner says.

Paul Gunderson, a county conservationist from Green Lake County, has also built a relationship with students and teachers in his county because of the poster contest. Last year, the county had two first place winners and one second place winner at the state level, who were recognized at a special ceremony put on by Gunderson in the county office.

“The winners of our local contest are recognized in front of the county board,” Gunderson says. “They have an opportunity to explain what the poster means and anything they liked about the contest. We also present the kids with certificates and cash prizes. Everyone really seems to enjoy the presentation.”

Parents in Green Lake County appreciate Gunderson’s efforts too. Lisa Reas-Knapp and her son, James, attended the ceremony once.


“In our house, we always talk about what the theme is going to be, and then I give my son about a week to think about what things he’d like to see on his poster,” says Reas-Knapp.

With her youngest son starting kindergarten, Reas-Knapp has been help-

ing both her sons think of what they can draw. At the end of the competition, in addition to getting a treasured poster she can give her kids when they are older, Reas-Knapp appreciates the lessons the contest teaches her sons.

“It gets kids at a younger age interested in environmental issues. So much seems to be for the older kids, but this is something the younger kids can be a part of. It’s very meaningful to them,” she says.

The meaning this poster contest holds for kids is much larger than one would expect to come from a simple 8-by-11-inch poster board. Yet, looking at what students take in to draw these posters — art lessons from Kelly Antoniewicz, science discussions with Paul DeLain, and an appreciation of natural resources from Bill Urban — the significance becomes apparent.

What kids draw on their posters are not just trees. They are pictures of the next generation’s attitude towards the environment and the future of conservation in Wisconsin. 

Scott Hennelly is a communications specialist with WI Land+Water, a nonprofit that supports locally led conservation through advocacy and capacity building.

>>> AWARD LEVELS

County level: Winners are announced between November and January. Awards vary by county. For example, Washington County features its winners in a calendar while Wood County gives out a trophy and \$20 gift card.

Regional level: Winner is announced between January and February. Awards depend on the region.

State level: Winner is announced at the WI Land+Water Annual Conference in March. All posters receive a plaque. First place winners also receive art supplies.

National level: Winner is announced at the NACD Annual Conference in January 2017. Award for first place is \$200; second place \$150; and third place \$100.

Past poster winners can be viewed at:

National level: nacdn.net.org/education/contests/poster

State level: wisconsinlandwater.org/events/youth-poster-amp-speaking-contest

A Christmas goose tastes even better when you were helped out on the hunt.

Teach a girl to

HUNT

YOU MAY HAVE A HUNTING PARTNER FOR LIFE.

KERRY MOTOVILOFF

John Motoviloff

The memories of teaching my daughter to fish and hunt are a stream fed by many sources. It's a special stream flowing from the time when Anne was a toddler and I was working out of the home as an outdoor writer.

One source is a windy November afternoon when Anne parted the curtains to reveal a brace of mallards from the morning's hunt hanging by the back door.

"Ack ack!" she said, imitating a duck.

That night at dinner, my wife Kerry cut her a slice of dark, tender duck.

"Ack ack!" Anne proclaimed, taking a big bite, smiling and coining her own word for meat.

Another source is a December twilight when I found myself walking along a spit of land between two lakes; Anne nestled in a backpack I carried on my shoulders. As I craned my head to get a better look at the ducks coming in to land there, I had the uncanny sense she was a shadow-self, seeing what I saw and feeling what I felt from a separate but connected being.

Another, still, stems from an Indian summer day when Anne and I were sitting on 5-gallon buckets plucking ducks. The fall wind had swept up clusters of down and I was struck, suddenly and powerfully, with the thought that life will always be fleeting while the attachment to those we love will always burn with searing permanence. So stinging was this truth that I had to turn away.

Following the stream

Streams flow on with their own ripples, glides and runs. Each one is distinct from the next. Just as we attend to water as anglers, we strive to teach others about the outdoors. Slowly, organically, patiently. And so one spring day found us — father, mother and daughter — on a trout stream near the Mississippi River. Kerry and I had caught fish, but casting beneath a tight tree canopy proved tough work for 6-year-old Anne. I offered to let Anne fight a trout I'd hooked, but she shook her head.

"I want to catch my own," she said, thrusting out her lower lip. I had her cast toward a fallen tree. The line sank into deep green water.

"Daddy, something's happening!" she said.

The water erupted, drag peeled off the reel, and she cranked in determinedly. I dropped my fly rod and rushed over. As I was about to coach her, I saw this

wasn't needed. She was already walking backward, in her tie-dye Wellies, and bringing the fish with her. The hefty brown trout was flopping on the bank and it was hard to say whether student or teacher was more excited. As we celebrated that night over butter burgers and root beer at Culver's, I saw that she knew exactly what she wanted — and was willing to wait for it.

A watershed of evocative names followed. Cold Spring and Plum Lake. Weister and Tainter. Crow Hollow and Star Valley. Kickapoo and Beaver Dam. Lunchbox and Triangles. We fished as the earth greened around us, finding morel mushrooms growing in leafy shade. We fished in July heat and gathered blackcaps in the evening cool. We fished in January, jigging through the ice for bluegill and crappie, and fried firm fillets in hot oil.

I showed her how to gut trout and wash them in cold, flowing water. How to bury fish bones in the garden to make vegetables grow. As she approached her teens, we became fishing partners.

Instruction gave way not so much to talk as to silence. There was an inquisitiveness in her hazel eyes that reminded me of my Ukrainian grandmother. There was, in our companionship, the silent bond my brother and I shared in fishing, which in turn echoed my Russian grandfather's proverbs. "More work, less talk. The quieter you go, the further you go."

"The coolest thing ever"

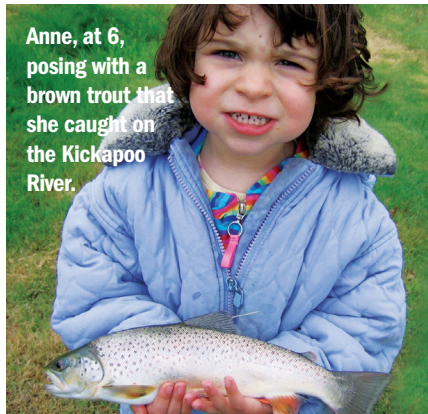
As streams press on, their character changes. As the Kickapoo — whose Algonquian name means, "he goes here and he goes there," and on whose bank we've built a family cabin — arises swift and narrow and then grows to a wide river, so we were ready to move from fishing to hunting. Not to handle guns, at this point, but to see if she liked the business of pursuing game. That our Labrador retriever, Gypsy, was a hunter helped pique Anne's interest.

If I've labored on my daughter's experience, it's not without reason. I've taught outdoor skills to adults and children. If I've learned one thing from this — and from my wife, who's been teaching for almost three decades — it's this: one size does not fit all. Each student — adult or child, male or female — has a particular path. Some may be ready at 10 or younger. Others may not have the opportunity or inclination until they are 20, 30, 40 or older. A good teacher meets



Anne and hunting pal Zane with wood ducks bagged on the 2015 Youth Waterfowl Hunt.

JOHN MOTOVILLOFF



Anne, at 6, posing with a brown trout that she caught on the Kickapoo River.

JOHN MOTOVILLOFF

students where they are.

One hoarfrosted December morning — after a hearty breakfast and with Anne dressed snugly in coveralls — we set out to chase pheasants in the Kickapoo River State Wildlife Area. Gypsy charged from the kennel and I slipped two shells into my side-by-side shotgun. I expected lots of chasing and little flushing, so we ambled along. Gypsy, however, had halted at the end of a weed patch. Her stiff posture told me a bird was near. Sure enough, a rooster flushed and I shot.

“Too loud?” I asked, as we went over to the dead bird.

“No,” she said. “It was the coolest thing ever!”

So began an apprenticeship. Anne endured mosquito bites on hot September dove hunts. She stomped brush piles to flush cottontail rabbits. She hauled decoys. She walked up steep coulee country hills. She carried a Christmas goose back to the car on a snowy evening looking in her wool cap and oversized coat, for the life of me, like a child from a Dickens novel.

Our most memorable hunt was a quiet evening on Pool 9 of the Mississippi River. I never fired a shot at the gadwall and widgeon flocking together in the open water beyond us. Our reward came, instead, in the form of a spectacle. A bald eagle swooped in and scooped

up a squawking duck in each talon, scattering the others in a whistling, quacking cloud. We sat processing what we’d seen and the words of Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset came to mind: “Hunting takes place across the entire zoological scale.”

This was a bonding time to be sure, with lots of hot chocolate and granola bars. But it was also a test to see if she really wanted to hunt. And a hedge against the nature deficit that’s all too common today. At worst, my thinking went, I would end up with a child who knew something about the workings of nature and guns. At best, I would have another hunting partner, my own Annie Oakley.

Timing is everything

I enrolled Anne in a hunter safety course at a local rod and gun club. That the class began the night of a howling blizzard, in which I nearly drove off the road, was perhaps an omen. The students watched a film about a young hunter who, after making a series of other mistakes, accidentally shot his friend. The film ended with the camera panning on the ambulance driving off, lights flashing.

I remembered, in junior high school, watching a prison documentary called “Scared Straight.” As the threat of incarceration, then, helped keep teenagers from jail, so the threat of maiming a friend would, here, discourage poor gun handling. This approach made good sense to me. But there must have been a disconnect for Anne.

I looked over to see that all color had drained from her face. While the message that you can’t take back a bullet is entirely correct, Anne’s take-way wasn’t the intended one. Sensitive and conscientious to a fault, she was, I could tell, sure she would kill someone the next time she picked up a gun. It was clear we needed to start over and find another class.

Shortly after this, I inherited my Uncle Roger’s Winchester Model 12, 16-gauge,

shotgun. He had used it, growing up in Pennsylvania in the 1950s, to hunt pheasants and quail. It had a good history, fit Anne well and, thanks to the polychoke it had been outfitted with, could be used for the full range of shotgunning.

We practiced gun handling and shooting at the cabin and she gained confidence. I enrolled her in an online hunter safety course in September 2015. At the field day, she got a perfect score on her written test and shot a pair of bull’s-eyes. That the youth waterfowl hunt took place a week after she completed the course seemed further proof that we were on the right track.

Taking advantage of this early season hunt, Anne and I crouched among fallen oak trees on a Lower Wisconsin Riverway slough. My hunting partner and his 14-year-old son were also there. The air was thick with anticipation and also with the pungent smell of bottomlands. A dense fog enveloped us and we waited. Soon, a drake wood duck twisted toward us through the timber. We could see his trademark facemasking as he came close.


“Take him,” I whispered.

Anne shouldered the Model 12 and fired. The bird lay twitching on the water and Gypsy brought it back. Anne held it and smoothed the feathers.

“Dinner,” she said.

I was going to remind her about ack ack. But it seemed best, with two teenager peers in the blind, to keep that one quiet.

While this turned out to be Anne’s only game bagged during her first season, she learned a great deal. She shot bull’s-eyes with a 30/30 at the Dane County Law Enforcement Range. On a pheasant hunt, she knew to turn down the shot as a hen flushed over her. During deer season, she sat quietly for hours on end, scanning the snowy woods, and never issued a complaint.

Where this will come to rest — or whether it will go on with its own trajectory, in her life, with her own family — I can’t say. Where this would have led had I pushed, earlier and harder, I’m certain: with a dislike for hunting and firearms. Now, we are making our way down the sporting road. It doesn’t matter whether it takes us to woods or waters, uplands or marsh, after fish or game. We’re here together, and that’s what counts. 

John Motoviloff edits hunting regulations booklets for the Department of Natural Resources. He is an avid hunter and author of the cookbook, “Wild Rice Goose and Other Dishes of the Upper Midwest.”

Rachel LaBarbera recorded and shared her Wisconsin turkey hunting success via her pink Blackberry smartphone and social media.

iPhone, iPad, iSurrender

TECHNOLOGY ON A TURKEY HUNT

Story and photos by Mark LaBarbera

Like other Wisconsin hunters who have more adventures behind us than ahead of us, I cherish time afield more than ever, especially when my only child, Rachel, now in her 20s, is at my side.

When she was very young, she learned the basics of firearms safety during backyard target practice, but other priorities in her teens stole the majority of her time and attention.

When terrorists attacked France right before Thanksgiving 2015, Rachel was boarding a business flight to Paris at the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport. Friends texted news of the bombings to her. TV monitors at the gate aired CNN coverage as French police were responding. On the plane, Rachel and other passengers heard updates from the airline as it delayed the flight and kept the jetway open, eventually offering passengers the option to disembark.

Rachel's cell phone kept her in touch with loved ones, and I was relieved

when she called my iPhone with news that she had decided not to make the trip. As parents, we assume that we will be the first to depart this earth. In reality, anyone at any time can be taken.

All of this rekindled memories of hunting excursions with young Rachel. One particular turkey hunt was especially meaningful because of the lesson learned. Memories of that hunt include letting go of a long-held perception. On that Wisconsin hunt, the mentor reluctantly became the student.

Throughout the trip, she was sending text messages on her pink Blackberry smartphone. Her friends knew when we arrived at camp, how late she stayed up, how early she had to get up, which iTunes files had turkey gobbles so they could hear at home what she was hearing for real in the wild, and what she was experiencing along the way.

At the time, I thought it was rude. We had had similar discussions years earlier about tuning out others when she put on her iPod headphones. Again, I thought she was bored and disinterested. It didn't seem like she was focused 100 percent on the hunt and the experience.

I didn't know what she was typing. To me, it was like being some place with someone who is whispering to another person right in front of you.

Late one morning, when gobblers started responding, Rachel made a great

shot on a nice tom. Her emotions poured out. It was all hugs and happiness. We tagged the bird, took pictures with her pink phone, and, before the bird had cooled, she had updated her Facebook page, tweeted enthusiastically, and sent the photos of our fun and success, plus more detailed text messages to her friends.

This is the same social media butterfly who surprised me when I hiked through the snow to her deer stand one year to see how she was holding up, and her thoughtful response was about how peaceful it was in the winter woods alone with the falling snow, birds, squirrels and her thoughts. She discovered the inner peace that time in nature can bring.

That is the dichotomy we all face in our recruitment efforts.

As we try to hook newcomers with the excitement, adventure and action, we also try to explain that some of the top motivations for spending time outdoors are to get away from it all, to escape the rat race, enjoy the peace and solitude, and reconnect with nature and our inner being.

Mentoring Rachel, I was the one who learned the most valuable lesson that technology and outdoor adventures can peacefully co-exist. Eventually, I admitted to her, "First it was an iPod, iTunes and then iPhone and an iPad. Now, I surrender. I give up."

She put away her iPhone and hugged me.

"Thanks, Dad."

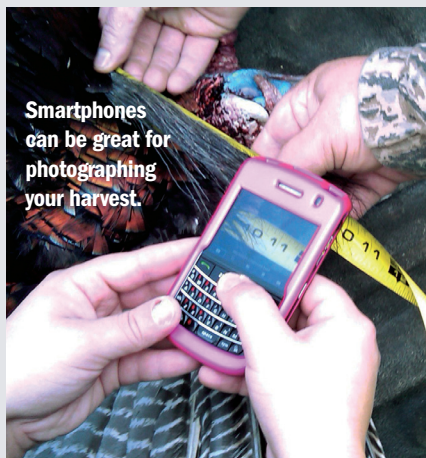
Now, when I mentor young hunters and anglers, I don't mind if they bring their mobile phones. Let them text. Let them tweet. Let them update their Facebook pages in the middle of the mentored experience, as long as there is no safety risk.

Heck, I'll help them by using their smartphone to take the picture or video with them having fun in that outdoor setting.

It no longer bothers me, because I realize now that they are spreading the good word about being outdoors. It's not rude or exclusionary. No, it is inclusive of her friends and followers. Call it "digital word-of-mouth" peer communication among trusted sources, with a certain credibility or believability that is far more likely to lead to action, or at least acceptance of hunting, than we could generate without them.



Mark LaBarbera is founder of the Outdoor Heritage Education Center and Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expo, May 18-19, 2016 at the DNR's MacKenzie Center, Poyntette.



Smartphones can be great for photographing your harvest.



The Red Banks Alvar
State Natural Area in
Brown County

Sparse and special

RED BANKS ALVAR STATE NATURAL AREA HOSTS RARE SPECIES.

Story by Joe Henry, photos by Thomas A. Meyer

Over the past 18 years, vacations for my family have been spent at our property on the Garden Peninsula in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Spending time outdoors exploring nature is one of my favorite things to do while on vacation.

One of my most memorable adventures was hiking to Point Detour, the tip of the peninsula. During this hike, one of the things that caught my attention was the amount of exposed bedrock that was evident along the coast. Long sections of the shoreline were strewn with large chunks of limestone boulders often paralleled by short cliffs ornate with dwarf lake iris. As I approached the tip, the boulders gave way to a flattened landscape where the bedrock turned into an expansive pavement transitioning into Lake Michigan.

Seeing all of this rock intrigued me and as I learned more about it I realized what I saw that day were distinct geologic features linked together by the bedrock. The limestone bedrock forms the basis of a wide array of related natural communities that hug the coastlines of the upper Great Lakes. Examples of these natural communities include Great Lakes alkaline rockshores, cobble beaches and alvars.

The term "alvar" was first used in North America by Scandinavian immigrants who settled in Ontario and were familiar with this habitat from their homelands. Alvars are grass and sedge-dominated plant communities occurring on broad, often exposed, expanses of limestone bedrock.

Some alvar communities are covered by thin sheets of discontinuous mineral soil often 10 inches thick or less. Many alvar communities are characterized by less than 60 percent tree cover.

Biologists have recognized several distinct alvar plant communities: open alvar pavements that are sparsely vegetated, alvar grasslands that are closely associated with short-grass prairies, alvar shrublands that resemble brushy prairies, and alvar woodlands and savannas that somewhat resemble oak savannas of the Midwest.

Geographically, alvars are rare, isolated and known to exist in only five areas of the world: the Baltic region of Europe, County Clare in Ireland, the Northwest Territories and Newfoundland of Canada, and the Great Lakes region of North America.

Great Lakes alvars are associated with the Niagara Escarpment, a prominent dolomite ridge that runs from Wisconsin through northern Lake Michigan and across northern Lake Huron through eastern Ontario to Niagara Falls, New York. Great Lakes alvars are unique from other alvars because of the distinctive plant and animal communities associated with the region. Since these species are found nowhere else in the world they are known as Great Lakes endemics. Occurrences of Great Lakes alvars are found in the province of Ontario, and the states of Ohio, Michigan, New York and Wisconsin.

The geographic context and geologic history of western Great Lakes alvars have shaped the unique flora and fauna that call these alvars home.

Approximately 100,000 years ago during the Wisconsin glaciation, scouring by the glaciers created the alvar pavements by scraping off topsoil leaving room for plants to grow only in the fractured bedrock; this same scouring also resulted in shallow depressions in the pavement that today form into ephemeral wetlands.

Alvars are known for their moisture extremes. Alvars can be seasonally flooded in the spring and fall as the shallow soils and exposed bedrock hold the melting snow and rains. These periods of wetness are contrasted by extreme drought during July and August where surface temperatures can reach up to 120 degrees. During these droughty months the wetlands dry up, and the vegetation must survive without water.

Despite the extreme environmental conditions, nearly 50 rare or declining

species have been documented on alvars in the Great Lakes region. Species like the federally threatened dwarf lake iris occur in Ontario, Michigan and Wisconsin. Another federally threatened species, lakeside daisy (named after Lakeside, Ohio), is found in Michigan, Ohio and Ontario. Rare species like loggerhead shrike and the eastern massasauga rattlesnake are strongly associated with alvars in Michigan.

Managing alvars can range from minimal visits to inspect sites for trash or newly established populations of invasive species, to intensive management for invasive species and to control shrub and tree encroachment.

Common invasive species found on alvars include woody species like autumn olive, European honeysuckles, exotic buckthorns, and herbaceous species like sweet clover, spotted knapweed, Canada thistle, and, in some cases, Phragmites, or common reed.

Some alvars need active management. Plant communities with well-developed ground and shrub cover lacking a closed, mature tree canopy, are created or maintained by intense or recurring disturbances.

To maintain alvars, land managers often use an integrated approach applying a variety of management tools ranging from timber harvests, mowing, herbicide application, and limited use of grazing under the right conditions. To a lesser extent, prescribed fire is also used on alvar grasslands, alvar shrublands and alvar woodlands and savannas where natural fires or fires set by Native Americans would have occurred more frequently. While many alvar communities need active management, communities like alvar pavements don't require any management and remain static on their own.

The fate of alvars is much like that of the tallgrass prairie with the majority of the original habitat having been destroyed. Historically, alvars covered a maximum of 600 square miles in the Great Lakes region with over three-quarters of the habitat occurring in Ontario.

Unfortunately, 93 percent of alvar habitat has been lost due to housing developments, rock quarrying, changes in hydrology resulting from quarrying, overgrazing and off road vehicle use. Presently, about 43 square miles of alvar habitat remain with the largest tracts in Ontario and smaller to medium sized remnants in Michigan.

If you want to visit Wisconsin's only



Cherrystone drop, a tiny terrestrial snail, is a state threatened species found in this area.

site, it is located at Red Banks Alvar State Natural Area, near Dyckesville in northeastern Brown County. Red Banks Alvar, acquired in 2001, protects 192 acres of habitat and is co-owned by the Department of Natural Resources and the Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust. Most of Red Banks is part of a larger oak woodland, a plant community more typically found in the southern part of the state.

This northerly occurrence of an oak woodland in Brown County is largely from the influence of the Potawatomi and Ho-Chunk who had numerous campsites, gardens and villages in Brown County. One Ho-Chunk village near Red Banks was estimated to have between 500 to 750 acres of cleared fields that were still visible in 1905. In conjunction with farming, Native Americans burned the land to aid in land clearing and increased food production. These agricultural practices helped to establish and perpetuate the prairie and savanna flora that are still found on this unique area today.

While the centerpiece of Red Banks is the alvar, it is flanked on its western border by a forested escarpment comprised of trees associated with southern mesic forests like basswood, white ash, and hackberry and shrubs like elderberry, ninebark and eastern wahoo. The Red Banks occurrences of hackberry and wahoo are the northeasternmost records for these species in Wisconsin.

These plants are able to survive here because the escarpment functions like a natural refrigerator keeping the environment cooler and moister than the surrounding landscape. Temperatures can vary as much as 10 to 15 degrees below the escarpment where cool air and water vent from the caves, and fractures in the rock face.

In 2008, the Botanical Club of Wisconsin spent several days at Red Banks Alvar identifying as many plant species as possible. When their field work was



Dwarf lake iris is also found to grow here.

completed, the club documented 208 species of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees, and 68 species of mosses and lichens.

Plant data was collected separately for both the escarpment woods and the alvar savanna and prairie. Species like bur and white oak, shagbark hickory, little and big bluestem, culver's root and shooting star were prominent on the alvar but were not found in the escarpment woods. Similarly, hackberry, basswood, mountain maple, bloodroot and wild ginger were prominent in the escarpment woods but did not occur in the alvar.

The dichotomy of these plant occurrences underscores the distinct nature of the plant communities and the influence the bedrock geology has on the growing environment. The compiled botanical report can be found at the Botanical Club website: <https://sites.google.com/site/botanicalclubofwisconsin/home>.

Land snail and butterfly surveys were conducted at Red Banks in the late 1990s. Surveyors found nearly two dozen glacial relict land snails that are associated with the Niagara escarpment including the state threatened Cherrystone drop and state endangered Midwest Pleistocene vertigo. Over 20 species of butterflies were documented on or near Red Banks; one of the most interesting finds was the mottled dusky wing, now listed as a state species of special concern.

The past surveys help establish a baseline of species living at the SNA. Surveys that are done in the future can provide information about any changes in what species are there now, and that can help guide us in adjusting management activities at Red Banks Alvar.

If you, like me, find unique features of Wisconsin's natural history interesting, Red Banks Alvar may be the place for you.



Joe Henry is a DNR district ecologist working out of the Green Bay office.

Chick fight

IN THIS BATTLE, JUST ABOUT ANYTHING GOES.

Story and photo by Bill LaFleur

I don't know if you've ever seen chicks fight before. But if you have, you know that they can get downright nasty. Anything goes. This isn't a swing-and-slug guy's fight. No, chicks get down and dirty. They scratch, claw, kick. You name it. Anything goes.

I experienced a chick fight in person once and it had all the above mentioned drama, but also teetered on becoming a fight to the death.

I had been filming a sandhill crane nest whose two eggs were ready to hatch any day. I thought it was strange how the female crane was sitting, and that one egg was outside the nest fully exposed next to her. I've seen this before, and had speculated the reason was to delay both eggs hatching at once.

Fortunately for me, on the morning I arrived I knew something was different by the body language of the pair. The male crane came up to relieve the hen from night duty. But she was uncharacteristically not ready to get up. She remained seated for quite a while and then when she did finally stand, there was a newly hatched chick (colt).

Her mate, in a touching moment, bent his head down for his first look at his

newborn. They both remained standing for some time before the hen finally went off to feed. She wasn't gone long, though, and hung around the nest site while the mate sat and the chick kept popping out from underneath his feathers. This peek-a-boo game went on for a couple hours before the male stood up exposing the newborn chick and the other still unhatched egg.

The chick was gaining strength by the minute as it would stumble around, falling forward and then backward like a drunken sailor. Finally, like an Olympic swimmer, he eased off the low platform nest into the water and swam like a duckling to the nearest high ground. Before long, the male and his chick disappeared.

All was quiet on the home front then, until during the night when the other egg hatched and the colt popped in and out of the hen's breast feathers walking

around the edge of the nest. The chick once tried to crawl up on the sitting hen's back like a loon chick, but it wasn't quite strong or agile enough to make it. To have succeeded, would have been the ultimate shot for a wildlife photographer and reward for many hours of time and patience. With a little luck and one more "umph" he would have been on the hen's back and I would have had the shot of a lifetime.

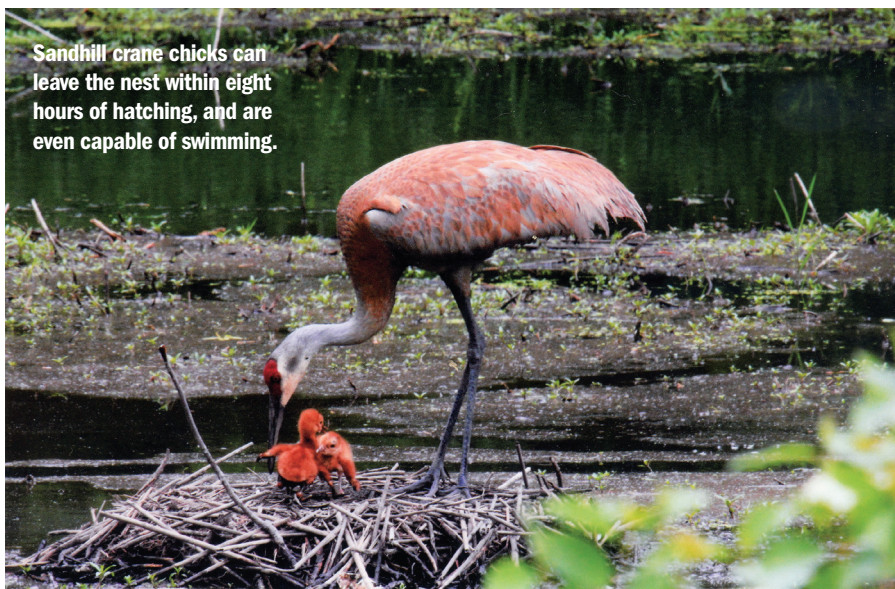
But it wasn't meant to be.

As the chick was gaining strength, popping in and out from under the hen and walking around the nest, the mate and sibling returned. This is unusual and could spell trouble. They were not supposed to return. This is the reason there is a day or two delay in the incubation of cranes and birds of prey. There is fierce sibling rivalry between chicks often resulting in the firstborn killing the second. Whether the fight is over food or the strongest to survive, the parents do little to intervene.

As the grudge match unfolded, I watched the firstborn climb up on the nest and eye-up his sibling. For the first time, they both romped around the nest playfully going in and out between the legs of the standing hen and her mate just a few feet away. The stronger firstborn was more aggressive and then, when push came to shove, things turned nasty.

Crane chick fights are intense as each chick has every intention of killing its sibling. There is no tapping out — if they can deliver a fatal blow, they go for the kill. The firstborn thrust and pecked violently at its sibling, sometimes coming right off its feet to deliver a damaging blow that luckily either missed or just glanced off. The adults, heads down like referees, made no attempt to stop the savageness. There also was nothing I could do but look on as it is nature's way.

This scene unfolded for nearly a minute until the firstborn tired and the sibling shrugged its head with no blood drawn, only sporting a sore head and body from being hammered on. Moments later they both acted as if nothing had happened. They then romped around for a while until the firstborn decided to leave the nest again, along with the adult male, leaving the sibling bruised and battered and very lucky to be alive.



Sandhill crane chicks can leave the nest within eight hours of hatching, and are even capable of swimming.

BILL LAFLEUR

Bill LaFleur is a wildlife photographer from Portage.

Write

MENTORED HUNT

Thanks to the readers who inquired about the 12-year-old hunter shown with his first deer in the December 2015 issue. We double-checked with the DNR conservation wardens for you, and, yes, the young hunter had completed his hunter safety certificate and was accompanied on his successful hunt by an adult as required by Wisconsin law. Thank you, readers, for thinking about the safety of all who enjoy Wisconsin's natural resources. Congratulations to Devin on his first deer. To apply for a first deer certificate, go to dnr.wi.gov and search "First Deer."

Natasha Kassulke, editor Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine

NAME THAT TUNE

We also asked readers in our December 2015 issue to help Bruce Birr of Manistique, Michigan, identify a song and artist that was played on some Wisconsin radio stations in 1969 and referenced the foghorns along the Lake Michigan shoreline of Wisconsin. You came through and we heard from many of you that the song was the "TR Special" (with the TR standing for Two Rivers) recorded by Wayne Brunner. Jim Martens and Kari Kahl even found a version on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjtPkCPcMFA>.

Another reader, Lee Erickson of Algoma, writes: I was in the Army stationed in Germany (1968-69) and my family sent me a 45 RPM record of this song. It was on the PAL Records label. The reverse side song is called "Out of Sight." I still have two copies of the record.

Natasha Kassulke, editor Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine

WINTER SURPRISE

While attempting to squirrel hunt on the last day of the year 2015, I stopped to rest after tramping through the woods for quite some time. I had only seen three squirrels, but they were too far away. Standing there, I looked at the beautiful, snow-coated ground. Turning my head, I noticed a small bird fluttering toward me. This small bird was a ruby-crowned kinglet. I was stunned because this little bird isn't even supposed to be in Wisconsin during the winter. As the bird flew from branch to branch, I was full of emotion. I was able to become part of nature in less than a minute; the bird accepted me as part of the woods. This experience assured something I already knew; I am not only a part of nature, nature is a part of me.

Brilyn Brecka
Alma



BRILYN BRECKA

COMMENT ON A STORY?

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

NO ACCESS TO THE WEB?

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



SUBMITTED BY LAMONT BONHAM

LAST DAY GUN HUNT SUCCESS

As a subscriber to the Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine I just wanted to submit a photo from the last day of the Wisconsin gun season, Nov. 29, 2015. I harvested this buck in Marathon County. It weighed in at 188 pounds dressed and was an 18 pointer, although officially it's a 17 pointer since one point is just under an inch in length. The inside spread was 21 3/8 inches.

LaMont Bonham
Wausau

PHEASANT HATCHING MEMORIES

Your article in the Dec. 2015 issue about the State Game Farm reminded me of my experiences hatching and raising pheasants in my hometown, East Troy, in the late 1940s when I was about 7 or 8 years old. We had a two story, two-plus car garage with an abandoned dog pen built under the stairs leading to the second floor. My dad and I decided the dog cage would be a good place to hatch and raise the pheasants. We replaced the hinged door to the outside pen with a burlap bag, spread straw on the floor and put chicken wire over the outside pen to keep the pheasants in and the varmints out. The last preparation step was to buy a Guinea hen to hatch the eggs. It seemed like a long ride from East Troy to the game farm in Poynette. We purchased 12 eggs for \$6. My job was to occasionally change the straw and feed and water the chicks and hen daily. It was with great expectation to get up every morning to see if the chicks had hatched and they finally did in about two weeks. It rained one day and some of the chicks were outside and I thought they were in peril. My dad worked next door to our house at a stainless steel, pipe and tube mill. I had never been inside the factory but on the day the rain came I went looking for my dad. People were eager to find my dad for me and as we returned home he assured me the chicks would be okay in the rain. About two weeks before the start of pheasant hunting season we put the birds in burlap bags and transported them to the Troy Marsh for release. All 12 birds survived their experience with me. I don't know how many survived the pheasant hunting season!

Don Wiedenheft
Waukesha

KUDOS FROM A PHEASANT DIAPERER

I recently received the December 2015 issue with your well-written article about pheasant diapers. My association with the Poynette Game Farm was a great experience in my younger years. Their employees were my friends and neighbors. I was fortunate to have Harley MacKenzie as my friend and mentor. It is rare to have a personalized article when you're 88 years old except for an obituary. I wanted you to know of my appreciation for the nice job you did.

Bob Vosen
Fond du Lac



BONNIE AND JIM HALPER

EARLY MORNING MARSH SURPRISE

A red eyed heron (black-crowned night) spotted on Horicon Marsh on Hwy. 49. We saw many of them in the early morning (August 2015).

Bonnie and Jim Halper
Kewaskum

Traveler

The great Northwoods adventure.

Story and photos by John Scanlan

I don't know when the idea first hit me. I think it was in July of 2014. Lying spread eagle beneath a ceiling fan while trying to sleep in the heat, I declared, "I'm not spending another July in South Carolina."

Thus, I started a year's worth of planning on what I dubbed to be "The great Northwoods adventure." I decided to use Superior, Wisconsin, as my base of operations, and from there I would pedal over to the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and back.

I departed Hilton Head Island with my Trek hybrid mounted atop my car and arrived in Superior on Sunday, July 5, 2015. I got a room at the Holiday Inn Express on U.S. Routes 2 and 53 and walked right across the street to eat at Perkins; after which, I toured the Richard I. Bong Historical Center, which honors the memory of Major Dick Bong and other WWII veterans. I ate supper at Perkins too, vowing that it would be my last chain restaurant. From here on out, it would be local, mom-n-pop places.

The next morning, I ate breakfast in the lobby, checked out and hit the Osaugie Trail on my bicycle. Paralleling traffic on U.S. Routes 2 and 53, I pedaled south to the Osaugie's end and then jumped on County Road E.

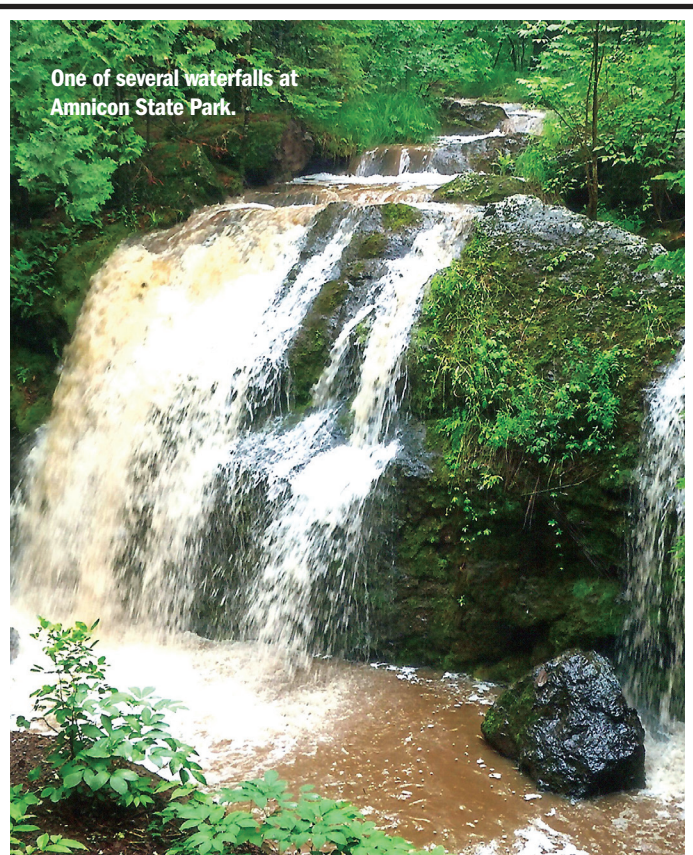
Time spent on more county roads and a brief stint on U.S. 2 — where I laughed out loud at the Three Finger Fireworks sign — took me to The Sleepy Hollow Motel, where I got a room. This was a clean, mom-n-pop place with a wood motif just outside of Amnicon Falls State Park.

From there, I walked into the park to take pictures of the falls, which were gorgeous. Due to the recent rain, the Amnicon River roared through the park that

was lush and green. Afterwards, I walked to Charlie's Riverside Bar for a small veggie pizza.

The next morning's breakfast consisted of a cold chicken wrap from Charlie's, after which, I hit U.S. 2 traveling east at 6:53 a.m. Where did those hills come from? I thought Wisconsin was flat! In fact, before arriving at Brule, I had to overcome two "walkers" — hills so steep that I had to dismount and push my loaded Trek.

After eating a huge late breakfast at Twin Gables, I rented a canoe from the Brule River Canoe Rental Company. Then I did canoe route A1, a calm 12-mile paddle down the



One of several waterfalls at Amnicon State Park.

Brule River from Stones Bridge Landing to Winneboujou . . . but there was a kicker. They had no one-man canoes, so I had to sit backwards on the front seat of a 14-foot, two-man canoe. Stop and think about that for

a second. In any case, the four-hour paddle was gorgeous. I even stopped to watch a deer feed along the banks.

Afterwards, I walked across the highway to get a room at the Brule River Motel and then walked to eat supper at The Round Up North. If you're ever there, get the spaghetti.

Wednesday, July 8 started with a monstrous breakfast at Twin Gables that included two egg-n-cheese muffins to go. Then I headed north and out of Brule. I eventually hit the smooth pavement and downhill grade of Wisconsin Route 13 and cruised at 16 mph into Port Wing. It was so cool to look across Lake Superior and be able to see Minnesota.

I set up my tent at the Anchor Inn Campground and then relaxed before eating supper in the Bear Paw Café. I was envious of the young waitress, who would be a freshman at the University of Wisconsin in a matter of weeks.

The next morning, after waffles at the Bear Paw, I was on the road at 7:31. After a big "walker" into Herbster, I cruised into Cornucopia, hoping to catch a kayak excursion. But



Grizz Works Wood Sculpture & Outdoor gallery features chainsaw art in Maple.



Cornucopia is known as the western gateway to the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

What's cooking?



AWAITING ASPARAGUS

Asparagus is an excellent source of vitamin K, folate, copper, selenium, vitamin B2, vitamin C, and vitamin E. It is a very good source of dietary fiber, manganese, phosphorus, niacin, potassium, choline, vitamin A, zinc, iron, protein, vitamin B6 and pantothenic acid. And it's delicious. Gardening season for asparagus in Wisconsin runs April through June.

Did you know that you also can pick wild asparagus on a state wildlife area? Edible fruits, edible nuts, wild mushrooms, wild asparagus and watercress may be removed by hand without a permit for the purpose of personal consumption by the collector. To find a state wildlife area near you, visit dnr.wi.gov and search "state wildlife area."

ASPARAGUS WITH LEMON MUSTARD VINAIGRETTE

- 1 ½ pounds fresh asparagus, washed and trimmed
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 teaspoons lemon and pepper seasoning
- 1 tablespoon country-style Dijon mustard
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ¼ cup olive or vegetable oil

Steam or boil the asparagus for 7 to 10 minutes, or until tender. Rinse with cold water. Place the asparagus on large platter and top with the red onion. Combine the remaining ingredients; drizzle over the asparagus and serve. Serves 6; 120 calories and 9 grams fat.

This recipe is from Sherry Tanumihardjo of UW-Extension and Jennifer Keeley, Bureau of Aging and Long Term Care Resources.

WE REGRET THE ERROR.

The February issue cited an incorrect date for the MacKenzie Center Maple Syrup Festival. The festival is Saturday, April 2.

no luck. All of Lost Creek Adventures' trips were full. So, I made a reservation for the next morning and set up my tent at the Siskiwit Bay Marina. The previous night I was surrounded by RVs, tonight I would have boats in the marina on one side and Lake Superior on the other.

Then I walked to see three waterfalls in the local Siskiwit River: a beautiful, under-the-radar escape. I soaked my feet in a clear pool until it was time to eat supper and then I walked to eat whitefish at The Village Inn.

On Friday morning, I kayaked with a group to the Mawikwe Bay Sea Caves, part of the Apostle Island National Lakeshore, courtesy of Lost Creek Adventures. There, I learned that centuries of wave action, freezing and thawing had sculpted formations and caves into the sandstone shoreline. We paddled amongst them and it was awesome.

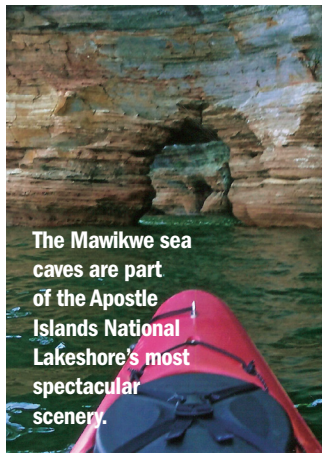
After lunch in the classic Ehler's Store, I hopped on my Trek at 12:30. Later, while pushing my Trek up a huge "walker," a touring bicyclist with a guitar strapped to his back passed me. It was humiliating, but in any case, I eventually pedaled around the horn on Route 13 to Bayfield. There, I immediately went to the dock and signed up for the next day's Stockton Island Day-Hiker with Apostle Islands Cruises. Then I got a quick bicycle tune-up at Bayfield Bike Route, where the guy with the guitar was doing the same. Lastly, I

ate whitefish at Greunke's Inn and I realized a pattern was starting to form in my schedule.

Totally exhausted, the last thing I wanted to do was climb back onto my Trek, so I pushed it to get a tent site at the Apostle Islands Area Campground, located 1 ½ miles south of Bayfield.

The next morning I walked to eat breakfast in Greunke's and then Apostle Islands Cruises took me and several others out to Stockton Island and dropped us off. There, I hiked the Anderson Point Trail, taking some phenomenal pictures, and caught my boat ride back to Bayfield. Then I toured both the Historical Museum and the Maritime Museum before eating whitefish at Maggie's. Then, I got a veggie pizza to go and walked the 1 ½ miles back out to my campsite.

Sunday, July 12, started with half of a cold veggie pizza and then hitting Route 13 at 6:50. In Washburn, French



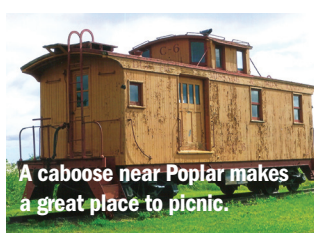
The Mawikwe sea caves are part of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore's most spectacular scenery.

toast from the Coco Café powered me onward to U.S. 2 west, where I continued to the Iron River. And that's where I caved and broke my vow to not eat at chain restaurants. I couldn't help it. It had been years since I had eaten at an A&W. Those famous brown bubbles of the root beer went down well with two chicken sandwiches devoured while I was sitting outside on the curb. Then I got a room at the Lumbermen's Inn.

The next morning, I walked down to the Rustic Roost for a big breakfast and two egg-n-cheese muffins to go. I was on the road at 7:43 a.m. After one "walker" on U.S. 2



Green Bay Packer pride spills over to northern Wisconsin.



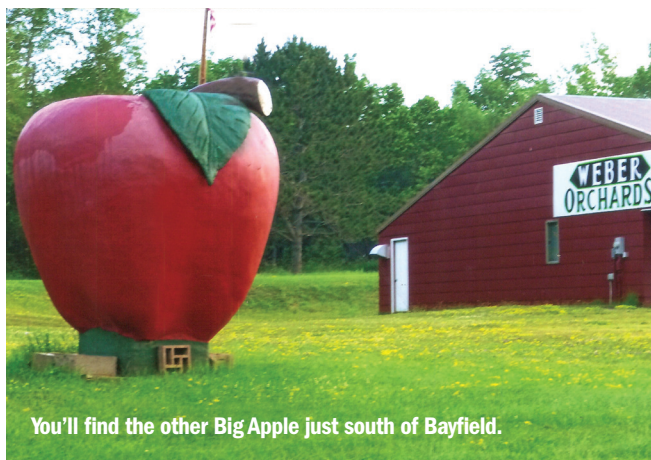
A caboose near Poplar makes a great place to picnic.

west, I ate my to-go order with Gatorade while sitting on the back of an abandoned caboose near Poplar.

After cruising at 16 mph on U.S. 2 and 53 back into Superior, I got a room at the same Holiday Inn Express and ate at good ol' Perkins. But I didn't have the whitefish. Instead, I ordered the "Ragin' Cajun" with my two glasses of chocolate milk.

Is upper Wisconsin great or what? 

John Scanlan writes from Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.



You'll find the other Big Apple just south of Bayfield.



Wisconsin, naturally

WEDDE CREEK SAVANNA STATE NATURAL AREA



Thomas A. Meyer
State Natural Areas Program

Notable: Oak barrens. That's the term Wisconsin ecologists use to describe a special type of savanna characterized by scattered, open-grown black oaks with an understory of prairie grasses and wildflowers growing on droughty, sandy soils. At Wedde Creek Savanna, large black oaks with spreading branches share the tree canopy with a few jack pine and stunted oak grubs. The meager ground layer supports clones of the grass-like Pennsylvania sedge, along with flowering spurge, hairy hawkweed, June grass, goat's rue, dotted horsemint and bird's-foot violet. Patches of wild lupine add vibrant color to the spring landscape and provide habitat for the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly, whose caterpillars feed exclusively on lupine. This is a fire-dependent landscape, requiring periodic prescribed burning to maintain its open aspect. A half-mile-long stretch of Wedde Creek threads its way from north to south through the natural area, downstream of its spring-fed origins in the low hills of the Johnstown Moraine to the west. Wedde feeds into Chafee Creek, which in turn, joins the Mekan River, all of which are prime trout waters. The 38-acre Wedde Creek Savanna lies within the Mekan River Fishery Area and was designated Wisconsin's 581st State Natural Area in 2008.

How to get there: From the intersection of Interstate 39 and County Highway E in Westfield, go north and east on E 6.9 miles, then north on County Highway Y 4.3 miles, then west on Deerborn Avenue 0.5 miles to a parking area south of the road. Walk south into the site. There are no trails in the natural area, but the site is open and easy to walk through. Visit dnr.wi.gov and search "Wedde Creek Savanna" for a map and more information.

