



## **Wisconsin natural resources. Vol. 28, No. 2**

### **April 2004**

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# WISCONSIN

## NATURAL RESOURCES

April 2004 \$3.50



75  
field trips

Elusive turkeys

Wading with damsels

The secretive  
pirate perch

# KRAWK!

The pipes are rusty, but this enthusiastic crooner is a beauty.

Anita Carpenter

Dawn finds the cattail marsh alive with exuberant music as avian singers blend their trills, whinnies, staccatos, quacks, honks, konk-la-rees and bubbly songs into a wonderful springtime chorus. Only the bass notes are lacking. Then low, raspy sounds are followed by a crescendo and a drawn-out *krawk* joins in. The discordant bass notes jar my senses. This croak sounds as if someone is being choked.

Searching for the source of these unmusical notes, I find a sleek-looking, 9½-inch black bird with a bright yellow head perched proudly atop a cattail stem. The bird spreads his tail, slightly flares his wings, lowers his head and lets loose with song. It isn't beautiful music, but I admire how it flows effortlessly forth. The notes seem forcefully ratcheted from deep within his soul and his whole body vibrates. Though the sound is grating, it is music to my ears and a song I long to hear each spring.

Yellow-headed blackbirds are simple to identify (if only all bird identification were this easy) for their name accurately describes their looks. Even a youngster when asked can describe this mystery bird accurately. As one of the more vividly colored marsh birds, males are a glossy black with a bright



(above) Males sing out to defend their territory from neighbors at the deep end of a marsh.

(left) Female yellowheads are engineers. They weave and suspend deep nests of wet vegetation that dry, shrink and hold fast to supporting live plants.

yellow head and breast. The heavy, sharply pointed beak is black with black extending back through its mischievous black eyes. White patches on the leading wing edges contrast sharply with black wings and are visible when the bird flies but remain mostly hidden when the bird alights. The bird's scientific name, *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*, accurately describes it not

once, but twice. It's as if the early taxonomists were so enamored of the bird's bold colors that they had to repeat the name for emphasis — from Greek, *xantho* means yellow and *cephalus* means head. The slightly smaller females are a bronzy brown with a golden throat and breast and no white wing patches.

Yellow-headed blackbirds nest in Wisconsin but we're at the eastern edge of their breeding range. Their numbers fluctuate annually and we can't depend that they will return to the same marsh, especially the smaller marshes, each year. These blackbirds are more finicky when choosing nest sites than are the more common red-winged blackbirds. Yellowheads nest in colonies, preferring cattail marshes and reed beds in deeper water farther out from shore and deeper within extensive cattail beds than the red-wings. Male yellowheads return from their Mexican over-wintering areas from late April into early May. They establish territories and actively defend them from neighboring males. Females slip in silently later.

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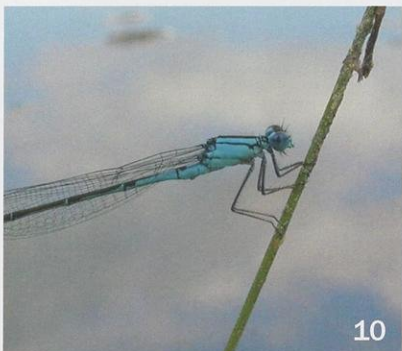
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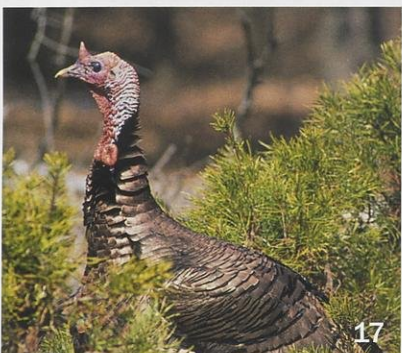
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COLLEEN MATULA, Woodruff, Wis.

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# Saving the best of the

(above) The 78-acre Beulah Bog in Walworth County is a "relict," an isolated tamarack bog community more typically found up north.  
(opposite, top) Brady's Bluff Prairie within Perrot State Park in Trempealeau Co. overlooks the Mississippi. More than 100 plant species, rare butterflies and snails live here.

Saving the remnants of our  
**natural heritage** starts with  
committed folks.

best

Camille Zanoni and Charlie Luthin

**B**eulah Bog. Brady's Bluff Prairie. Bark Bay Slough. Bloch Oxbow. St. Croix Seep. Tiffany Bottoms. Coon Fork Barrens. Poetic names for special parcels of our landscape that are unfamiliar to most Wisconsinites, yet these locales are among more than 400 protected places that harbor the state's rarest plants and animals. Together they comprise our state natural areas.

*Listeria*, *Parnassia*, *Habenaria*, *Prenanthes*, *Liatris*...a poetry of descriptive science, the Latin genus names of some rare plant species that find refuge in these special places. Though the 408 designated natural areas comprise less than half a percent of Wisconsin's land surface, these 162,500 acres provide habitat to sustain 60 percent of the state species that are threatened, endangered or "of special concern." This includes more than 93 percent of our rare plant species and over 80 percent of the state-endangered bird species. They are sparkling stars on the map marking natural treasures that make Wisconsin so extraordinary.

Thanks to the foresight of scientists and conservation leaders like Aldo Leopold, Norman Fassett and John Curtis in the 1930s and 1940s, as well as dedicated commitment and hard work by countless Conservation Department and DNR staff, conservation groups (especially The Nature Conservancy), and private landowners, Wisconsin has already identified and set aside an extensive mosaic of sites. Natural areas house our most spectacular examples of biological, geological and archaeological riches — the "best of the best" of Wisconsin's landscapes.

But that work isn't done. As human populations continue to grow and communities spread over the land, wild places dwindle, becoming isolated, scarcer and more important as reservoirs that protect our native plants and animals. The system of state natural areas saves remnants of a biological history that evolved over thousands, even millions of years. And each natural area has its own story to share. Here, we highlight the human stories that led to preserving three natural areas.

### A place to call home

Larry Roe is eager to share the thick binder containing a complex mix of titles to property that now form 244 acres of Mississippi River bluffs and bottomlands preserved as the Roe Unit of Cassville Bluffs State Natural Area. Larry and his wife, Kathy, purchased their first acre of



## State Natural Areas (SNA) Facts

THOMAS A. MEYER

- Wisconsin's natural areas program is the oldest in the nation (1952) and one of the most successful, safeguarding 408 state natural areas that encompass 162,500 acres.
- By statutory definition, SNAs are areas of land or water that have special educational or scientific value; that serve as a reservoir of the state's biological diversity; that provide habitat for rare, threatened or endangered plant and animal species; or that protect significant geological or archaeological features.
- SNAs encompass only a half percent of the total acreage of Wisconsin, yet they protect 58 percent (520 of 900) of the state "listed" species that are threatened, endangered, or of special concern. This includes 93 percent of the state's threatened and endangered plant species (115 of 123) and 81 percent of our threatened bird species (30 of 37). Some of the finest remnants of Wisconsin's native plant communities (oak savannas, fens, prairies, wetlands, dunes and forests) are protected within our state natural areas.
- The DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources manages the SNA program. It's supported by contributions to the Endangered Resources Fund and the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin. You can help by:
  - Joining the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin and supporting the SNA campaign.
  - Donating to the Endangered Resources Fund on your Wisconsin income tax form.
  - Buying a "Wisconsin, naturally" guidebook to 150 state natural areas.
  - Purchasing an Endangered Resources wolf license plate for your vehicle.
  - Sending a check, payable to the Endangered Resources Fund State Natural Areas program, to:  
Endangered Resources Program  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 7921  
Madison, WI 53707



The Roe family moved around the country, but they remembered, savored and saved these bluffs and views back home in Cassville. It's now preserved as a state natural area from blufftop all the way down to the riverbank on the Mississippi.

(right) Larry Roe hopes to sustain the peace and beauty his family enjoyed for generations exploring the river bottoms and bluffs.

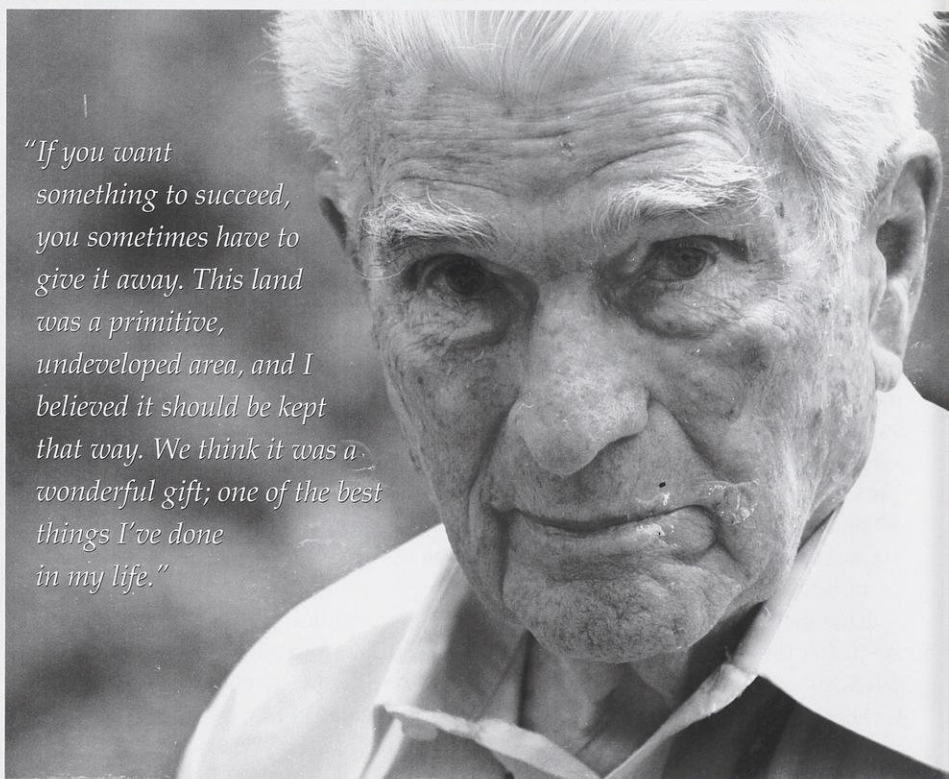
the property in 1947. The family moved around the country as Larry's employment as a mining engineer took him west, east and back to the Midwest. He never lost a love for the riverbottom country he had explored as a kid in Cassville and Kathy had known from her Platteville upbringing. Roe says that respect and love for the river country came from his folks.

"Dad could live without a car in that community, but he had to have a boat to keep exploring the river," Roe recalls.

They bought another 14 acres in the mid-fifties as they raised a family moving around the country, and then in 1968 purchased the remaining acres. The parcel is part of the only linear mile of protected Mississippi River edge in Wisconsin extending from the water's edge to the bluff top. When asked why he bought the land, his response is simply, "I always loved Cassville, and I wanted a place to call home."

The Roes never developed the property, save for a small, seasonal cottage and garage. Beyond some selective logging, they left it "in its natural state" so that the species residing there, such as the rare chinquapin oak, jeweled shooting star, and bald eagles, could continue to have a place to call home as well.

In 2000, Roe contacted the Department of Natural Resources and the Mississippi Valley Conservancy with the in-



*"If you want something to succeed, you sometimes have to give it away. This land was a primitive, undeveloped area, and I believed it should be kept that way. We think it was a wonderful gift; one of the best things I've done in my life."*

tent to sell and give away the land so that it would be preserved forever. As a result, the Roe Unit of Cassville Bluffs State Natural Area was designated in 2002. Roe explained, "If you want something to succeed, you sometimes have to give it away. This land was a primitive, undeveloped area, and I believed it should be kept that way." He looks over at his wife and smiles, "We think it was a wonderful gift; one of the best things I've done in my life. My grandma and grandpa taught me that nature is important and that some things are really worth the effort."

The Roe Unit of Cassville Bluffs is certainly one of them. The area contains

a rare expanse of undeveloped bluffs, sand terraces, dry prairie and scarce chinquapin oak savanna. It preserves one of the largest eagle-shaped effigy mounds in the state. Cylindrical blazing-star, small green milkweed, compass plant and side-oats grama grass dominate the dry prairie, while fern species including rusty woodsia and smooth cliffbrake thrive on the dolomite outcroppings.

Today, the Mississippi Valley Conservancy and the Department of Natural Resources are tending to this property, restoring the prairie areas and making other improvements with financial support from the Natural Resources Foun-

dation of Wisconsin.

As a Cassville native, Roe felt it was only natural to leave this little piece of paradise he savored from his youth for future generations to enjoy.

"Human beings have a natural inclination to return home," Roe said, and a part of his family will always remain on these riverside bluffs. He adds with a smile, "I love dreamers who can make their dreams come true."

### A bridge to the north

The "lake effect" that brings cooler springs, milder summers and moderate winters to Door County also extends the range of northern habitats on this

Wisconsin peninsula. The microclimate from the surrounding Lake Michigan and Green Bay creates a meteorological "bridge" that allows plant communities normally found in boreal forests much farther north to thrive here. The Bailey's Harbor Boreal Forest and Wetlands State Natural Area is a marvelous example of such a relict plant community. It's protected thanks to Bob and Betty Ragotzkie and friends.

"We were a bridge to save a unique ecosystem that we have right here," explains Ragotzkie describing his family and other community members. Back in the early 90s, the Ragotzkies and seven other land holders began buying small pieces of undeveloped habitat to preserve it. As a UW-Madison meteorologist and the first Director of the UW Sea Grant Institute, Professor Ragotzkie had a wide network of contacts in environmental sciences. The group met with university specialists, DNR's Bureau of Endangered Resources staff, and The Nature Conservancy to identify parcels with rare natural features. Local Door County landowners acquired additional small pieces of land to form one contiguous holding. In 1995, Bailey's Har-

bor Boreal Forest and Wetlands became the 284th state natural area.

Balsam fir and white spruce dominate the forest in this northeastern refuge. Lower-lying wetter portions form a forest of white cedar, white pine, paper birch and hemlock. The federally threatened dwarf lake iris and rare orchids inhabit the forest understory. Uncommon species such as bird's-eye primrose, small fringed gentian and tufted hair grass tough it out on the flat, limestone shoreline. This 329-acre natural area protects 1.2 miles of shoreline, one of the largest expanses of undeveloped Lake Michigan shoreline in northern Wisconsin, an important spawning ground for whitefish and critical habitat for migratory shorebirds and waterfowl. The area also hosts one of Wisconsin's few known nesting sites for the common goldeneye, a diving duck.

The forest and wetlands refuge is managed by the joint efforts of local conservation groups, individual volunteers, and DNR staff from the Bureau of Endangered Resources who work to curtail the spread of invasive species such as purple loosestrife and giant reed grass, *Phragmites*.

Bob and Betty Ragotzkie and their Door County neighbors bought parcels that saved 329 acres of coastal forestland. The residents now include nesting goldeneye ducks.

*"The most important thing is that the DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources continues to have foresight to look ahead and set aside unique and beautiful areas of our state for our children's grandchildren, and those that follow. That's the whole point of this."*



"The most important thing," Ragotzkie says, "is that the DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources continues to have foresight to look ahead and set aside unique and beautiful areas of our state for our children's grandchildren, and those that follow. That's the whole point of this."

The Ragotzkies followed that vision, worked out a plan with their community and donated a 17.8-acre easement to this natural area last January.

### Restoring the largest wet prairie east of the Mississippi

Within Waukesha County's Southern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest, the landscape is being transformed by hand and fire. Shortly after volunteers and DNR staff burn and clear off invasive brush, a host of prairie plants start emerging from the ashes.

"We're not planting them. They're just popping up in places we didn't even expect to find them," explains DNR Park Naturalist Ron Kurowski. "We call it the 'Crex Meadows effect,'" he explains, referring to the remarkable phenomenon at Crex Meadows State Wildlife Area in

Burnett County, where native prairie plants dormant for decades started to naturally recover after the land was burned and cleared.

If only prairie restoration were so rewarding everywhere!

The Scuppernong River Habitat Area Project encompasses the Scuppernong Prairie and Kettle Moraine Low Prairie State Natural Areas near Eagle, a wetland complex of 3,500 acres. It includes a mosaic of habitats: wet mesic prairies, sedge meadows, fens, cattail marshes, and oak savannas. The natural areas contain such rare flowers as purple milkweed and prairie Indian plantain, along with uncommon birds such as the bobolink and upland sandpiper. Scuppernong Prairie is also home to three rare moths and butterflies — the Poweshiek skipperling, the silphium borer moth, and the liatris borer moth.

Together, these areas contain more than 45 plant, animal and insect species designated as state-endangered, threatened, or of special concern.

Project leaders hope to connect the existing state natural areas to other prairies and oak savannas stretching from Ottawa Lake in Waukesha County

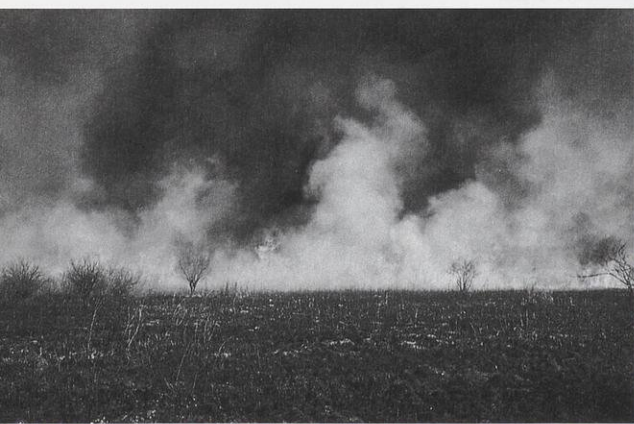
to Whitewater Lake in Walworth County with wild corridors that link the properties. "Once restored, it will be the largest wet prairie east of the Mississippi," Kurowski says. "If restoration efforts are successful, visitors would be able to walk a trail through two miles of contiguous native prairie."

The restoration effort, spearheaded by the Department of Natural Resources, has a list of friends as long as the prairie soil is deep. Grassroots conservation groups with help from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have raised nearly \$200,000 for the project. A local friends group, the Kettle Moraine Natural History Association, has contributed \$20,000 and the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin has also raised needed funds.

These community groups also provide the strong backs to match their bucks. Volunteer labor is doing the muscle work to remove invasive species such as buckthorn and purple loosestrife that threaten to overwhelm native prairie species.

"It's a big job to bring these areas back to their original condition," ob-

A prescribed prairie fire burns up brushy cover and releases plants long dormant in the soils of southeastern Waukesha and northern Walworth counties. Committed volunteers provide financial support and labor to restore native prairies and wetlands like those found in the Kettle Moraine Fen and Low Prairie State Natural Area.





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## Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin

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The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin is a non-profit organization that works to promote the knowledge, enjoyment and stewardship of Wisconsin's natural resources.

**Our Key Programs Include:**

*Whooping Crane Reintroduction Project*

*C.D. Besadny Conservation Grants Program*

*Field Trip Program*

*State Natural Areas Program*



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- \$25** Includes our newsletter and annual field trip schedule.
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serves Kurowski, “but it’s one of the last chances to restore one of the last, big wet prairies in Wisconsin.”

The team also hopes to bring back sharp-tailed grouse and other species that disappeared from these areas, and to eventually restore the water level hydrology of these sites, which were degraded through drainage ditches and stream straightening.

“This could be quite a landmark site,” Kurowski says. “We’ll need continued community and financial support to meet our management goals and preserve these different natural landscapes. It’s special, and we want to keep it that way.”

## Maintaining our natural heritage

Setting aside natural areas is a proud Wisconsin tradition, but it’s only the first step in providing long term protection. Natural areas need to be surrounded by open spaces that can buffer the sites from external impacts like development, runoff and invasion by exotic species. Once these lands are restored, they often need continuous management to stave off unwanted species.

As human development spreads and encroaches ever deeper into rural areas, our state natural areas become increasingly important parcels for protecting remnant plant communities and rare species.

Recognizing that an ever-diminishing

state budget has dramatically reduced funds available to manage the state natural areas, the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin is embarking on a long-term statewide campaign to raise private funds to steward these rare landscape gems. NRF hopes to raise \$100,000 this year and every year thereafter to build a \$10 million endowment by 2014. This effort will help protect the last vestiges of original Wisconsin, the “living libraries” that house our rarest biological treasures. By maintaining healthy state natural areas, we hope to protect the living and human history of our state long into the future. ■

*Camille Zannoni is program director and Charlie Luthin is the executive director of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin.*

## About the NRF

The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin (NRF) is a member-supported, independent nonprofit organization that works with public and private partners to promote the knowledge, enjoyment and stewardship of Wisconsin’s natural resources. NRF was founded in 1986 to raise private contributions for select DNR projects — mostly associated with endangered species and habitats — and to help fund worthy conservation programs around the state.

Since its inception, NRF has raised and provided over \$1.3 million for a wide variety of worthy conservation projects, including public education and wildlife habitat restoration and improvement.

Current programs include:

- **Whooping Crane Reintroduction Project** — As a member of the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership, NRF raises funds to support the reintroduction of the endangered whooping crane to Wisconsin. Now in their third year of recovery, 36 migratory whoopers are wintering in Florida with summer breeding grounds in Wisconsin. NRF has

contributed nearly \$200,000 to the reintroduction project.

- **C.D. Besadny Conservation Grants Program** — NRF offers small matching grants up to \$1,000 to private and public organizations and communities to support environmental education or conservation projects. Since 1989, NRF has awarded 275 grants in 70 counties totaling more than \$183,000.
- **Field Trip Program** — NRF annually organizes field trips from spring through fall led by experienced naturalists who visit natural landscapes and review outdoor issues throughout Wisconsin. From sea kayaking to osprey banding, bog walks to prairie hikes, these trips attract more than 1,400 participants annually. Since 1994, NRF has hosted 474 trips enjoyed by nearly 11,500 participants. A total of 75 exciting trips are planned this year.
- **State Natural Areas Campaign** — In recent years, NRF has contributed more than \$100,000 to protect and manage state natural areas, the best examples of original Wisconsin landscapes remaining under protection. Focusing on priority targeted sites throughout the state, this campaign is being greatly expanded in 2004.

Smaller fringed gentian.

To contact the Natural Resources Foundation, write or call:

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# Wading with



RICH PHALIN

# damsels

Walk through water to glimpse these winged beauties in action.

Mike Reese

**T**he jewel-bright sparkle of a damselfly on the wing or in repose never fails to excite. These graceful insects dazzle professional and amateur entomologists alike with their shining colors and delicate wing tracery. Watching a damsel up close is like peering through a loupe at a rare and precious gem; several species are even named after the rubies and amber they resemble.

It's easy to locate and observe damsels if you immerse yourself into their habitat. My favorite field trips involve wading through the headwaters of shallow clear trout streams in mid- to late afternoon; at different times of the spring, summer and fall seasons, different species groups are present. Damselflies actually spend most of their lives as larvae under the water and the adult stage is short-lived, all the more reason to see them while you can. Water-loving damsels rise and dip through shoreline vegetation, sometimes less than a foot from the ground. Both lar-

vae and adults are predators that consume smaller invertebrates. Find a good clear stream, a shallow pond, or a riverbank where you can wade in the water and you can learn first-hand about their behaviors and habits. I hope my photos will inspire you to take a closer look at these tiny, fascinating creatures.

## Identifying damselflies

Damselflies are to dragonflies what skippers are to butterflies: closely related species with just enough differences to call them by different names. Classified together in the order Odonata, damselflies and dragonflies are among the most ancient of living creatures. The forerunners of present-day odonates were flying more than 300 million years ago, predating dinosaurs by more than 100 million years and birds by some 150 million years.

The most easily observable difference between the two groups is that the wings of dragonflies are open when they are at rest, while damselflies' wings are totally closed or only partially open at rest. Damselflies are in general much thinner than dragonflies and they tend to spend less time in flight. Damselflies are rarely in the air more than 30 seconds at a time, while some species of dragonflies migrate long distances and others hardly ever land, preferring to fly all day long.

The 46 species of damselflies found in Wisconsin fall into three main types: broad-winged damsels, spreadwings and pond damsels. The broad-winged damsels are probably the best known. These damselflies have darkened, broad wings that are colored, not clear as in the other damselflies.

Damselflies spend most of their lives as underwater larvae and typically emerge as adults for 30–60 days. They are weaker fliers than the dragonflies, rarely staying airborne more than 30 seconds at a time.  
(left) One of Wisconsin's 19 bluet species.  
(right) American rubyspot (*Hetaerina americana*).

GREG VANDELEEST

The ebony jewelwing (*Calopteryx maculata*) is the most common broad-winged damsel and is found throughout Wisconsin. The females often congregate in groups to lay eggs on vegetation in or on top of the water. I once saw four female ebony jewelwings laying their eggs while an American rubyspot (another broad-winged damsel, *Hetaerina americana*) male landed time and time again on the females' wings. The male evidently was trying to find a dry place to land, and the jewelwings just happened to be an available, though precarious, perch!

Spreadwings all hold their wings spread at an angle when at rest. There are ten species of spreadwings in Wisconsin, and all seem to prefer smaller, shallower lakes or ponds. In Waushara County in central Wisconsin, I saw six species of spreadwings in a shallow, less than five-acre lake with an abundant variety of emergent vegetation growing near shore. The females of most spreadwing species, unlike the broad-winged damselflies, lay their eggs while still attached to the male. I waded out into about a foot of water to take the photo of four pairs of amber-winged spreadwings (*Lestes eurinus*) laying eggs together on a single bulrush. After taking the photo, I looked around and the spreadwings were everywhere. I counted more than 50 pairs within ten yards of where I stood.

Amber-winged spreadwings are listed on the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory list as a species of special concern. Although they are not the longest spreadwing, they are the largest-bodied ones and appear huge compared to the pond damselflies. They also are the only damselfly I observed eating other damselflies, including other spreadwing species. Although amber-winged spreadwings were abundant and conspicuous at this site, I did not see them at any other location.

Spreadwing males stay attached to the females during egg laying. Rarely would a male attach itself to another male by accident, but I was able to observe male-to-male-to-female triplets on two occasions. I witnessed an amber-winged spreadwing triplet flying completely stretched out so that the entire length was nearly six inches, which was quite a spectacle! Two weeks later on the same pond I saw three sweetflag spreadwings (*Lestes forcipatus*) flying around and was able to capture the triplet on film.

The largest group of damselflies in Wisconsin is the pond damselflies with 32 species. These insects are very small, with the largest at barely 1.5 inches in length. With a very narrow body and clear wings, the pond damselflies can be difficult to observe and identify. Use good, close-focusing binoculars. To identify pond damselfly species, observe male/female interactions, so that you can get to know the females. The females of many damselflies vary in color. The Eastern forktail (*Ischnura verticalis*), for example, may be yellow, male-like green, or a bluish white color on older individuals. When I first started observing this species, I thought I'd found a species new to me, only to find out it was just another form of the Eastern forktail. Pond damselfly males are not so variable and therefore much easier to identify once you are familiar with them.

This is not to say male pond damselflies are easy to tell apart! I looked them up in every book I could find, plus checked on the Internet for additional information and photos to help identify these species. One book said the familiar bluet (*Enallagma*

(left) Damselflies lay eggs on vegetation either above or under the water. Here an ebony jewelwing on the bottom and an American rubyspot on top do communal egg-laying.

(right) Occasionally they will prey on other damselfly species. A larger bodied amber-winged spreadwing eats a sweetflag spreadwing.





(above) The spreadwings, like these mating sedge sprites, stay attached while the female lays eggs on vegetation.

(below) A triplet of sweetflag spreadwings.



*lagma civile*) was one of the easiest bluets to recognize. I can say without a doubt, I am still not familiar with this species! Although I have seen it on four occasions, it looks very much like several other damselfs. I must have it in my hand and observe it closely to determine its exact identity. Luckily, over three-fourths of the pond damselfs are easy to identify, and it is only the very similar species of bluets that give even the best taxonomist fits!

Like the spreadwings, the majority of the female pond damselfs lay eggs in plant material while the male is still attached. For the male, this pretty much guarantees he will be the last to mate with the female and his genes will be passed on to the next generation.

The Eastern red damself (*Amphiagrion saucium*) is not a common pond damself species in central Wisconsin, but it is found throughout the state and is the only red damselfly, making it very easy to identify. My photo of the red damself was taken in the middle of a stream as the female repeatedly laid eggs on the clumps of vegetation available at the top of the water. It was one of many pairs of red damselfs I saw on June 20. Two weeks later, I did not see any in the same stream,

(PHOTOS BOTH PAGES) MIKE REESE



MIKE REESE

MIKE REESE

(top) The river bluet is an uncommon find in Wisconsin.

(above) An Eastern red damsel laying eggs midstream on emergent vegetation.

which shows that timing is important if you want to see some of these species at their prime.

Another species abundant in late June and throughout July in that same stream was the river bluet (*Enallagma anna*) a species of special concern in Wisconsin that has only been recorded in four Wisconsin counties. This species has a very distinctive male abdominal appendage extending nearly the same length as the last abdominal segment.

In late June and early July, on a stream that was slightly larger, but ten miles away, a different group of damselflies prevailed. Stream bluets (*Enallagma exsulans*) and variable dancers (*Argia fumipennis*) were abundant and ebony jewelwings and American rubyspots were packing the bleachers, but I didn't see a single river bluet or a red damsel.

The Wisconsin form of the variable dancer is violet in color and so is sometimes called the violet dancer. Like the red damsel, the color alone on this damselfly more or less guarantees you are watching this species. The mated pairs of violet dancers laying eggs that I saw often did so in groups.

The stream bluet is a larger species and, at almost 1.5 inches, is one of the longest bluets in Wisconsin. With males still holding onto the females, stream bluets were much more impressive to watch as the females laid their eggs. Partially because of the added height, they seemed to stick far above the vegetation. I photographed five pairs of stream bluets and a single pair of variable dancers laying eggs with the male attached just inches above the water on July 1. Later in the year, I observed a female stream bluet completely immersing herself underwater to lay eggs on a plant. The male let go instead of being dragged under and hovered overhead as the female laid her eggs.

## An ode to Odes

Damselflies are attracting an ever-growing base of admirers. The Department of Natural Resources continues to work with partners developing two websites with damselfly and dragonfly information. The first is posted on a portion of the DNR endangered resources website to provide photos and descriptions of the threatened and endangered dragonflies, damselflies and butterflies found here. The site is a work in progress that you can access at [www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/invertebrates/dragonflies](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/invertebrates/dragonflies). The second site is intended as a more comprehensive online field guide to damselflies and dragonflies found in Wisconsin. It will be housed online at the Aquatic and Terrestrial Resources Inventory (ATRI), a site set up by state and university researchers as a sort of one-stop shop for authoritative information about Wisconsin species. The ATRI site already offers links to impressive listings of vascular plants, herps, breeding birds, beetles, mollusks and small mammals. We anticipate damselfly and dragonfly listings will be added this summer. The site will include species characteristics,

distributions by county, habitats, flight periods, photos and online reporting forms to share observations. You can access ATRI at: [www.maps.botany.wisc.edu/atri/index.htm](http://www.maps.botany.wisc.edu/atri/index.htm). Click on the button that says statewide inventory to link to the various listings.

If you are interested in taking part in a statewide effort to map the distributions and habitats used by the Odonata (damselflies and dragonflies), start boning up on your identification skills. Those who might like to take part in the atlas project can contact DNR invertebrate researcher Bob DuBois at [robert.dubois@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:robert.dubois@dnr.state.wi.us). DuBois recommends two field guides: "A Field Guide to the Dragonflies and Damselflies of Massachusetts" includes most of the species we see here and can be ordered for \$20 from the Massachusetts Heritage and Endangered Species Program, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01591; "Dragonflies and Damselflies of Northeast Ohio," includes many of the species found here. The guide contact is Renee Boronka, [rboronka@cmnh.org](mailto:rboronka@cmnh.org).

Damselflies develop in water. To protect them, we need to protect, conserve and, where possible, increase suitable shoreland habitat. By working in your community to preserve wetlands and safeguard water quality in lakes, rivers and streams, you can help ensure these colorful and beguiling insects with a long, long history will have an equally lengthy future.

Mike Reese is a teacher from Wautoma and a true dragonfly, damselfly and butterfly enthusiast. He maintains a website, [www.wisconsinbutterflies.org](http://www.wisconsinbutterflies.org), where researchers and amateur entomologists can share information and observations.

# Pirate perch

A story and a remembrance of a rare breed.



Editor's note: We remember George Bachay, 87, a wonderful friend and contributor to this magazine who succumbed to cancer on New Year's Eve. Bachay was a Renaissance man — a lifelong outdoorsman, former fisheries biologist, game warden for the old Wisconsin Conservation Department, reporter, painter, craftsman, trapper, angler and hunter. George was a great storyteller and loved to share his enthusiasm for conservation. He wrote the outdoors column for The Janesville Gazette for more than 25 years, hosted an outdoors radio show, painted outdoor scenes in a folk art style and in his later years started writing western romance novels.

Bachay's house on the shores of the Sugar River was a mixture of art museum and science lab filled with specimen jars of the fish, insects and mammals he had collected over the years. He delighted in remaining a lifelong learner and keen observer of nature just outside his window, and he spearheaded many conservation causes to improve water quality, protect wetlands and promote outdoor learning. Here is the last manuscript he sent us just a year before his passing about an unusual fish he had found earlier in his career. Bachay's great skill was finding ample subjects for his writings and broadcasts from the Sugar River area home near Albany that he and Theresa kept for 33 years. He had a way of teaching several lessons at the same time, as he did here, all wrapped in an entertaining narrative.

ROBERT QUEEN

George S. Bachay

**M**y daughter Kathleen from Waterville was dusting shelves in my studio. She stopped to examine a specimen preserved in formalin.

"Dad, how come you never wrote about these unique perch?" she asked, studying the glass jar containing five small fish. "It's marked 1947. Where did you catch them?"

"I found them when you were only four years old," I replied. At the time I was a game warden working in La Crosse. I remembered it was in February when Dick Lipinski, owner of the Delta Fish and Fur Farm near Marshland called to ask if I could bring some biologists to see the northern pike and



JOHN LYONS

(top left) George Bachay was a keen observer of wildlife and a tireless advocate for many conservation causes. His conservation radio show, artwork and newspaper columns encouraged thousands in southern Wisconsin to take an active interest in outdoor issues.

(above) Bachay first saw pirate perch in 1947 and wrote about the infrequently seen species.

bullheads in one of his ponds along the Mississippi River near Trempealeau. I asked what the problem was, and he said the fish had some kind of worms under their skin.

So, with Dr. John Greenbank, biologist for the Wisconsin Conservation Department, and Melvin Monson from the Minnesota Biology Department, we went to visit the fish farm.

The ponds were covered with a foot of ice, but in one pond, where the artesian well flowed, fish congregated by the thousands seeking the oxygen-rich water.

Lipinski was in the fish house dressing bullheads for the market. With his knife tip, he pointed to a separate pile of fish infected with grubs for the biologists to examine.

"There's nothing you can do about these grubs," Dr. Greenbank said sadly, examining several of them. "It's one of nature's magic tricks." He explained that the life cycle of this yellow grub begins in the mouths of fish-eating birds when they lay eggs

(below) Pirate perch are nocturnal feeders that aggressively attack larvae, worms, crustaceans and small minnows.

(right) Note the vent just behind the pectoral fins in the middle of Bachay's 1947 photos of pirate perch specimens.



## Observations of a nighttime raider

Pirate perch are mainly found east of the Mississippi. In Wisconsin, they inhabit the Mississippi River, lower Wisconsin River and Lake Michigan drainage basins. They are more commonly found in quiet waters — oxbows, sloughs, marshes and ditches. The species is nocturnal and derives its common name from aggressively feeding on live foods: small minnows, earthworms, small crustaceans, water fleas and mosquito larvae.

Fisheries biologists speculated that the unusual migration of the fish's vent forward was an adaptation because pirate perch eggs were incubated in gill cavities, as is common among closely related cavefish. However, incubation studies by Ray Katula as reported in 1992 to the North American Native Fishes Association indicate that pirate fish raised in an aquarium clearly laid eggs in mossy, bottom substrate, so the reason for this adaptation remains a mystery.

that fall into the water as the birds feed. The eggs hatch in the water and become host to snails. After leaving the snail, the small eggs attach themselves to fish, birds pick up the fish and, as they enter the bird's mouth, the cycle begins all over again.

While Greenbank explained the life cycle details to Lipinski, Monson and I netted some bullheads from another pond. Sorting the fish from the net, I found some pumpkinseed sunfish, crappies and some small purple fish resembling bass.

Examining the fish, we noticed that the biggest of the purple ones (five inches long) had the anus just under the gills. Monson said they were pirate perch, so I dug deeper into the silt with the dipnet and came up with more specimens. The adults were dark purple with green and gray bellies.

Dr. Greenbank was amazed to see them and explained that the pirate perch (*Aphredoderus sayanus gibbosus*) belonged to a genus that contained just this one species. When the fish are young, their anus is located near the anal fin, like most ordinary fish, but as the young grow to adulthood, the vent migrates forward in front of the ventral fins.

As I told the story to Kathleen, I recalled that the following summer her mom and I found pirate perch while seining minnows in lagoons along the Mississippi River south of La Crosse. The small fish were feeding on aquatic insects in the deep muck.

Kathleen and I cleaned out many of the old specimen jars, but thanks to her, we saved the pirate perch. I remember later in 1947 collecting pirate perch for Edward Schneberger, then superintendent of Fish Management and also collected some for Dr. Breckenridge of the Minneapolis Museum.

GEORGE BACHAY

KONRAD SCHMIDT

*A guide to Wisconsin's Great River Road  
National Scenic Byway*

# Of boats, bikes & binoculars

Fun on the Mississippi



For 235 miles the Mississippi River rambles south along Wisconsin's western border. Weaving through backwater sloughs and sandbar archipelagos, past soaring limestone bluffs and quaint river towns, the river is a wide blue thread in the fabric of Wisconsin.

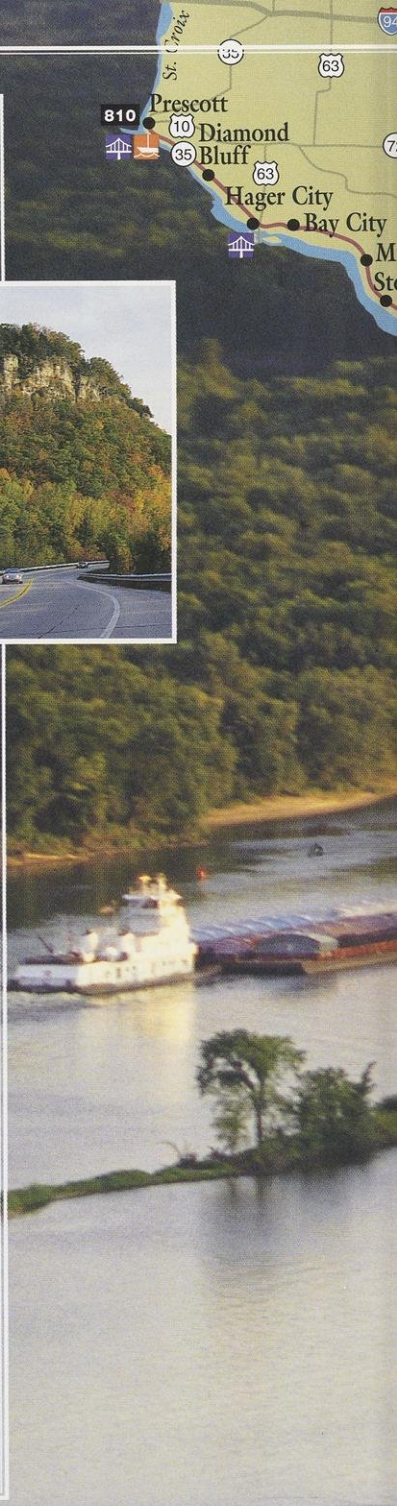
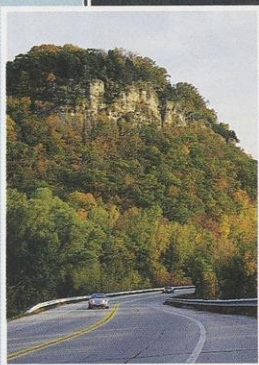
It is recreation. It is commerce. It is transportation and ecology, architecture and history. It anchors our economy and buoys our collective spirit.

It is today as it has been since the dawn of time – quite magical.

This handy booklet is your guide to three of many recreational opportunities along the river – birding, boating and biking. It is a sampler – intended to get you started. Use it as your passport to Mississippi River adventures.

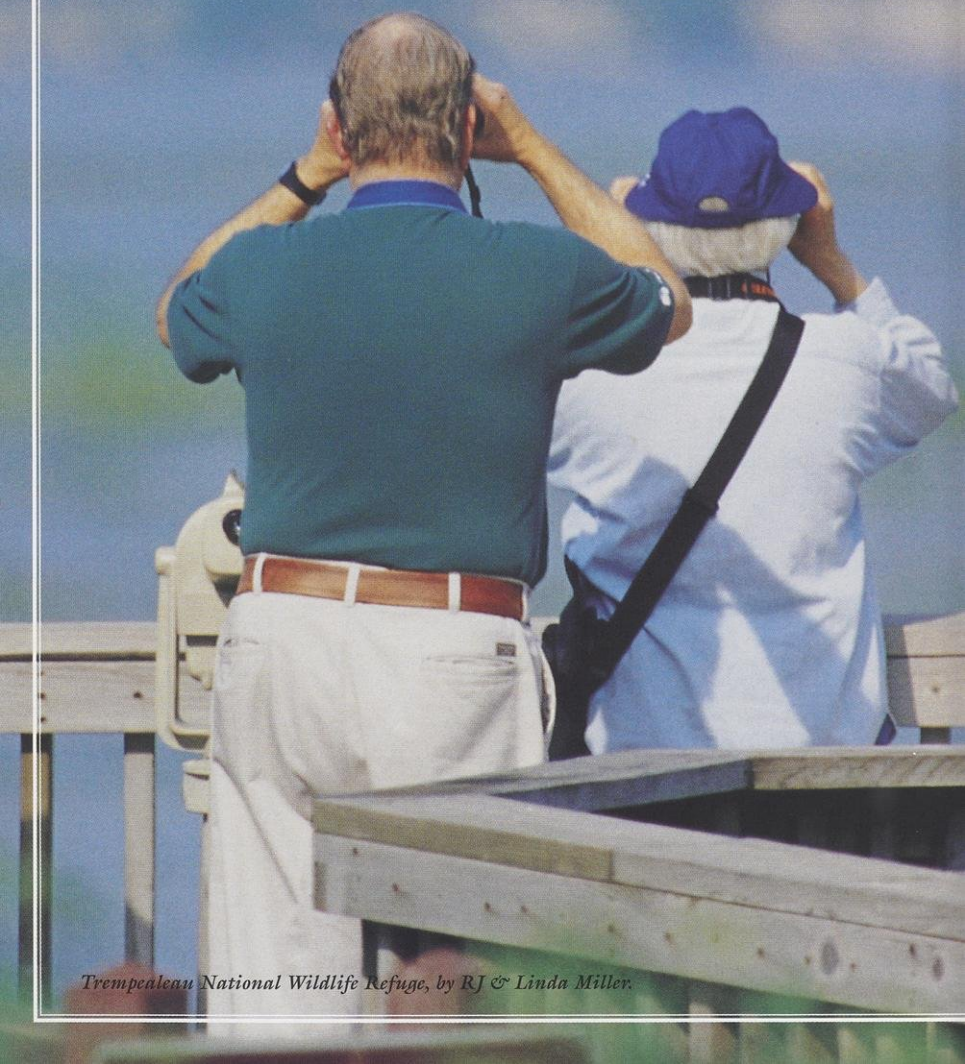
Come, share the magic of Wisconsin's Great River Road.

RU & LINDA MILLER





# Birding



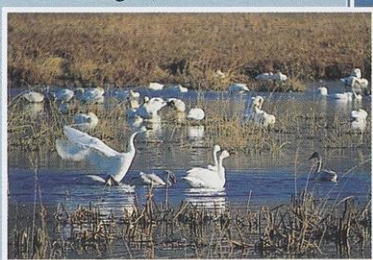
*Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, by RJ & Linda Miller.*

**T**he Mississippi River Flyway is the most important avian migratory route in North America. A total of 326 bird species - fully one-third of all species on the continent - use the river valley as a spring and fall migratory flyway, including forty percent of all the waterfowl in North America.

The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge caps the Flyway's northern zone. It is an area of unequalled birding opportunity. It includes nearly all of Wisconsin's Great River Road. It harbors a variety of birding habitat - marshland, backwater sloughs, rich bottomland, open water, sand prairie, and wooded bluffs. The river is a vital spring and summer nesting area for many species. Even in winter, the river's open water is a gathering spot for resident northern bird populations, including the bald eagle.

So, bring the binoculars.

RJ & LINDA MILLER

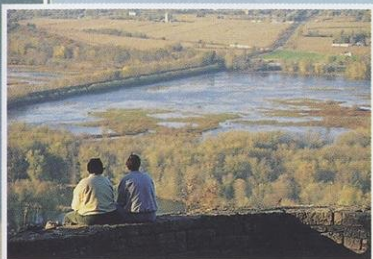


*Migrating Tundra Swans.*

## Birding Hotspots

Here's a sample of birding hotspots, arranged south to north, along Wisconsin's Great River Road:

**Wyalusing State Park:** Located just two miles south of Prairie du Chien at the confluence of the Mississippi and Wisconsin Rivers, the park is perhaps the best place in Wisconsin for Kentucky, Cerulean and Yellow-throated Warblers. Other populations include Prothonotary Warblers, Bell's Vireos, Henslow's Sparrows, Wild Turkeys, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, Turkey Vultures and Bald Eagles. Stop at the park office for a vehicle admission sticker (required), current birding information, and directions to the Passenger Pigeon Monument. (608/996-2261)



RJ & LINDA MILLER

*Wyalusing State Park.*

**Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge:** This 6,200-acre preserve just north of Trempealeau offers a four-mile wildlife driving tour, an interpretive center, and an observation deck. A diverse habitat shelters 29 warbler species and 100 bird species at the height of migration. In prairie and woodland habitat watch for Grasshopper, Lark, Savannah, and Field Sparrows, cuckoos, Sandhill Cranes, Dickcissels, Bobolinks, Northern

Shrike, Pileated Woodpeckers, American Woodcocks, Northern Harriers, hawks, accipiters and owls. In open water and slough areas watch for Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Tundra Swans, White Pelicans, Forster's Terns, Sora and Virginia Rails and cormorants, as well as mergansers and dabblers in spring and fall. Maps of the refuge are available at the interpretive center and at kiosks in the refuge. (608/539-2311)

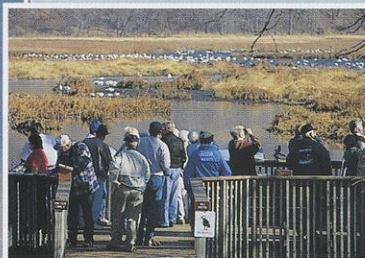


PHOTO BY LINDA MILLER

*Riecks Lake Park.*

**Buena Vista Park:** Perched on a bluff 500 feet above the Mississippi at Alma, Buena Vista Park is one of the best public viewing areas in Wisconsin for migrating raptors. Watch for Turkey Vultures, Red-tailed Hawks, Peregrine Falcons and Broad-winged Hawks (Aug-Sept). In fall, watch for Merlins, American Kestrels, Sharp-shinned Hawks and

Coopers Hawks. Open water below Lock and Dam #4 makes this a great spot to watch Bald Eagles fish in winter. The park also harbors Scarlet Tanagers, Wood Thrushes, Hairy Woodpeckers and Ruffed Grouse.

**Riecks Lake Park:** Just two miles north of Alma, the park is the best spot on the Mississippi to get up-close views of Tundra Swans in the fall. "Swan Watch" volunteers man the viewing decks on weekends from mid-October through November. To see wintering Golden Eagles, take a short drive up Hwy. 37 along the Buffalo River.

## Scenic Overlooks

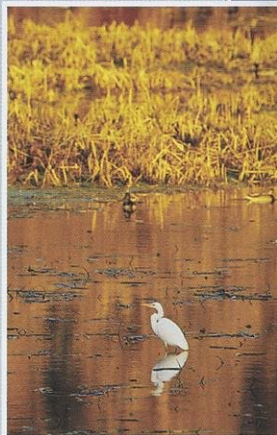
Many locations along the river offer panoramic bluff-top views. These are also excellent locations to watch for migrating and resident raptors including Bald Eagles, Turkey Vultures, hawks, falcons and kestrels as they ride the thermals along the bluffs.

Consider these locations:

**Nelson Dewey State Park at Cassville:** Drive to this bluff-top overlook or hike the bluff trail. Additionally, six walk-in campsites offer spectacular views. (608/725-5374)

**Wyalusing State Park at Bagley:** Drive to several scenic overlooks atop the bluffs. Fifty-five bluff-top campsites share the view. (608/996-2261)

PHOTO BY LINDA MILLER



*White Egret.*

**Larson Bluff:** A short drive up the bluff just north of Lynxville brings a spectacular view of Pool 9.

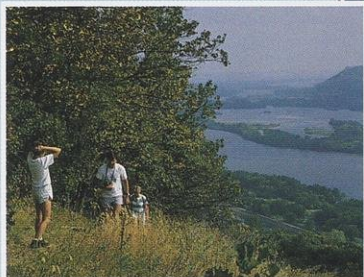
**Grandad Bluff at La Crosse:** A drive to this beautiful bluff-top park yields a panoramic view of the city and three states.

**Perrot State Park at Trempealeau:** A moderate hike to the top of Brady's Bluff produces terrific views of Trempealeau Mountain and the Mississippi. (608/534-6409)

**Buena Vista Park at Alma:** A grand view of Alma and Lock and Dam #4 is the payoff for a drive to this bluff-top park.

**Freedom Park at Prescott:** A drive to this park is the best vantage to view the confluence of the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers.

BOB QUEEN



*Perrot State Park.*

## More Sources of Birding Information

**The Audubon – Upper Mississippi River Campaign** has produced a handy set of fifteen large foldout maps detailing hundreds of birding locations along the river. The maps collectively describe the Great River Birding Trail. Much of the birding information in this booklet comes from those maps. Wisconsin's portion of the river is described on maps 5, 6 & 7. Maps are available at these three Wisconsin Travel Information Centers located along the state's border: in Grant County on Hwy. 61/151 (just across the river from Dubuque); at La Crosse on Interstate 90; and at Hudson on Interstate 94 (just across the St. Croix River).

Also, consider these Web sites:

National Audubon Society: [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)

Wisconsin Society for Ornithology: [www.uwgb.edu/birds/wso/](http://www.uwgb.edu/birds/wso/)

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources: [www.dnr.state.wi.us/](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/)

Mississippi River Parkway Commission: [www.mississippiriverinfo.com](http://www.mississippiriverinfo.com)

Mississippi Valley Partners: [www.mississippi-river.org](http://www.mississippi-river.org)

Wisconsin's Great River Road: [www.wigreatriverroad.org](http://www.wigreatriverroad.org)

RJ & LINDA MILLER



*Bald Eagle.*

# Boating



*The riverboat Julia Belle Swain, by RJ & Linda Miller.*

**H**istorically, the Mississippi River was the great water highway of the Midwest. It's waters carried Native American canoes, river barges, fishing boats, steamboats, keelboats, and the great log rafts of white pine that built America.

Today, river traffic is much the same: kayaks and canoes, towboats pushing huge river barges, fishing boats, paddle wheel steamboats filled with tourists, and pleasure craft of all description keep the river bustling. There is much to be enjoyed on the waters of the Mississippi.

## Recreational Boating

The Mississippi welcomes a variety of recreational watercraft; sailboats ply the broader reaches of Lake Pepin; fishing boats angle for walleye below the river wing dams, powerboats of all description ferry sunbathers and picnic lunches to sandbars up and down the river.

If you're trailering a boat to the river, you'll find public launching ramps in every river town. Many towns have several ramps; access to the river is the lifeblood of these friendly communities.

## Fishing

If you've come looking for a fishing hot spot, local bait shops are happy to pass along the latest "hot tip." Walleye fishing below the river's wing dams has inspired generations of anglers. Hunt the sloughs and backwaters for trophy bass and excellent panfish action.

Many river communities offer fishing "floats" – large barges anchored in the river in prime walleye water. Floats are often equipped with a bait shop and snack bar making them a unique and complete angling opportunity. For a fee, smaller boats ferry fishing parties to and

from the barges. Floats are located at Lynxville, Genoa, Trempealeau, Fountain City and Alma.

TOURISM PHOTO FILE



*Pepin Marina.*



DOUG STAMM

*Fishing on the Mighty Mississippi.*

## River Excursions

One of the best ways to enjoy the river is from the water – aboard an excursion boat. Be it a luxury motor launch or a genuine steam-driven paddlewheeler, an on-board tour lets you experience the river as those ashore cannot. Cast-off aboard any of these tour possibilities:

### **Island Girl River Cruises**

621 Park Plaza Dr, La Crosse, WI 54601

608/784-0556

[www.greatriver.com/islandgirl](http://www.greatriver.com/islandgirl)

*149-passenger luxury yacht with daily cocktail and dinner cruises. Sightseeing, lunch, weekend moonlight and Sunday breakfast cruises also available. Open late May to early October. Departs from the dock next to Skipper Liner Marine.*

### **Julia Belle Swain**

227 Main St, La Crosse, WI 54601

800/815-1005, 608/784-4882

[www.juliabelle.com](http://www.juliabelle.com)

*Daily excursions aboard one of only five authentic steam-powered boats still on the river. Sunday morning brunch and evening dinner cruises, as well as overnight trips. Live music, great food and themed party cruises. Open June through October. Call for reservations.*

### **La Crosse Queen Cruises**

405 Veterans Memorial Dr, La Crosse, WI 54602

608/784-8523

[www.greatriver.com/laxqueen/paddle.htm](http://www.greatriver.com/laxqueen/paddle.htm)

*149-passenger authentic split sternwheel paddlewheeler offering daily sightseeing tours. Dinner and brunch cruises on weekends. Lunch, pizza and three-hour cruises also available. Open June through October. Departs from Riverside Park.*

### **Steamboat Inn River Charters**

US Hwy 10 Bridge, Prescott, WI 54021

800/262-8232, 715/262-5858

[www.steamboatinn.com](http://www.steamboatinn.com)

*Cruises on the St. Croix and Mississippi Rivers. Open June 15 to October 1. Departs from the dock at the Steamboat Inn Restaurant.*

## Houseboating Vacations

Imagine captaining your own vessel on the broad Mississippi – anchoring on moonlit sandbars, soaking in the topside hot tub, casting a line for walleye, locking through with other river craft. Outfitters in Alma and La Crosse (use the “Community Contacts” on the back page of this booklet) rent fully equipped houseboats in several sizes. If you’re inexperienced, they offer on-the-water training. You’re never alone on the river – CB radios keep you in constant touch with their operations office.

## Locks & Dams

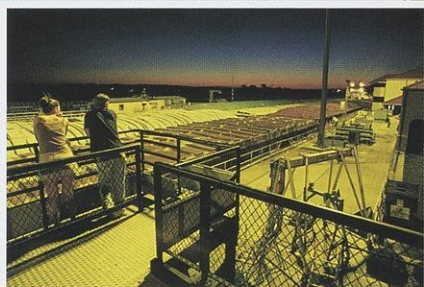
To maintain a 9-foot-deep channel on the Upper Mississippi, the US Army Corps of Engineers built a series of locks and dams on the river in the 1930s. Ten such locks and dams control water flow along Wisconsin's portion of the Great River Road.

The dams create pools behind them allowing the river to "step-down" as it flows south. The locks are water elevators that move boats up or down between pools. Using a lock is called "locking through."

Locking through is free – on a first-come, first-served basis. The procedure for locking through is broadcast on Marine Band Channel 14.

Strong currents can exist above and below locks and dams – stay out of these restricted areas. Wing dams are long piles of rock placed in the river to direct the channel. In high water, they can be submerged just below the surface. Avoid areas of rough water that may indicate a submerged wing dam.

The 9-foot main channel is marked in the river by buoys or "day marks." When traveling upstream, green buoys mark the left edge of the channel; red buoys mark the right edge.



RJ & LINDA MILLER

*Lock and dam at Alma.*

## More Sources of Boating Information

For a map of the Upper Mississippi River from Cairo, Illinois to St. Paul, Minnesota, contact:

### **Mississippi River Visitor Center**

PO Box 2004

Rock Island, IL 61204-2004

309/794-5338, 800/645-0248

[www.mvr.usace.army.mil/missriver](http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/missriver)

For information about boat registration, regulation and licensing, and boating safety, visit [www.dnr.state.wi.us](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us) then click on "Outdoor Recreation."

For more information about Wisconsin's Great River Road, visit [www.wigreatriverroad.org](http://www.wigreatriverroad.org)

# Biking



*The Crosse Queen, by Gary Knowles*

The varied terrain of the Upper Mississippi River Valley offers bicyclists an array of challenging pedal pushing. Think of the Mississippi River Valley as a giant half-pipe snaking its way along Wisconsin's western border. On the valley floor you go with the flow; the riding is easy as you shadow the river from one picturesque town to another. But to turn east – away from the river – you've got to power up the side of the half-pipe; up 500-foot limestone bluffs. It's not an easy climb, but the bluff-top views are spectacular.

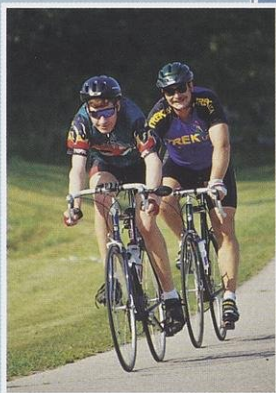
## On-Road Touring

With few exceptions, Wisconsin's portion of the Great River Road follows US Highway 35 from Dickeyville in the southwestern corner of the state to Prescott where the Mississippi turns west into Minnesota. Hwy 35 is well traveled. While most experienced touring bicyclists will be quite capable of traveling its entire length and coping with its traffic, two sections with lower volumes and 5-foot paved shoulders are good examples of how well you can experience the river from the seat of your bicycle. Those sections are a 32-mile stretch from Nelson to Hager City, and a 27-mile stretch from Lynxville to Genoa.

The northern recommended section of Hwy 35 links six pleasant river towns – Nelson, Pepin, Stockholm, Maiden Rock, Bay City and Hager City. The town of Nelson is famous for its ice cream parlor and cheese factory, as well as the Tiffany Bottoms, a 12,000-acre wildlife refuge that's a prime breeding and migratory bird habitat. Pepin is the birthplace of Laura Ingalls Wilder, author of the "Little House" books. Stockholm boasts a vibrant artisan community; its Main Street is a wonderful mix of cafes, gift shops, galleries and antiques. Maiden Rock is named for the bluff above the city. It

is the home of one of the state's largest berry farms and apple orchards. Bay City, at the north end of Lake Pepin, is a popular stop for eagle watching, picnicking and fishing.

PHOTO BY R. & L. MILLER



*On-road touring.*

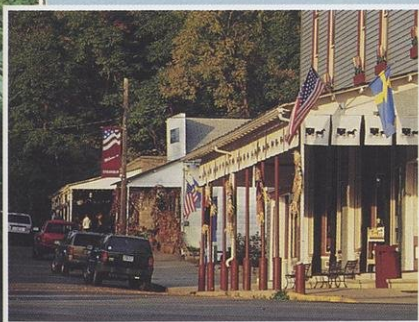


PHOTO BY R. & L. MILLER

*Stockholm.*

The southern shouldered section of Hwy 35 links Lynxville, Ferryville, De Soto, Victory and Genoa. At Lynxville you can watch barges come through Lock & Dam #9. Ferryville, built on a narrow ledge between the river and the bluffs, is the longest one-street village in the world. Three miles north of De Soto, Blackhawk Park is a 225-site, full-service campground operated by the Army Corps of Engineers on an island in the Mississippi. Genoa is the home of Lock & Dam #8, and Clement's Fishing Barge, the oldest floating fishing platform on the river.

The all-new Mississippi River Bike Map is an excellent resource for any portion of Wisconsin's Great River Road (Hwy. 35). It highlights biking conditions on one side, with accompanying narrative copy on the other. The map is currently available only on-line at [www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/bike-foot/bikemaps.htm](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/bike-foot/bikemaps.htm). Check it out.

East of the river, up the bluffs, many quiet country roads make excellent on-road bicycling forays. The Wisconsin Bicycle Federation distributes a series of four large foldout maps detailing on road routes as well as linear bike trails. Maps are available at Wisconsin bike shops or may be ordered by calling 800/362-4537 (\$18.96 for the set, includes S&H).

## Mountain Biking

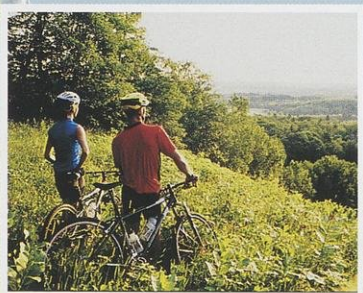
Much of the bluff riding you'll do along the Mississippi can be described as on-road mountain biking. But if it's an off-roading adventure you want, consider two of Wisconsin's riverside state parks.

Wyalusing State Park at Bagley offers seven miles of mountain bike trails in two looped trail systems. The Whitetail Meadows Trail runs a ridge top between woods and prairie grassland. It's a 3.2-mile loop with a center cut-off. The Mississippi Ridge Trail is a more heavily-wooded, 3-

mile loop. At its mid-point, it offers a dandy picnic shelter and overlook of the river. Both trails are rated easy/moderate, ideal for beginners and families.

For a more breath-taking off-road experience, ride the trails at Perrot State Park near Trempealeau. To cover the long loop (5.8 miles), you'll have to climb more than 250 feet several times.

From the top of Chicken Breast Bluff, you'll fall 360 feet in a half-mile. It's a difficult trail intended for the experienced rider. For an easy roll, take the Wilber Trail, a 2.7-mile loop that won't leave you quite so breathless.



TOURISM PHOTO FILE

*Blufftop vista.*

## Rail-Trails

For the past thirty years, Wisconsin has led the nation in the conversion of abandoned railroad lines to linear bike trails. Today, there are approximately 2,000 miles of dedicated, motor vehicle-free state, county and municipal bike trails in the state - and the mileage grows every year. These are minimal-grade trails that traverse some of the most scenic parts of the state.



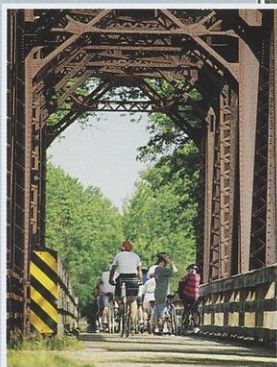
RJ & LINDA MILLER

*Great River State Trail.*

One of the best is the Great River State Trail. It follows the Mississippi for 24 miles from Marshland to Onalaska. It bridges eighteen streams and channels through wetlands teeming with wildlife including whitetail deer, herons and egrets. In the sleepy river town of Trempealeau you can watch tugboats finesse 400-foot-long barges through lock and dam No. 6. Nearby, Perrot State Park is a scenic wonder.

At the visitor center in Onalaska, the Great River State Trail links with the La Crosse River State Trail turning east on a 100-mile rail-trail adventure into the heartland of south-central Wisconsin. A series of three state trails – the La Crosse River, the Elroy-Sparta, and the “400” – run through railroad tunnels, over trestles, and across field and forest all the way to Reedsburg, south of Wisconsin Dells. It’s a great ride with all the amenities – food, rest stops, bike shops, camping and lodging – along the way.

RJ & LINDA MILLER



*Black River bridge.*

## More Sources of Biking Information

For a free copy of the Wisconsin Biking Guide including detailed maps and descriptions of 30 designated bike trails, off-road mountain bike trails, and on-road tours, call 800/432-8747; or order on-line at [www.travelwisconsin.com](http://www.travelwisconsin.com). That same Web site also includes maps, descriptions and trail facts for more than fifty other Wisconsin bike trails and tours.

For more information about Wisconsin’s Great River Road, visit [www.wigreatriverroad.org](http://www.wigreatriverroad.org)

## Community Contacts along Wisconsin's Great River Road

### **Alma**

City Clerk's Office  
314 N Main St  
Alma, WI 54610  
608/685-3330  
[www.almawisconsin.com](http://www.almawisconsin.com)

### **Cassville**

Department of Tourism  
PO Box 576  
Cassville, WI 53806-0576  
608/725-5855  
[www.cassville.org](http://www.cassville.org)

### **Holmen**

PO Box 158  
Holmen, WI 54636-0158  
608/526-4336, 800/873-1901

### **La Crosse Area CVB**

410 Veterans Memorial Dr  
La Crosse, WI 54601-4990  
608/782-2366, 800/658-9424  
[www.explorelacrosse.com](http://www.explorelacrosse.com)

### **Onalaska**

Center for Commerce & Tourism  
800 Oak Forest Dr  
Onalaska, WI 54650  
608/781-9570, 800/873-1901  
[www.tourism.onalaska.wi.us](http://www.tourism.onalaska.wi.us)

### **Pepin**

Visitor Information Center  
PO Box 277  
Pepin, WI 54759-0277  
715/442-3011  
[www.pepinwisconsin.com](http://www.pepinwisconsin.com)

### **Potosi-Tennysen**

Chamber of Commerce  
PO Box 11  
Potosi, WI 53820-0011  
608/763-2261

### **Prairie du Chien**

Chamber of Commerce  
211 S Main St  
Prairie du Chien, WI 53821  
608/326-8555, 800/732-1673  
[www.prairieduchien.org](http://www.prairieduchien.org)

### **Prescott Area**

Chamber of Commerce  
237 Broad St N  
Prescott, WI 54021-1703  
715/262-3284  
[www.prescottwi.com](http://www.prescottwi.com)

### **Trempealeau**

Chamber of Commerce  
PO Box 212  
Trempealeau, WI 54661-0212  
608/534-6780  
[www.trempealeau.net](http://www.trempealeau.net)

This brochure was produced with matching funds from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Wisconsin Department of Tourism. It promotes a "Birding, Biking, and Boating" campaign for the thirty-three communities along Wisconsin's portion of the Great River Road.

Wisconsin's Great River Road was the state's first roadway designated as a National Scenic Byway. There are 95 such designated byways in 39 States. The FHWA promotes the collection as America's Byways. To learn more about the National Scenic Byways Program visit [www.byways.org](http://www.byways.org).



AMERICA'S BYWAYS

For more information about Wisconsin's Great River Road, visit  
[www.wigreatriverroad.org](http://www.wigreatriverroad.org)

A large turkey with iridescent feathers in shades of red, orange, and black stands in a field of tall, dry grass. The turkey is facing the camera, with its head turned slightly to the right. Its tail feathers are fanned out, showing a mix of dark and light patterns.

# The elusive **turk**

For five years, respect was about as hard to find as a turkey.

*Barbara Barr*

Turkeys are extremely wary. Keen eyesight and hearing alert them to the slightest noise or movement. It takes skill, time and patience to learn the birds' calls, habits and movements.

I wanted to learn to shoot and care for a gun properly, so when I retired in 1995, after 21 years of teaching, I decided to go turkey hunting. My husband, Bob, a hunter since childhood would never show me the finer art of the arsenal. Probably afraid I'd shoot him, accidentally or on purpose. Having butchered many a chicken in my day, I figured I

could shoot a turkey better than deer or squirrels. So I read, got my license, and the next spring I sallied forth with a short-barreled, lightweight shotgun supplied by our friend Dave.

In the woods by 5 a.m. still half asleep, I became aware of the "rosy fingers of dawn" described in "The Iliad." For five days I persisted, trudging, waddling along behind Bob with my

too-big boots and layered clothing.

The last fifteen minutes of the last day of that first season, while Bob was off mushroom hunting, I shot at my decoy some few yards in front of me. Bob came running around the hill saying, "Did ja git em?"

"No, and I think I missed the decoy, too." Examination found the decoy quite intact.



STEPHEN J. LANG

Since reintroduction in 1978, turkeys have spread and been transplanted northward in a population that now numbers about 330,000. More than 74,000 hunters train themselves and enjoy seeing and hunting turkeys in spring and fall.

"Oh geez," he said. "Don't tell anybody. They'll feel sorry for me." Then he proceeded to tell everyone.

The spring of '97 dawned with many cold, rainy days, but I determinedly got my gear together and dutifully practiced always hitting the target a bit high, but in range. Learning to sit still was hard, but I was getting good at it.

One day a little, fat brown thrush danced on a branch at the end of my gun barrel, and a turkey hen putted around the grassy knoll I was sitting on. Her head bobbed as she'd stop to scratch in the dirt clucking and putting. Finally, she came to an opening and started toward me then stopped.

I was frozen, not even blinking. She looked steadily then turned and walked sedately away no longer putting. She sensed something wrong, but like Jody in "The Yearling," I'd seen "a thing."

And so the 1998 spring turkey season started with Bob again directing. We sat in a cold, drippy foggy blind; no "rosy fingers of dawn" this first morning. Gradually out of the mist a coon family emerged, crossed our opening,

paused to examine the decoys then disappeared into a hole beneath a hollow tree. Two deer walked into our clearing, neither scenting nor seeing us. This was fun. Next came two men who stood near our blind unaware of us until Bob spoke to them. They were poachers and trespassers...not fun. They ended our hunt for that day.

The next morning was more invigorating. I was sitting in a different blind with Bob sitting behind and to my left. He'd paced off distance to the decoys patiently explaining the limit of my gun's range for the umpteenth time. I'm nestled into myself half asleep when ...*Crash!*

*Gobble, gobble* and across the clearing from me I see a form trying to get through the multiflora rose brush. The form disappears to emerge again through another opening. It's a tom in full strut! His feathers and wings are fluffed, his wattles are shaking, and he's somehow pounding because the ground seems to shake. The beautiful red and iridescent bronze-gold feathers are shimmering; he is turning around and

around. Bob is gobbling and the decoy is swaying sensually when out of the woods comes a *real* hen who imposes herself between the decoy and the strutting tom. Gradually the real hen lures the tom off into the woods. I never even think to pull up my gun until they are nearly out of sight.

Thinking Bob had seen what I did, I raced back to him. "My God, did you see that? It was so beautiful."

"You saw him and you didn't shoot!" He stomped out of the woods so fast I had to run or get left behind. He's recounted this tale always with the same disgust, more often than I care to remember.

And so endeth the '98 spring season.

The '99 season rolled around, and I was given to understand I'd be hunting alone, but dear Dave, he of the gun, took me with him calling and sitting interminable hours in the blind. The first morning four hens came to our blind and invited us to a pending orgy, then dropped down over the hill and out of sight. Dave is a convincing caller. They believed him, but the toms because of

## Spring turkey tips

- Before the season, take turkey loads of varying sizes — try No. 4s, 5s and 6s — and head to a shooting range with a few turkey targets. You want a good even pattern to cover the head and neck area of the turkey at 40 yards. But don't limit your shooting to that distance. Pattern your gun at shorter distances of 20 and 30 yards so you are aware of how it will perform at closer ranges.
- Plan your hunt. Hunt your plan. Let people know when you expect to return.
- Don't wear anything red, white or blue. The tom turkey's caruncles, snood and head are these shades during the spring mating season. Even check that food wrappers in these colors are not sticking out of your camouflage clothing or gear.
- Select a hunting location where your back and sides are protected by a tree, stump or some solid object at least as wide as your back and higher than your head. From your seated hunting position, identify a clear line of vision to your front. Select a sight line that gives you 100 yards visibility, then set your decoy(s) about 20 yards from your position along your line of sight.
- Identify your target positively and don't shoot at a sound or movement. Make sure you can see the entire turkey and it is safe to shoot. Then, and only then, take a shot.
- If you are calling over decoys and decide to move, check carefully to ensure that no one is stalking your decoys. If you see someone, call out to them in a loud, clear voice. You and they have already compromised each other's hunting positions, so make sure you are heard and seen.
- For safety's sake, pack some blaze (hunter) orange clothing in your gear that you can wear if you are successful and are approaching or handling a bird on the ground.
- Don't stalk turkeys; it's dangerous and people who think they are stalking turkeys often find that they are stalking another hunter.

*Advice from the National Wild Turkey Federation*



the willing hens, had no need to come to his call. The second day we moved to another hill and set up in a cozy tent. We heard gobbles and a "fly down," but then they went away from us toward the spring. Dave yelped a few times, then we visited quietly. A sudden rustling of leaves and Dave whispered, "They're coming."

Two jakes peeked into our clearing, craning their necks and trying not to be too obvious. If toms were there doing their business, these youngsters knew they would get their butts kicked. I made a bad shot too high, but Dave polished it off and a small 18-lb. jake was the main course at the hunter's feast next day. Luscious...fresh...no poultry seasoning necessary. This was real turkey flavor. When Dave presented me with my very own slate call, I knew he too was telling me I would be on my own.

The 2000 season dawned clear, cold, and windy. I'd staked out my blind early. I'd regularly seen birds when riding horses in this area. The horse was running hard when we popped up over the top of the knoll surprising the birds in the flat below. They heard us coming, but didn't know what we were, so they froze in place until we actually appeared before they ran and flew away.

I chose to set up the blind near a wooded point on the edge of the flat below the knoll. My ears ached from the cold wind that first morning as I tried to stay still listening to gobbles behind me in the woods. The turkeys weren't going to go into the open field to be blown around...drat it all any way. Bob came from his blind where he'd passed up a shot being out of position and was disgruntled, so we left the woods to go to Dave's venison steak lunch for a gang of hunters. One of them was on his way to the hospital having blown out his knee chasing a wounded bird. Doug reminded him that if he'd aimed for the head and neck, he'd have killed it, thus preventing his present injury.

As Bob prepared to head back to hunt, I thought longingly of my "lazy girl" chair, but I decided I'd better tag along, as he seemed to be including me in his plans. We drove to the foot of the hill we intended to hunt. I was placed in

a thicket of multiflora rose that picked and scratched at my clothes and mask while Bob went farther along the trail and began to call. I heard rustling behind me at the same time I heard Bob's signal whistle. Wasn't that just like him!

Now what was I supposed to do? Be really still? Was there really a turkey behind me or did Bob want me to move? I stretched up a tiny bit. Now I can see his decoy, which means he's moved, so he must want me to move. God forbid I get the signals wrong. With difficulty, I



Barbara Barr learned a lot in her first five years as a turkey hunter. Her first bird was a 22-pounder taken in the spring 2000 season.

COURTESY OF BARBARA BARR

extricated myself from the prickly blind and moved toward the decoy. I was staying close to the woods, when I heard a gobble behind me. I'd blown it! The turk must have seen me! I dove into an opening and knelt.

Suddenly, in front of me are four turkeys that seem humanly tall ogling the decoy. At the "schnick" of my safety, they simultaneously swung to look at me. It's now or never. One shot — mine — and one turk dropped dead.

I am aghast, dumbfounded, shaken. My knees are wobbly. I can hardly stand. I'm trying to say, "Bob come quick," but it's barely a whisper. Finally, having heard the shot he came out of the woods. Still unable to speak, I point at the bird.

"Is it a hen?"

Never sure of myself I say, "I don't think so; I think I saw a beard."

Sure enough there is a six-inch beard and it was a clean kill to the head thanks to Doug's subliminal reminder and my tendency to aim high. Bob is incredulous and beginning to sound proud as he tags him, then paces off the 45-yard shot.

I'm left alone while he goes to get the truck to haul the 22-lb. turk down the hill. I slip a stem of grass into the turkey's mouth for its journey to the spirit world. I bow to the four winds, thanking the turkey gods, and I'm humble and grateful to have been a part of the experience.

That evening, the hunters gathered for dinner at the hotel much being made of the successful first day hunt.

"What kind of gun were you using?" Glen asked.

"Well, I don't know. It has a short barrel and is light." I pretended not to notice the sidelong glances and amusement at this answer. He's thinking I don't even know what kind of gun I have.

Over dessert Mike asked what kind of shell I used. I didn't rise to the bait. "A little short red one. I have longer black ones, but I chose the little short red one."

A simultaneous inhalation of breath...amusement and perhaps a hint of disgust at my assumed ignorance and dumb luck was thick. But that was OK. After all the little Mossberg 500 with the 12-gauge magnum shells did their job, and so did I.

*Barbara Barr lives in Bagley.*

# HAVE GUIDE, WILL TRAVEL

75 tours take you to the right place  
at the right time.



DON SPANGENBERG (BELOW) BILL & KATHLEEN WEEGE

Christine Tanzer

As our wild kingdom thaws, the urge to hole-up for winter gives way to wanderlust and the urge to travel. And may we say it's our pleasure to lure you astray from the hustle and bustle to relax, breathe a little, and visit the wilder nooks and crannies of Wisconsin.

Once again the Natural Resources Foundation has set up day trips — guided hikes, tours and leisurely paddles — in the company of DNR staff who will point out the posies and the challenges of managing wild resources. This year more than half the trips focus on forests in celebration of a century of managed forestlands and on visits to state natural areas (SNAs).

Note that these 75 trips are arranged chronologically from April through October. Assume the trips fall on Saturdays unless otherwise noted. The physical demands of each trip are noted by the color tint behind each number: blue — accessible to people with walking disabilities, green — easy, short travel on level terrain, yellow — an average

hike with a few hills, or orange — steeper terrain, a longer hike or a canoe trip with a few small rapids.



Space is limited and trips fill quickly on a first-come, first-served basis. Trips that can accommodate fewer than 20 people are indicated in the listing. Details and directions will be sent to registrants two weeks before each trip. Fees are nonrefundable if you cancel. Parties remaining on waiting lists will receive refunds.

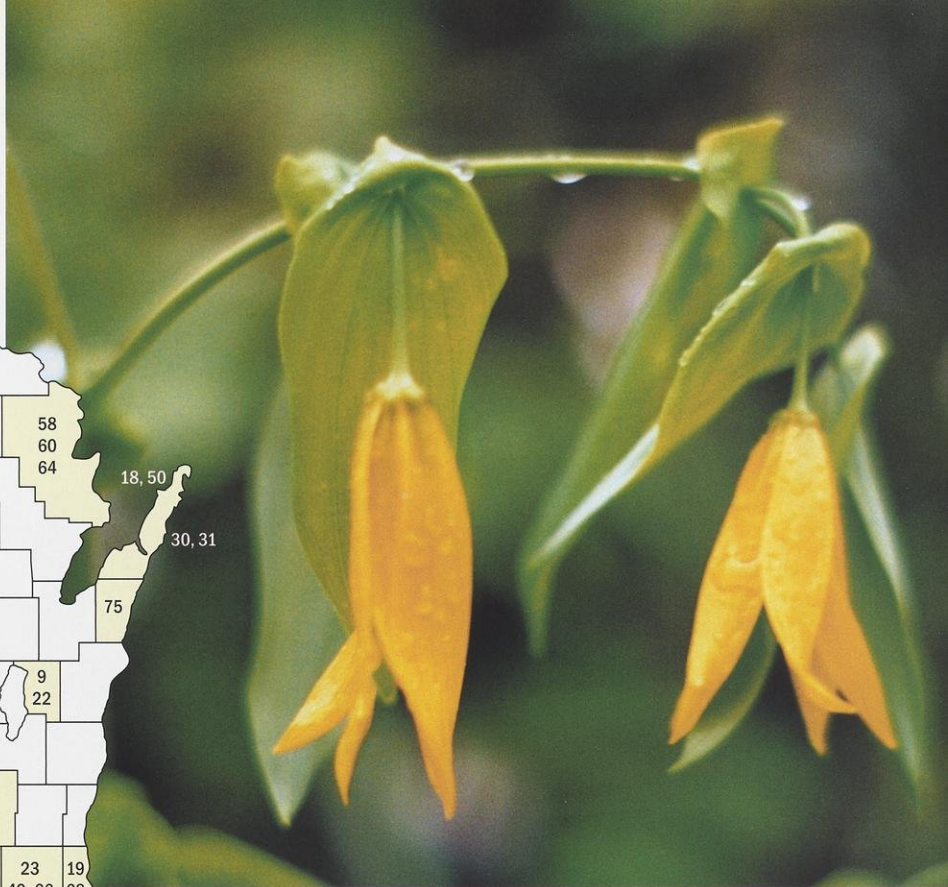
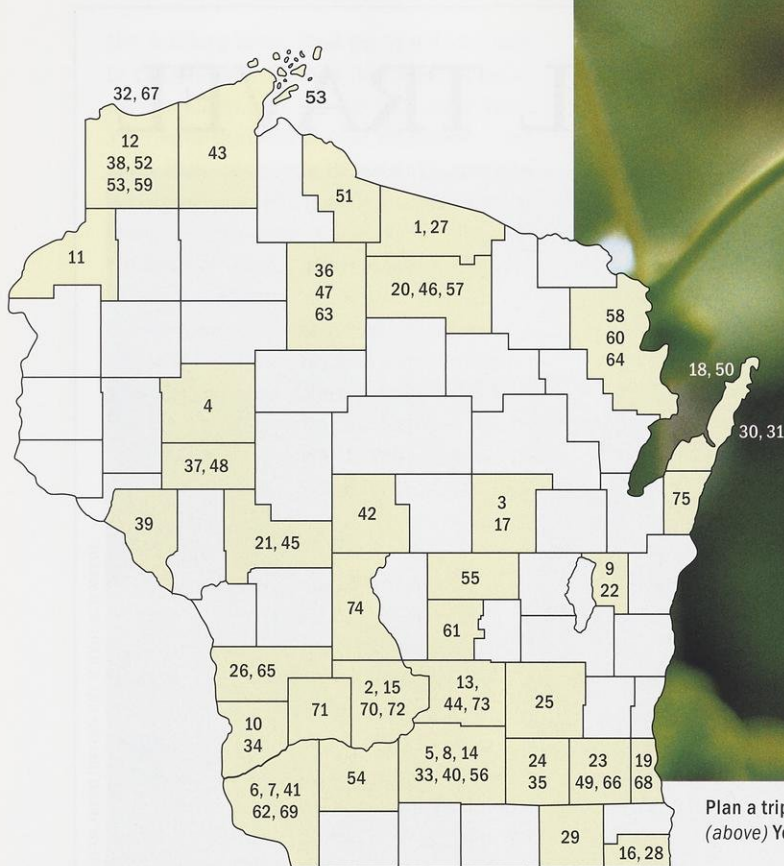
In filling out registration forms, please only consider one canoe trip per



Eight different trips aim to put you in a pile o' posies as forests and prairies bloom, (above) like trip 28 to Chiwaukee prairie. Spiderwort (left) blooms in meadows and wooded borders.

family or group. Fill out the application card listing the trip number, number of people in your party and include an annual \$30 trip registration in your check. Also include any per person fees for the few trips that are providing lunch, boat or canoe rentals. Calculate total costs and please mail one check payable to the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin at the address indicated.

Check trip availability on our website [www.nrfwis.org](http://www.nrfwis.org). Online registration may also be available at this site by publication time. Or call toll-free (866) 264-4096 after 5 p.m. to check trip status. Further questions? Call me on Wednesdays at (608) 264-8548 or send e-mail to [christine.tanzer@dnr.wi.gov](mailto:christine.tanzer@dnr.wi.gov).



Plan a trip by date, topic or location. Counties where each trip occurs are shown at left. (above) You'll see bellworts on some wildflower trips.

### 1A & 1B. Owls of Nicolet Forest

Venture into the night to discover the darker side of the Nicolet National Forest on a walk filled with owls and whip-poor-wills!

- A. Friday, April 23, 7:30–11 p.m. • B. April 24, 7:30–11 p.m. • Eagle River, Vilas Co. • Andy Paulios, leader
- Limit: 12

### 2A & 2B. Parfrey's Glen SNA

Explore the natural and human history of this spectacular 100-foot-deep gorge cut into the Baraboo Hills. Delightful spring wildflowers await!

- A. May 1, 9–11:30 a.m. • B. May 8, 9–11:30 a.m. • Baraboo, Sauk Co.
- David Bouche, leader

### 3. Spring ephemerals of northern old-growth

Discover spring flowers like the downy yellow violet and Dutchman's breeches as you hike through the old-growth northern mesic forest of Tellock's Hill SNA.

- May 1, 9–11 a.m. • Iola, Waupaca Co.
- Darcy Kind, leader

### 4. Frogs & toads of the Northern Chippewa

Learn to identify frogs and toads at night by their chirps and chortles while exploring several sites in northern Chippewa County. (cost includes field guide and tape)

- Friday, May 7, 8–11:30 p.m. • Eagleton, Chippewa Co. • Bruce Neeb & Rob Strand, leaders • Limit: 12 • Cost: \$25 per party

### 5. Women hike the Ice Age Trail

Explore beauty in the Brooklyn Wildlife Area hiking the Ice Age Trail with a group of women learning about natural history.

- Friday, May 7, 9 a.m.–1 p.m. • Verona, Dane Co. • Danielle Valvassori, Tracey Teodecki, Cheryl Housley, Sara Rigelman & Mary Zickerman, leaders • Limit: 15 women

### 6. Warblers of Wyalusing

Wood warblers, vireos, tanagers and orioles abound.

- May 8, 7:30–10:30 a.m. • Wyalusing State Park, Grant Co. • Yoyi Hernandez & Scott Johnson, leaders

### 7. Effigy mounds of the Wisconsin River valley

Travel back in time and visit bird mounds, an ancient terraced agricultural field, a Ho-Chunk mound group, a bison herd and a hill offering a 360° panorama of the river valley.

- May 8, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. • Muscoda, Grant Co. • Robert Salzer, leader • Cost: \$10 per person

### 8. Hike the Ice Age Reserve

Venture back to the edge of the Ice Age as you traverse the terrain of the beautiful Cross Plains Unit.

- Friday, May 14, 9–11:30 a.m. • Cross Plains, Dane Co. • Tracey Teodecki, Drew Hanson & Cheryl Housley, leaders

### 9. Spring wildflowers of Stockbridge Ledge Woods SNA

Enjoy a fantastic display of spring wildflowers while hiking the sugar maple forests of this new natural area. See trillium, trout lily, mayapple and more.

- Friday, May 14, 9–11 a.m. • Stockbridge, Calumet Co. • Randy Hoffman, leader

### 10. Birds & spring flora of Mississippi River bluff prairies

See spectacular views of the Mississippi River valley from atop 400' high bluffs. Explore native flora in steep "goat" prairies of Rush Creek SNA.

• Friday, May 14, 9:30 a.m.–1 p.m.  
• Ferryville, Crawford Co. • Gretchen Heaser & Craig Thompson, leaders

### 11. Prairie birds & wildflowers of Crex Meadows

Discover the abundant prairie flora & fauna on a driving tour with several short walks into the Crex Meadows Wildlife Area.

• May 15, 9 a.m.–noon • Grantsburg, Burnett Co. • Jim Hoefler, leader  
• Limit: 16

### 12. Brule Valley glacial features auto tour

Drive into the past and envision a land formed by mile-high ice and covered by a great sea.

• May 15, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. • Brule, Douglas Co. • Jay Gallagher & Josh McIntyre, leaders

### 13. Dells of the Wisconsin River SNA spring hike

Towering hemlocks, mossy glens, and rare plants await! Blaze a trail through the Dells of the Wisconsin River SNA not normally accessible to the public.

• Sunday, May 16, 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m. • Wisconsin Dells, Columbia Co. • Thomas Meyer, leader

### 14. Brooklyn Wildlife Area — Ice Age Trail

Learn about Ice Age geology and trail history as you hike a beautiful portion of the trail.

• Friday, May 21, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. • Paoli, Dane Co. • Danielle Valvassori, Mary Zickermann, Bill Adamski, leaders

### 15. Ferry Bluff SNA & Schluckebier Prairie

Enjoy an exceptional show of prairie and woodland flora with a breathtaking view of the Lower Wisconsin River top the bluff.

• May 22, 9 a.m.–1 p.m. • Sauk City, Sauk Co. • Janeen Laatsch, leader

### 16. Discover Wisconsin frogs

Learn to recognize frogs by sight and song with an indoor program and a night walk among the crepuscular chorus.

• May 22, 8–10 p.m. • Bong Recreation Area, Kenosha Co. • Beth Goeppinger & Donna Mosca, leaders

### 17. Skunk-Foster Lakes SNA

Hike in the hemlocks as you explore a cluster of five undeveloped glacial pot-hole lakes in a scenic moraine.

• May 22, 9:30 a.m.–1 p.m. • Waupaca, Waupaca Co. • Mark Martin, leader

### 18. Peninsula's White Cedar Forest SNA

Explore the cedar forest, sedge meadow and abandoned beaches of this exceptional SNA to see the rare dwarf lake iris and fringed polygala.

• Friday, May 28, 9 a.m.–noon  
• Peninsula State Park, Door Co. • Kathleen Harris, leader

### 19. Spring bird hike — Havenwoods

Blaze a trail in Havenwoods State Forest in search of bluebirds, warblers, snipe, soras and other spring migrants.

• May 29, 7:30–9:30 a.m. • Milwaukee, Milwaukee Co. • Susan McLarty, leader

### 20. Wild crafts from the woods

Venture into the forest in search of balsam boughs, birch bark and princess pine (club moss). Learn how to sustainably harvest and make your own bark basket and balsam wreath.

• Thursday, June 3, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.  
• Woodruff, Oneida Co. • Colleen Matula, leader

### 21. Canoe the Black River State Forest

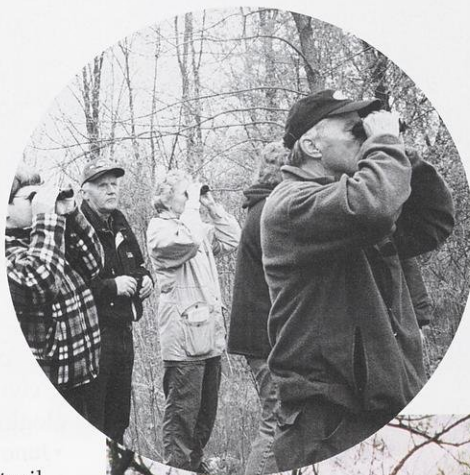
Paddle down the scenic bottomlands of the lower Black River and learn about forest ecology along the way. (bring your own canoe/kayak)

• June 5, 10 a.m.–3 p.m. • Black River Falls, Jackson Co. • Tim Beyer, leader  
• Limit: 12

### 22. Niagara Escarpment

Explore the environmental, economic and social issues surrounding the non-metallic mining of the Niagara Escarpment. See what is being done to reclaim quarry sites. Lunch included.

• June 5, 10 a.m.–3:30 p.m. • High Cliff State Park, Calumet Co. • Shelly Schaetz & Eric Fowle, leaders  
• Cost: \$5 per person



Birders delight on land and water.

(left) Watch spring migrants at Havenwoods in Milwaukee (trip 19) or see black and white warblers on a spring canoe trip.



**23. Boat Big Muskego Lake**

Canoe a portion of the lake to discover plants, birds and fish. Then take a power-boat ride to learn more about lake restoration. Canoes provided.

• June 5, 9 a.m.–noon • Muskego, Waukesha Co. • Heidi Bunk, Randy Schumacher, Jim Jackley & Tom Zagar, leaders • Limit: 20

**24. Insect ecology at Snapper Prairie SNA**

Discover the world of prairie insects as you hike among blooming shooting stars and prairie phlox in this exceptional prairie remnant. Search for the endangered silphium borer moth, leafhoppers and butterflies.

• June 5, 9:30 a.m.–noon • Lake Mills, Jefferson Co. • Joe Henry, leader

**25. Canoe Horicon Marsh**

Learn about marsh ecology and watch an array of wildlife as you paddle through this scenic wetland of international importance. Canoe and kayak rental available.

• June 5, 8:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. • Horicon, Dodge Co. • Brenda Hill & Laura Hartner, leaders

**26. Montana of the Midwest**

Brook trout populations are growing in Wisconsin streams that have not held them for 100 years. Come to the “Montana of the Midwest” and sample a stream.

• June 5, 10 a.m.–noon • Coon Valley, Vernon Co. • David Vetrano, leader

**27. Plum Lake SNA Old Growth**

Discover the majesty of old growth forests at Plum Lake SNA and the contrasting Star Lake. Learn about ecology and management of northern forests.

• June 5, 10 a.m.–3 p.m. • Star Lake, Vilas Co. • Ron Eckstein, leader

**28. Chiwaukee Prairie SNA**

Tread among shooting stars exploring a prairie with more than 400 identified species.

• June 5, 9–11 a.m. • Kenosha, Kenosha Co. • Kelly Skaife & Marty Johnson, leaders

**29. Walk on water at Beulah Bog SNA**

Traverse a floating, quaking mat of vegetation to the wonders of bog flora including carnivorous plants, mosses, tamaracks and more.

• Thursday, June 10, 9:30–11:30 a.m. • East Troy, Walworth Co. • Thomas Meyer, leader • Limit: 12

**30. Moonlight Bay Bedrock Beach SNA**

Blaze a trail through a boreal forest and emerge into the solitude of an undisturbed bedrock beach in Door Co. Rare plants and geology await.

• Friday, June 11, 1:30–4:30 p.m. • Bailey's Harbor, Door Co. • Mark Martin, leader



Purple prairie clover brightens a spring hike.

**31. Bailey's Harbor — Phragmites Control**

Visit several SNAs in Bailey's Harbor and learn about the threat that the “green giant” (giant reed grass) poses to our coastal wetland gems and efforts to control it.

• June 12, 9 a.m.–noon • Bailey's Harbor, Door Co. • Mark Martin, leader

**32. Sea kayak through a Lake Superior estuary**

Enjoy a six-mile paddle through steep wooded shores, unique wetlands and meandering tributary bays in the remote wilderness of the St. Louis River Streambank Protection Area. Sea kayaks and instruction will be provided by outfitter. Beginners welcome!

• June 12, 9 a.m.–4 p.m. • Superior, Douglas Co. • Frank Koshere, leader • Limit: 18 • Cost: \$55 per person kayak rental; \$25 per person with own kayak and gear

**33. Wisconsin's Important Bird Areas — Military Ridge Prairie**

Search for upland sandpipers, dickcissels and other birds as you traverse the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area.

• June 12, 7:30–11 a.m. • Blue Mounds State Park, Dane Co. • Yoyi Hernandez & Kristin Westad, leaders • Limit: 15

**34. Wilson State Nursery**

Tour the Wilson State Nursery to see what is involved in producing seedlings of 25 forest tree and wildlife shrub species.

• June 12, 10 a.m.–noon • Boscobel, Crawford Co. • Joe Vande Hey, leader

**35. Ancient Aztalan**

Travel back 1,000 years to explore the mystery of an ancient civilization when this premier archaeological site was a thriving settlement.

• June 12, 1–2 p.m. • Lake Mills, Jefferson Co. • Tom Davies, leader

**36. Flambeau River — introduction to whitewater canoeing**

Venture out and learn to paddle a whitewater portion of the Flambeau River. Camp overnight either one or two nights and enjoy a weekend on the water.

• Friday, June 18, 7 p.m.–Saturday, 5 p.m. (optional to Sunday, June 20 at 3 p.m.) • Park Falls, Price Co. • Dave Birren & Tom Watkins, leaders • Limit: 10 people

# NRF Field Trips 2004!



Natural Resources  
Foundation of Wisconsin

In an effort to promote responsible stewardship of Wisconsin's natural resources, the Natural Resources Foundation is offering more than seventy field trips throughout Wisconsin this year. The trips are led by DNR experts who share their enthusiasm and knowledge of our state's most beautiful places with field trip participants.

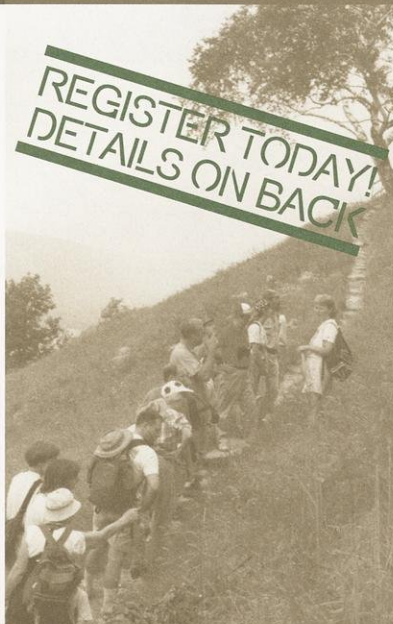
*The annual field trip registration fee is \$30.00 and includes an introductory membership to the Natural Resources Foundation.*

*For trip availability:*

*Call toll-free (866) 264-4096 or*

*Visit [www.nrfwis.org](http://www.nrfwis.org) (click on Field Trips)*

REGISTER TODAY!  
DETAILS ON BACK





# Field Trip Registration Form

Name.....

Address.....

City/State/Zip.....

Phone (daytime)..... (evening).....

Email.....

## ***I will attend the following trips:***

Trip#..... Number of People..... x Trip Fee..... = .....

Trip#..... Number of People..... x Trip Fee..... = .....

Trip#..... Number of People..... x Trip Fee..... = .....

*Make checks payable to Natural Resources Foundation.*

*Mail this form and payment to:*

*NRF Field Trips, PO Box 2317, Madison, WI 53701*

Trip Registration Fee = **\$30.00**.....

**Total Enclosed** = .....



Calling all wolf fans! Join an evening howl on trip 47.

### 37. Chippewa pinery of the past

Explore the history of logging managed vs. unmanaged stands, and steps to convert the pineries to their pre-logging era condition. Travel by bus to visit red and white pine stands, a logging camp, and the Pea Creek Sedge Meadow SNA.

• June 19, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. • Eau Claire, Eau Claire Co. • Steve Edge & Brooke Ludwig, leaders • Cost: \$10 per person

### 38. Five gems of the Brule River Forest

Hike portions of five spectacular gems of the Brule River State Forest: Mott's Ravine Pine Barrens, Brule Bog, Rush Lake Interior Beach, Brule River Boreal Forest and Bear Beach.

• June 19, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. • Solon Springs, Douglas Co. • Josh McIntyre, leader

### 39. Birds of Trempealeau River Meadows SNA

Bubbly songs of bobolinks and grassland birds abound in the largest wet grassland in the driftless area of Wisconsin.

• June 19, 6-9 a.m. • Fountain City, Buffalo Co. • Randy Hoffman, leader • Limit: 12

### 40. Trout stream assessment

Visit a trout stream and use sampling gear to assess water quality, habitat conditions, and aquatic insect and plant populations.

• June 19, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. • Cross Plains, Dane Co. • Mike Miller, leader

### 41. Summer solstice on Wisconsin's desert

Celebrate the longest day of the year at the Blue River Sand Barrens SNA along the Wisconsin River. See prickly pear cactus, ant lions and six-lined racerunner lizards.

• Monday, June 21, 9:30 a.m.-noon  
• Blue River, Grant Co. • Thomas Meyer, leader

### 42. Griffith State Nursery

Travel by wagon over this beautiful 100-acre tree nursery to see the details of propagating 25 species of native trees and shrubs.

• June 26, 10 a.m.-noon • Wisconsin Rapids, Wood Co. • Jim Storandt, leader

### 43. Plunge into lake ecosystems

Enjoy a day-long pontoon ride on Lake Namekagon learning about limnology, aquatic plants, fish, shoreland habitats and management. (catered lunch included)

• June 26, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. • Cable, Bayfield Co. • Buzz Sorge, leader • Cost: \$35 per person

### 44. Canyons & savannas of Rocky Run

Explore the diversity of Rocky Run — gently rolling slopes next to sheer-walled box canyons! Rare plants, savanna ecology and geology.

• June 26, 9 a.m.-noon • Wyocena, Columbia Co. • Craig Anderson, leader • Limit: 15

### 45. Stream ecology — Black River Falls

Discover the wonders of cold water stream ecology including water chemistry, aquatic insects, fish and habitat. Hands-on learning fun!

• June 26, 9 a.m.-noon • Black River Falls, Jackson Co. • Ken Schreiber, leader

### 46. Forest ecology and restoration

Visit a pine forest restored by prescribed burning and a northern hardwood site restored by fire and scarification to learn about forest ecosystems.

• Thursday, July 8, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.  
• Woodruff, Oneida Co. • Colleen Matula, leader



Get on top of landfill situations, literally. Trip 48 takes you to this recovered site where prairie birds and butterflies are making a comeback.

#### 47. Wolf howl in the Chequamegon National Forest

Learn about wolf biology and forest ecology during a hike and drive through wolf territory in the Great Divide District of the Chequamegon National Forest. Conduct an evening wolf howl survey. Cost includes dinner and bus ride.

• July 10, 3 p.m.–midnight • Park Falls, Price Co. • Adrian Wydeven, Sarah Boles & Tom Matthiae, leaders • Cost: \$25 per person

#### 48. The “power” in landfills

Visit the Superior Seven Mile Creek Landfill where collected biogas from decomposing refuse now provides power to 2,600 local homes.

• July 10, 10 a.m.–noon • Eau Claire, Eau Claire Co. • Dave Lundberg, leader

#### 49. Scuppernong Prairie and biocontrol beetles

Enjoy the beauty of Scuppernong Prairie, one of the state’s finest remaining wet prairies. Find out how beetles are helping to control purple loosestrife and bringing this prairie back to life!

• July 10, 10 a.m.–noon • Eagle, Waukesha Co. • Brock Woods, leader

#### 50. Paddle the Door shore

Learn about Door County geology and early settlement during a three-mile paddle along the base of a spectacular Niagara Escarpment bluff. Canoe or kayak rental available.

Friday, July 16, 9 a.m.–noon

• Peninsula State Park, Door Co. • Kathleen Harris, leader

#### 51. Osprey banding & Turtle Flambeau Flowage tour

Visit osprey nests and help band nestlings. Take a scenic boat ride through the flowage to see wildlife and a patterned bog. Gourmet lunch included. This trip is a fundraiser for the osprey monitoring program.

• July 17, 8:30 a.m.–4 p.m. • Mercer, Iron Co. • Bruce Bacon & Roger Jasinski, leaders • Cost: \$65 per person

#### 52. Canoe the Bois Brule River

Enjoy a summer day paddling the Bois Brule River with stops to learn about natural features and cultural history. Expect rapids and riffles. Canoes provided.

• July 17, 8 a.m.–2 p.m. • Lake Nebagamon, Douglas Co. • Steve Petersen & Josh McIntyre, leaders • Cost: \$20 per person

#### 53. Waterscape painting

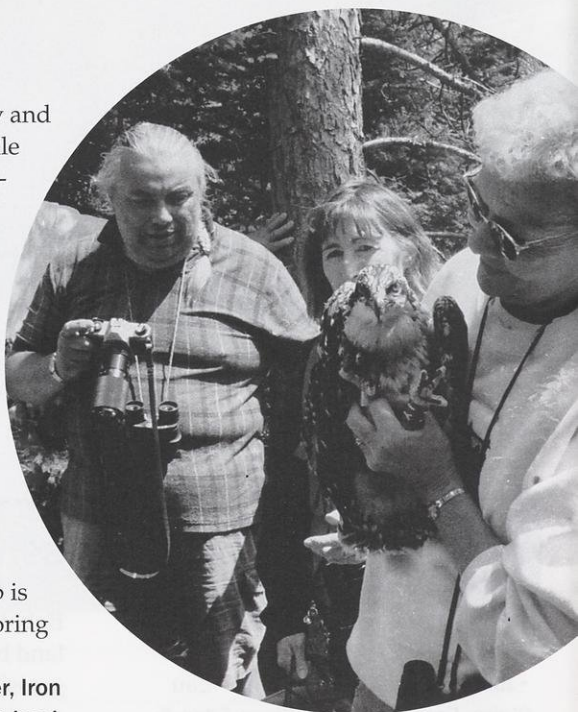
Gather with other artists to enjoy a day of outdoor painting in a beautiful shoreline setting. Get technical assistance from an experienced artist.

• Friday, July 23, 10 a.m.–3 p.m. • Solon Springs, Douglas Co. • Ruth King, leader

#### 54. Wild edible plants, medicinal plants and flower farming

Harvest edible and medicinal plants, then go into the kitchen to prepare your foraged lunch. Tour a cut-flower farm and learn about organic and sustainable farming.

• July 31, 9:30 a.m.–2 p.m. • Barneveld, Iowa Co. • Kelly Kearns & Kate Cooper, leaders • Limit: 15 • Cost: \$6 per person



A scenic boat ride, gourmet lunch and a chance to band ospreys await on trip 51.

#### 55. Prairie in peak summer bloom

Enjoy peak bloom at Greenwood Wildlife Area — one of the best prairie restorations in Wisconsin.

• August 7, 9 a.m.–noon • Wautoma, Waushara Co. • Jim Tomasko, leader



Woodland sunflowers, wetland glades and lunch on a hilltop with a panoramic view are on tap for trip 61.

### 56. Grasshoppers up close

Hike through the sand prairie and open woodland of Mazomanie Oak Barrens SNA to catch grasshoppers. Learn about grasshopper identification and ecology.

• August 7, 1–3:30 p.m. • Mazomanie, Dane Co. • Kathy Kirk, leader • Limit: 12

### 57. Forest invasive non-natives

Invasive non-natives threaten species diversity in field and forest. Learn to identify these plants and find out about restoration and control measures.

• August 7, 9 a.m.–4 p.m. • Woodruff, Oneida Co. • Colleen Matula, leader

### 58. Forest management on private lands

Tour two thriving forests on private lands with differing management practices. Look at timber harvests, unmanaged stands and discuss forest tax law.

• August 14, 9 a.m.–1 p.m. • Crivitz, Marinette Co. • Jennifer Boice & Jeff Bonikowske, leaders • Cost: \$5

### 59. Hike the oldest trail in the state

For over 300 years Native Americans, explorers and fur traders have used this trail to portage between the Bois Brule and St. Croix rivers. Hike the route and discover its history.

• August 14, 9 a.m.–noon • Solon Springs, Douglas Co. • Josh McIntyre & Chuck Zosel, leaders

All aboard for an environmental and cultural history tour of the Duluth/Superior harbor on trip 67.

### 60. Peshtigo River fly-fishing area

Travel by bus to several sites, enjoy beautiful vistas and learn about fish, fly-fishing, forests and river history.

• August 21, 9 a.m.–noon • Crivitz, Marinette Co. • Dan Mertz, leader • Cost: \$5 per person

### 61. John Muir's boyhood haunts

Walk the lake country, wetlands, prairie and savanna where John Muir grew up. Lunch at Observatory Hill atop a cedar glade with a spectacular view.

• August 28, 9:30 a.m.–1 p.m. • Montello, Marquette Co. • Mark Martin, leader

### 62. Astronomy at Wyalusing

Discover fun of astronomic proportions with a basic introduction to astronomy and a glimpse at the galaxies, star clusters and constellations.

• September 11, 7–9 p.m. • Wyalusing State Park, Grant Co. • Scott Johnson, leader • Cost: \$5

### 63. Canoe the Flambeau River

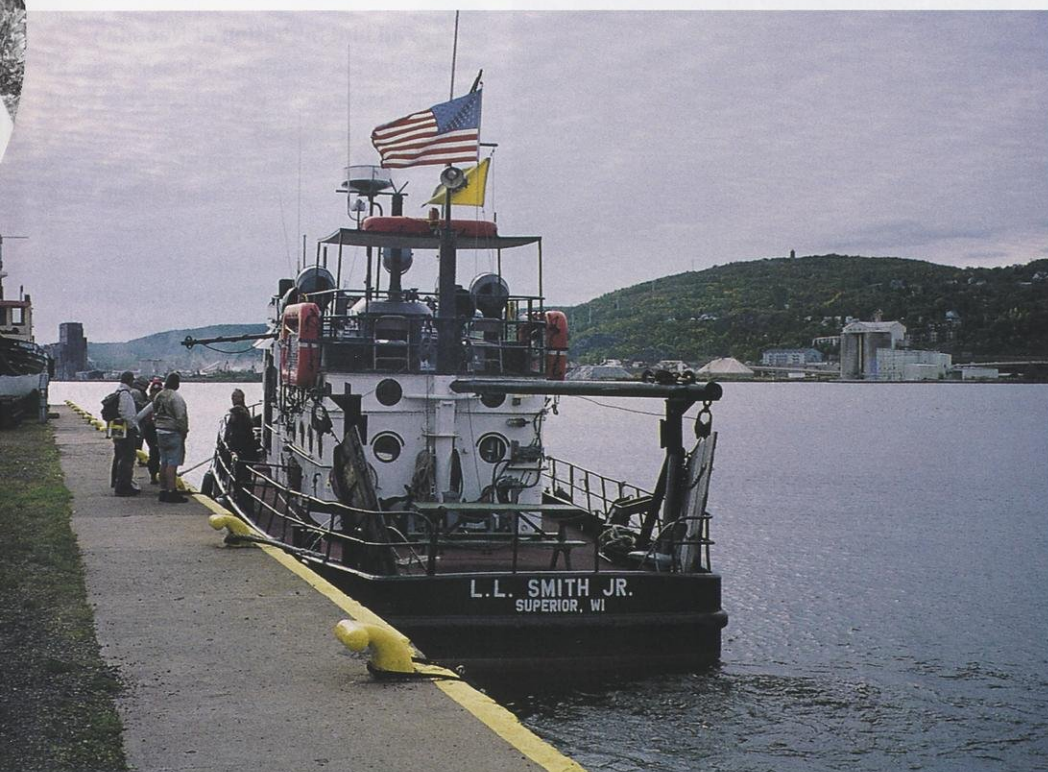
See wilderness and wildlife while paddling down a flat stretch of the Flambeau River. Learn about the history and management of this famed watershed and take a short hike to Big Block Wilderness Area. (lunch provided)

• September 11, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. • Phillips, Price Co. • Heidi Brunkow, leader • Cost: \$16 per person canoe rental; \$10 per person with own canoe

### 64. Peshtigo fire and forest history

See the site of America's most destructive forest fire where over a million acres burned in 1871. Learn about forest and settlement history. Visit Bloch Oxbow SNA to see what the area may have looked like before the fire.

• September 11, 9 a.m.–1 p.m. • Peshtigo, Marinette Co. • Mike Folgert, leader



FRANK KOSHERE

**65. Canoe the Kickapoo**

Water-carved sandstone cliffs line the banks as we paddle this winding waterway. Enjoy a hike through the hemlock forest of Mt. Pisgah SNA. (Limited canoes available for free use. Indicate on form if you need one, or are bringing your own)

- Friday, September 17, 11 a.m.–4:30 p.m. • Ontario, Vernon Co. • Hank Kuehling & Dave Siebert, leaders
- Limit: 18

**66. Prairies of Scuppernong River**

Explore a former glacial lake basin that is now a restored 3,500-acre low prairie.

- September 18, 9 a.m.–noon • Eagle, Waukesha Co. • Ron Kurowski, leader

**68. Future forestry education center**

Visit the future site of the DNR's Forestry Education Center and learn about trees, forest succession and exotic vegetation.

- September 18, 9:30 a.m.–noon
- Wauwatosa, Milwaukee Co. • Wendy McCown & Michael Sieger, leaders

**69. Fall raptor migration and Mississippi prairies**

See raptors migrating overhead as we hike a bluff prairie full of rare plants. Breathtaking views of the Mississippi River await! Steep terrain.

- September 25, 9 a.m.–noon
- Cassville, Grant Co. • Richard & Amy Staffen, leaders • Limit: 15

**71. Brook trout of Ash Creek**

The amazing size of brook trout is "shocking" in this catch-and-release stream. Visit this demonstration property to also see impressive timber stand improvement, plantings, prairie restoration and a fish-shocking demo. (lunch included)

- September 25, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. • Richland Center, Richland Co. • Todd Kenefick, Cathy Cooper & Aaron Young, leaders • Cost: \$10 per person

**72. Hike Devil's Lake Ice Age Trail**

Enjoy autumn color and learn about geology and prairie restoration as we hike a scenic portion of the Ice Age Trail that traverses Rozno's Prairie within Devil's Lake State Park.

- October 1, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. • Devil's Lake, Sauk Co. • Greg Delwiche & Tim Malzhan, leaders • Limit: 15

**73. Autumn dells hike**

Spectacular gorges, mossy glens and rare plants await on a 3.5-mile trek through the Dells of the Wisconsin River SNA, not normally accessible to the public. Steep and off-trail terrain.

- Friday, October 1, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
- Wisconsin Dells, Columbia Co.
- Thomas Meyer, leader

**74. Fall bird migration at Necedah**

Enjoy the fall colors on oak savannas as you watch waterfowl and songbirds migrate.

- October 2, 7 a.m.–noon • Necedah, Juneau Co. • Yoyi Hernandez & Rich King, leaders

**75. Chinook salmon**

Watch chinook salmon take their last journey to their spawning streams. Learn about Great Lakes history, salmon lifecycles and egg collection at the Besadny Fisheries Facility.

- October 9, 10–11:30 a.m. • Kewaunee, Kewaunee Co. • Kathy Dax, leader



NRF FILE PHOTO

Several fall trips keep an eye on the sky searching for migrating hawks from atop prairie bluffs, savannas and forests.

**67. Water quality and boat tour of historic Superior Harbor**

Come aboard the research vessel *LL Smith* to learn about the environmental history and cultural development of the Duluth/Superior Harbor, including fisheries restoration, the history of shipping and water quality.

- September 18, 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
- Superior, Douglas Co. • Frank Koshere, Nancy Larson, Dan Rau & Sue O'Halloran, leaders

**70. Baraboo Hills geologic history**

Hike the picturesque bluffs at Devil's Lake, then enjoy a van tour with hiking stops at Rock Springs, Abelman's Gorge SNA, Natural Bridge State Park, and a rock hunting expedition into the "Pink Lady" Quarry.

- September 25, 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
- Devil's Lake, Sauk Co. • Phil Fauble, leader

continued from page 2



JACK R. BARTHOLMAI



JACK R. BARTHOLMAI

(top) Yellowhead chicks are all mouth waiting for a meal.  
(above) Young leave the nest at 9–12 days then hang on to reeds for dear life. They become adept fliers, leaving the marshlands to feed in nearby fields as summer progresses.

After being courted with his unmusical songs and proud display of his white wing patches, she succumbs to his advances. However, he is seldom satisfied with one female. Polygamy is fairly common within the community. Each female builds her own nest, which she completes in two to four days. A marvel of engineering, the nest, placed over water that is two to four feet deep, is constructed of water-soaked aquatic vegetation that is woven around several live plant stems. As the vegetation dries, the nest shrinks, tightening its grip and pulling in the supporting stems, which further helps to conceal the nest.

The nest is bulky and six inches high with a fairly deep nest bowl. She lays an average of four eggs, each one bluish-white heavily dotted with brown. Seemingly stuffed deep inside the nest, she incubates the eggs for 12 to 13 days. Young leave the nest when they are 9 to 12 days old. They can't fly yet, but are adept at holding on and scrambling among the reeds, for any slip could mean death by drowning. One brood is raised per year and their time with us is all too short.

Summer advances into August. The krawking birds are quiet. They've left the marshes for surrounding fields of grain. They've molted and flocked together, often with other blackbirds, and now begin leaving Wisconsin.



JACK R. BARTHOLMAI

Guided tours and talks are scheduled each weekend April 24–May 23 at the Horicon Marsh Melodies celebrations.

## A weekend with the birds

The blackbirds will *krawk* and the Marsh Melodies will be in full voice as we celebrate the peak bird migration at Horicon Marsh in Dodge County. All weekend from Friday, May 7 through Monday, May 10 the Horicon Marsh Bird Festival offers guided bird hikes, canoe trips and pontoon boat tours into the marsh. Birding events are scheduled from dawn's early light into the night when the chorus shifts from animals you can see to frogs, birds and mammals you can hear on evening tours. The hard cores can even take part in a 24-hour sit-in as birders camp out on the Observation Deck at the southern end of the cattail marsh.

You're new to bird watching? No problem. Some talks are specifically geared to new birders and young birders just taking up the hobby. Want to learn bird banding? Can do, at demonstrations and workshops throughout the weekend. Got a hunger for something else? No worries. Community steak fries and a brat fry will keep the grills glowing, BUT DON'T ASK FOR CHICKEN! After all, this is the weekend to praise, not braise, our kindred feathered brethren!

More than 40 events have been cooked up, er, planned for the weekend and other Marsh Melody events are scheduled in the area each weekend from April 24 through May 23. For a complete listing, contact [www.marshmelodies.com](http://www.marshmelodies.com) or call (920) 387-7860.

So venture out on those cool spring mornings. Listen for the squawky bass notes. Scan the marshes looking for bright, Easter egg-sized yellow spots poking just above the cattails. For each yellow spot is attached to a sassy blackbird with a "you've got to look at me, I'm handsome even though I can't sing" attitude. Who can resist?



Anita Carpenter treads the bogs, beaches and byways watching nature nationwide and near her Oshkosh home. You can hear the yellow-headed blackbird's song at [www.naturesongs.com/yhbl1.wav](http://www.naturesongs.com/yhbl1.wav)

## COMMENT ON A STORY?

Send your letters to Readers Write, WNR magazine, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707 or e-mail letters to david.sperling@dnr.wi.gov.

### ON BIRCH BARK

I've read and enjoyed [Anita Carpenter's] charming articles these many years and always found them entertaining and often enlightening. Still do, but I must take mild issue with your unfounded pity for birches, the "fragile-looking tree with the thin bark."

The "thin" bark is superficial, and the total bark layer is often considerable and, diameter for diameter, compares fairly well with many other tree species. The outer white bark can be up to 3/16-inch thick, but such thickness is rare and reserved for older-growth trees in northern climes. In Wisconsin, 1/8-inch is normal and I'd usually save such thickness for large mococks [containers] or even canoes.

In any case, the total bark covering is usually 1/2-3/4 inches in mature trees in our area, which appears to be quite sufficient [to survive] our -25° weather.

Regarding the question of "why white?" you might want to investigate local Indian legends which often cite the primeval birch that was unblemished white, but whose pride in its purity led ultimately to its being scratched by more common trees. These scars persist on birches to the present day.

Richard C. Schneider  
Stevens Point

Readers may recall a 1995 piece by Professor Schneider on cutting and milling one's own wood and drying it in a homemade solar kiln.

### PESKY WOODPECKERS

I read in the December issue about the book "The Critter Con-

trol Handbook." I have a problem with a woodpecker that is making holes in the cedar wood siding on my house. I'm wondering if there is a solution.

Kenneth Sellnow  
Mayville

*The woodpeckers may be hammering to sound out their territory, but this time of year are more often looking for food and grubs in your siding. Grooved siding is a great place for insects to lay their eggs or maybe the siding is getting older and a few bugs are holding out there. You have several options, but you need to break the woodpeckers' bad habits:*

1. *Noise, owl decoys and streamers may scare the woodpeckers away.*
2. *Apply wood stains or preservatives to make the siding less attractive sites for boring insects.*
3. *Offer the woodpeckers a better source of food that is easier to get to. Some people have success by hanging a suet feeder on a tree near the area where the siding is damaged. The woodpeckers are drawn to that food source and may leave your siding alone if the suet provides their energy needs for a lot less work. Try making one of the suet feeders we showed in the December issue or you can buy one for less than \$10 at stores selling bird seed and other birding supplies.*
4. *Contact your county extension office and ask for appropriate publications. "Controlling Woodpecker Damage" by Extension Wildlife Specialist Scott Craven (Publication G3117) will surely help you set strategies.*
5. *Consider products you can spray on the siding that make it less attractive to both birds and insects. Woodpeckers don't like a sticky product called Tanglefoot. The problem is that product may stain or discolor your siding, which would not be an improvement.*
6. *As a last resort, some people try spraying the affected areas of siding with an insecticide that kills the bugs the woodpeckers*

*are seeking. The drawback here is that you don't know what else you might be harming in the process. We surely do not recommend this as a first alternative.*

### PAINTING BAT HOUSES

I intend to build two bat houses after reading the December issue ("Habitat at Home") that provided building instructions. I intend to put them on the south end of our barn, which is painted white. If I stain the inside of the bat house dark as recom-

mended, can I paint the outside white to match the barn?

Theodore A. Waak  
Manitowoc

*It's sure worth a try. We suspect that placing the bat house on a south wall with southern exposure will help it warm up. Given that bats prefer their quarters quite warm, most bat house designs recommend darker paints and stains so the houses heat up more quickly and stay warmer during the evening.*

## UPDATE

### WHERE BUDGET CUTS HIT

The state's budget shortfall forced the Department of Natural Resources to cut more than 20 positions last fall. The next round of layoffs could total almost 100 positions. Many of these cuts were targeted for DNR administrative and technology positions and will hit especially hard in positions supporting field staff, activities and computer technology services.

DNR Secretary Scott Hassett listed several areas of future emphasis, including environmental restoration of rivers, dam removals and groundwater protection.

"We have a program for the future of fishing and hunting, and I don't want that to take a back seat," Hassett told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel in late January. "By the same token, we have to recognize changing demographics in the state and other resource users — whether it is backpackers, people using trails or birders — they are potential sources of funding."

The DNR noted where cuts would come in areas more visible to the public. Chief Warden Randy Stark noted that field warden budgets are down 24 percent from 1995 levels. Budget reductions reduced the warden force by five wardens and four enforcement support positions. Another 16 warden vacancies will be held open and by January of 2005, there could be as many as 35 warden vacancies.

Tom Hauge, director of the Bureau of Wildlife Management said managers are operating with 16 vacancies and field managers have cut back about 70 percent in their operations budget. Hauge said DNR wildlife programs cut back all habitat improvement programs except those funded by special earmarked funds such as pheasant and waterfowl stamps.

Mike Staggs, DNR director of Fisheries Management and Habitat Protection said fisheries had to cut programs that anglers will notice. "We had to reduce our fisheries budget by \$1.7 million and eliminate eight fisheries positions," he said. The fisheries budget for angler education and outreach was reduced 25-50 percent, and cutbacks will reduce trout stocking on put-and-take streams by 25 percent, reduce musky fingerling production and cut walleye fingerling production. Staff will not be raising any bass or northern pike until some funding can be restored and will cut back on brook trout production for Lake Michigan and brown trout production for Lake Superior.

# Spring delights

No one can throw off winter's shackles like a Wisconsin resident. Come spring a torrent of creative energy bursts through all those dark and chill hours, resulting in a bounty of celebratory endeavors and some occasional wacky behavior. Give in to that giddy delight in the year's new warmth and you won't be alone — especially if you attend one or more of the following events.

You're welcome to take a discreet peek and even mention unmentionables when you explore **The Underside of Victorians**, a look at the petticoats, pantaloons, bustles and sleepwear worn by people who lived in the Victorian age. More lacy than racy, the undergarments will be on display beginning April 23 at the Captain Frederick Pabst Museum, 2000 W. Wisconsin Ave, Milwaukee. Built in 1892, the "Pabst Mansion" — a fine example of Flemish Renaissance Revival architecture — has 37 rooms, 12 baths and 14 fireplaces. (414) 931-0808. On the web: [www.pabstmansion.com/](http://www.pabstmansion.com/)

Meanwhile, just down the road a piece, the city of Racine will blush when **Downtown Bears It All** starting on May 4. More than 150 life-size bears painted and decorated in all kinds of colors and styles will grace Main and Sixth streets with their lumbering yet benevolent presence throughout the summer. (Check out the one that looks like Mike Ditka.)

Bears not your cup of brew? Perhaps a weekend with 500 alpaca — real live ones — might suit you better. During the **Great Midwest Alpaca Festival**, April 23–25 at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison, you can watch alpacas from more than 100 farms around the country compete for ribbons in various categories. Current or prospective alpaca owners can take part in seminars on nutri-

Pursue spring delights viewing the underside of Victorian wear, the roadside bargains on the 85-mile garage sale and the outside of soft, friendly alpacas.

tion, pasture management, business planning, and fleece. (608) 845-7317. On the web: [www.gmaf.info/schedule.html](http://www.gmaf.info/schedule.html)

First, we tossed it. Then we recycled it. Next, we talked it. And now, it's art. "It" is trash, and you can appreciate it with a new eye when the Appleton Art Center mounts **Trash: An Art Exhibition** beginning on April 23. The artists whose works will be displayed strive to transform our everyday discards into works capable of transcending aesthetic boundaries. Will they succeed, or will an empty cereal box remain nothing more

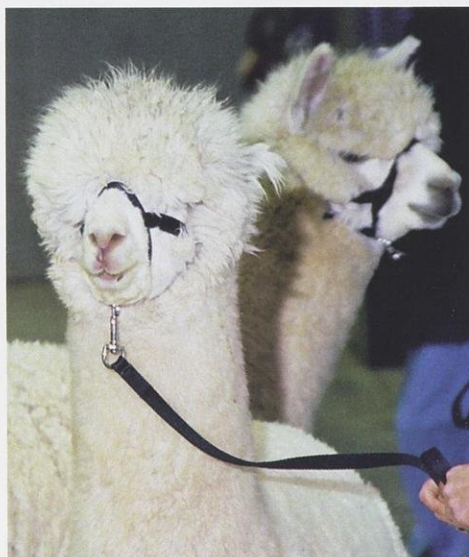
than a cardboard coffin for Captain Crunch? Find out at the center, 111 W. College Ave., Appleton. (920) 733-4089. On the web: [www.appletonartcenter.org](http://www.appletonartcenter.org)

Speaking of the detritus of daily life, it wouldn't be spring without a sale — specifically, an **85-Mile Garage Sale**. From April 30 to May 2, residents and businesses in 13 communities around Lake Pepin will set out all manner of household sundries, furniture, appliances, bric-a-brac, clothes, toys, books and more. If you can't find your treasure somewhere along this 85-mile route, friend, it doesn't exist. On the web: [www.mississippi-river.org](http://www.mississippi-river.org)

land — the oldest Icelandic community in the United States — the island's natives and summer folk invite you to munch, dance and laugh the night away at the **Island Party**. Join in the annual soiree to welcome spring on April 24 at Karly's on Main Road. (920) 847-2655. Catch ferries to the island from Gills Rock on the Door County mainland with the Washington Island Ferry, (800) 223-2094 or (920) 847-2546. The Island Clipper ferry, (920) 854-2972, operates starting Memorial Day. ▀



PABST MANSION



GREAT MIDWEST ALPACA FESTIVAL



GARY KNOWLES

90°

Cross Death's Door, hike the Jackson Harbor Ridges, walk across the smooth stones of Schoolhouse Beach, climb 184 steps to the top of the lookout tower in Mountain Park and be greeted by stunning Lake Michigan vistas. When you've completed your personal survey of Washington Is-

## McNaughton Lake, Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest

Stretching across 220,000 acres of Vilas, Oneida and Iron counties, the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest is the largest state-managed property. At its southern end, about midway between Rhinelander and Woodruff off Highway 47, McNaughton Lake offers a unique area for silent recreation and nature walks to enjoy its undeveloped, natural communities. To learn more about this forest's history, visit the Forest Headquarters in Boulder Junction (4125 State Highway M).



**TO SUBSCRIBE CALL 1-800-678-9472**