

# WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES

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## Helping **WHOOPEERS** find their way

A historic hunt  
Sentimental trees  
After the storm



# Grandma's hunting tale

## Tagging the buck of a lifetime.

Harriett Breunig

I am 69 years old (at the time of this writing) and I have been one of the lucky ones. I've hunted as far back as I can remember. I went out with my dad hunting before I could even carry a gun. Helping on drives or just being outside was a passion for me.

I love being out in the woods even if it is snowing, freezing rain, windy or hot. I hunt. Even with having 10 children I've hunted.

In fact, I helped many of my children and grandchildren get the hunting bug. I have hunted geese, duck, raccoon, turkey and deer. I am sure that most people think I am crazy because even though my husband has stopped hunting, I continue going out.

And my husband encourages my love of hunting. The last two big gifts he gave me were a crossbow and a range finder! At this point in my life, I may move a little slower and know that I need help with the gutting and carrying, but that doesn't bother me because at least I get to be out in the woods.

All of this history brings me to the most exciting hunt of my life. As one of my boys put it, this hunt and buck "were 69 years in the making." Boy, was he right!

It was the Monday after the opening weekend of gun-deer hunting 2011. I was going to participate in some drives with my sons, one daughter and a grandchild. With my trusty 29-year-old .30-06 rifle and being the senior member of the group, I was to be the "stander" of the group.

I was set up overlooking a field with one son on the other end of the field. There was a drainage ditch in the middle of the field going down to the woods. Deer tend to like to run out of this area. On the other side of the woods, there was another open field that I could see from my lookout. If anything was in that field first, it would give me a head's up that the deer would be traveling into the woods in front of me and hopefully to the field where I was.

The drive had just started when a group of does came running through the first open field into the small woods in front of me. My adrenaline started pumping. Then the does came running out of the woods and into the second field. There was only one nice doe and, of course, it was the farthest from me. I was disappointed, but knew that I would still be able to make a good shot at that longer distance. I just had to wait for a clear shot and when I did... I missed. Adrenaline breaker.

The drive was still underway, so I kept my eyes glued to the field and stayed in my spot, hoping that more deer would be pushed out. A couple of minutes later, another group of does came out. They were all pretty small, so I just stood there and watched them.

Then with the drive winding down I didn't really expect to see anything more. Little did I know that the next few minutes were going to be the start of one of the greatest hunting adventures of my life.

Suddenly, out of the woods, burst the biggest buck of my life. He was high-tailing it across the field, but even at that speed I could tell that he was bigger than anything

I had ever seen in the wild. I had thought these deer only existed in pictures. I told myself that I needed to focus on the body and not on the rack.

The buck took the same path as all the other deer, so when I had a clear shot, he was about 100 yards away. While focusing on the body, I took a deep breath and slowly pulled the trigger. I saw him go down on the other side of the tall grass. I couldn't believe it!

I started to walk towards him when, all of a sudden, I could see his breath steaming up behind the grassy hill. He stood up and ran. I quickly shouldered my gun and took two more shots. I missed. He disappeared into the neighbor's woods.

The drive finished and I regrouped with my family and told them about the buck.

We didn't have permission to hunt the woods that the buck ran into. So I started to make phone calls so that I could track and recover the deer.

But I am semi-retired and I drive a school bus in the mornings and afternoons. So by the time I got permission from the very gracious landowners to go after the buck, I had to go on my bus route. My four sons took to tracking the deer. They followed the trail for the next two hours without any luck. It was getting dark and they gave up the search for the night.

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Breunig with her buck of a lifetime, recorded as a 13-pointer.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY HARRIETT BREUNIG



# WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES

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DNR FILE PHOTO



SUBMITTED BY PAUL MORRISON



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**FRONT COVER:** Operation Migration has played a leading role in the reintroduction of endangered whooping cranes to parts of North America since 2001. To hear whooping crane calls visit [www.operationmigration.org/work\\_wcranes.html](http://www.operationmigration.org/work_wcranes.html) and click on "Sound Files."

OPERATION MIGRATION

**BACK COVER:** Early morning light at Black Earth Rettenmund Prairie State Natural Area in Dane County. INSET: Stiff goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*), a member of the aster family. For more information, or to order a guidebook to State Natural Areas for \$18.00 (postage and tax included), contact the State Natural Areas Program, Bureau of Endangered Resources, DNR, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707 or visit [dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna](http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna).

Thomas A. Meyer, DNR



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A whooping crane is captured in mid-flight, its long legs trailing behind and its wings fully extended. The bird has a white body with a reddish-brown head and neck. It is flying over a dense field of tall grasses with yellow and orange autumn foliage. The background is a clear, pale blue sky.

David Sakrison

# COME ON, WHOOPEERS!

**AUTUMN BRINGS  
ANOTHER “FIRST”  
MIGRATION.**

With a height of approximately 5 feet, whooping cranes are the tallest birds in North America. Whooping cranes have a 7 ½-foot wingspan. They are lean birds, which despite their height weigh only about 15 pounds. They can live 20-25 years in the wild.





OPERATION MIGRATION

Operation Migration pilot Joe Duff leads a gaggle of young whoopers on migration.

## For the first time in more than a century, whooping cranes, the most endangered of the world's 15 species of cranes, are migrating in Wisconsin skies.

**T**his is a cutting-edge species recovery project, described by one U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) official as, “the wildlife equivalent of putting a man on the moon.”

One of the most daunting challenges was teaching captive-raised cranes to migrate. But the first challenge was to save the “whoopers” from oblivion.

One of two crane species native to North America, whoopers were never as abundant as sandhill cranes. Hunting and habitat loss reduced their numbers drastically. By 1946, there were just 16 whoopers wintering at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) on the Texas Gulf Coast — the last wild whooping cranes on earth.

With federal protection and management, the species began to recover. By 1958, there were 32 cranes at Aransas, including nine new fledglings. But droughts and diseases, storms, power lines and illegal hunting all took their toll.

### A recovery program is born

In 1967, the USFWS began a whooping crane recovery program at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (WRC) in Laurel, Md. There were three goals: study the birds in the wild, breed them in captivity and return captive-raised eggs or birds to the wild.

By 1975, Patuxent had a successful captive breeding program and the wild population was growing. In 1975, 49 wild whoopers, including eight new fledglings, made the 2,500-mile migra-

tion from Canada’s Wood Buffalo National Park to Aransas NWR.

Having all the wild whoopers in one flock made the species too vulnerable. But creating a new flock from scratch presented a major obstacle: migration. Cranes, like many other precocial birds, have an instinctive *urge* to migrate, but they learn when and where from their parents. A new flock of captive-raised chicks would have no adult cranes to show the way.

One possible solution was to use wild

sandhill cranes as “foster parents.” Sandhill cranes were abundant and captive sandhills had served as foster parents in Patuxent’s breeding program. Raised by wild sandhills, the whoopers would (the biologists hoped) grow up wild. They would learn a new migration route from Idaho to New Mexico. And they would produce little whoopers and build a new flock.

From 1975 through 1989, USFWS biologists placed 287 whooping crane eggs from Patuxent into wild sandhill nests at Grays Lake; 210 hatched and 85 chicks fledged, and they all migrated to New Mexico and back with the wild cranes.

As the whoopers reached sexual maturity at Grays Lake, the males seemed to have the right nesting instincts, but their courtships were aimed at sandhill females and both sides quickly lost interest. The female whoopers at Grays Lake had no males of either species courting them and they showed no interest in nesting. As the Grays Lake project ended in 1989, the Aransas flock had grown to 146 cranes, after six good breeding years. But the single wild flock was still all too vulnerable to natural or man-made disasters.

### A film gets ideas flying

In 1989, Canadian wildlife sculptor William Lishman produced a documentary called “C’m on Geese.” It told the story of teaching Canada geese to follow his ultralight. That July, at the Experimental Aircraft Association fly-in at Oshkosh, Terry Kohler, a Wisconsin businessman and conservationist, saw the video. Returning home, he called his friend George Archibald at the International Crane Foundation. Did Archibald think it was possible, Kohler asked, that whoopers could be taught to migrate behind an ultralight piloted by a human?

“I ignored George’s horrific laughter,” Kohler later wrote, “and I sent him the video.”

A few months later, Archibald brought up the idea at a meeting of the International Whooping Crane Recovery Team, a coalition of U.S. and Canadian wildlife



experts and officials. To Archibald's surprise, team members were intrigued by it.

But the recovery team moved slowly on the idea and it was 1995 before rancher/biologist Kent Clegg convinced them to let him lead young sandhill cranes on migration. Clegg had worked at Grays Lake; he had heard of Lishman's work, and was thinking along similar lines.

Two years before, Lishman and partner Joe Duff used ultralights to lead a flock of 18 young geese on their first migration from Ontario to Virginia — the first human-led migration. The following spring, 13 of the "honkers" returned on their own to Ontario.

In the spring of 1995, 20 captive sandhills hatched at Clegg's Idaho ranch. Clegg allowed them to imprint on him just enough so they would follow him but not enough to depend on him. By October, the chicks were following his ultralight on flights of 25 miles or more around the ranch. On Oct. 15, Clegg led 11 sandhill cranes away from the ranch on the world's first ultralight-led crane migration.

From Grace, Idaho to Bosque del Apache NWR near Socorro, N.M., the migration covered 748 miles. It took 11 days. One bird returned to the ranch. Two were killed by golden eagles. One was grounded by a respiratory ailment. On Oct. 26, the ultralight and seven sandhills landed at Bosque del Apache. When Clegg and the ultralight disappeared, the birds joined a large flock of wild sandhill cranes.

Over the winter, two of Clegg's cranes were killed by hunters and one disappeared. In the spring, the four survivors migrated north with the wild cranes.

In October 1996, he led another seven captive-raised sandhill cranes on a 15-day migration to Bosque del Apache. Again, the survivors migrated north with wild cranes.

In 1997, he got the green light for a migration with whooping cranes. On Oct. 12, Clegg's ultralight left the ranch with eight sandhills and four whoopers in trail. All 12 made the nine-day flight and settled in with the wild sandhill cranes at the refuge. Over the winter, two of the whoopers disappeared. In the spring the survivors migrated north.

### **Dress rehearsal is over**

The Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership (WCEP), an association of nine federal, state, and private agencies and



In the early morning mist, Operation Migration pilot Brooke Pennypacker leads young whoopers into the air on an early practice flight at White River Marsh.



On their first migration, the whooper chicks do what comes naturally, under the watchful eye of costumed handlers.

OPERATION MIGRATION





DAVID SAKRISON, OPERATION MIGRATION



An adult and juvenile whooping crane. Chicks lose their cinnamon coloring at about a year of age.

INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION



Kent Clegg and his ultralight-led sandhill cranes. Clegg's ultralight-led migrations proved the concept.

PETER CLEGG

organizations was formed in 1998 and began looking for sites for a new flock. Lishman and Canadian photographer Joe Duff formed Operation Migration (OM) and led a flock of sandhill chicks from Ontario to Virginia. In the spring, the birds returned on their own to Ontario. It was time to begin establishing a new and (it was hoped) permanent flock of whooping cranes east of the Mississippi.

From several possible sites, the Recovery Team chose Necedah NWR in Wisconsin as the training site and Chassahowitzka NWR near Tampa, Fla. as the wintering site. Costume rearing developed at the International Crane Foundation was modified and fine-tuned to allow pilots to wear the burkha-like crane costumes.

The migration route was 1,200 miles long and the first year was a dress rehearsal using sandhill cranes. The birds were hatched at Patuxent and, eight weeks later, were moved to Necedah. There, they learned to follow the ultralight on the ground and in the air.

On Oct. 3, 2000, the OM team took off from Necedah and headed south with a flock of 13 sandhill cranes. Riding the ultralight's wingtip vortices, the birds mostly glided, flapping their wings very little. Two or three birds traded off the point position less than a foot behind the ultralight's wing.

A typical day's flight lasted 60 to 90 minutes and covered anywhere from 20 to 80 miles. On Nov. 8, the birds reached Chassahowitzka, where they spent the winter loafing around their pen and the nearby meadows.

On Feb. 25, 2001, 10 of the 11 cranes left the pen unexpectedly and disappeared. The last bird hung around "Chazz" until April 17, and then headed north. On April 27, a volunteer at Necedah picked up radio signals from all 11 birds. The next day they landed near the training pen.

The "dress rehearsal" was over. The sandhill cranes had left their wintering grounds on their own initiative and had returned to the place where they fledged, though no one knew what they had been up to for 62 days. And they were wary of humans; OM's methods to promote wildness appeared to be working.

#### In a class of their own

The "Class of 2001" — 10 whooper chicks — hatched at Patuxent, and in July, Terry





An Operation Migration volunteer introduces whoopers to their pen at White River Marsh.

OPERATION MIGRATION

Kohler's Cessna Caravan brought them to Necedah. After a few days' rest, the chicks were led out to the grass runway next to their pen and began running back and forth behind the ultralight. By early August, they were following it on short flights around the refuge.

On Oct. 17, three ultralights and eight birds took off southbound. Bad weather plagued the project with only six flying days between Oct. 17 and Nov. 4.

Finally, on Dec. 3, 2001, the ultralights landed at the Homosassa pen in Citrus County, near Chassahowitzka NWR, with six whooping cranes flying right behind them and a seventh crane riding in the trailer. The eighth bird had died after colliding with a power line. Two days later, they were moved to their isolated winter pen in the refuge. Their journey had taken 48 days, 22 of them spent grounded by weather.

The young whoopers settled in for the winter, foraging outside their pen during the day and spending their nights inside the protective enclosure. Two were lost to bobcats. On April 10, the five surviving whoopers left the refuge and flew north, tracked by ground vehicles. Nine days later, four whooping cranes landed at Necedah NWR, close to their training pen. The fifth bird, a female, wandered around southern Wisconsin for two weeks. Then she too returned to the refuge. In future seasons, she and her "classmates" migrated south and north on their own. For the first time in more than a century, wild whooping cranes migrated in eastern skies.

Every Autumn since then, Operation Migration has led a flock of young

whoopers on their first migration. And every spring, the birds return on their own, wild and free. The eastern flock now numbers about 100 birds and has produced several chicks, the first in 2006. WCEP's goal is a flock of 125 birds with 25 successful nesting pairs.

The Aransas-Wood Buffalo flock now has about 250 birds, though drought and water use issues in Texas may threaten its long-term survival. Including the captive breeding programs, the world population of whooping cranes today is just over 500 birds.

Weather continues to bedevil the migration project. The 2001 migration of 48 days turned out to be one of the shortest — the longest nearly 100 days, with weather being the main culprit. In February 2007, a storm surge struck the pen at Chassahowitzka, killing 17 of the 18 chicks that had arrived only days before. And although the flock has produced chicks at Necedah, in recent years, whooper parents have abandoned many of their nests there, probably because of black flies that drive the parents off the nests and leave the eggs prey to eagles and other predators.

In 2011, the training site was moved from Necedah to the Wisconsin DNR's White River Marsh State Wildlife Area in Green Lake County. The move avoids the black flies and creates a new and separate nesting area for the cranes introduced in future years.


And WCEP has added a new technique to bolster the eastern flock. "Direct Autumn Release" (DAR) places captive-raised chicks among wild cranes at Necedah and at Horicon Marsh. Most of

the DAR birds have joined the flock and followed wild cranes on migration.

### Why do we bother?

Reintroducing whooping cranes to the eastern United States is difficult, demanding, uncertain and expensive. But the whooper has become an icon of wild-life conservation, drawing public attention and private and corporate contributions to the plight of many endangered species. Moreover, saving the cranes requires that we restore and protect the precious wetlands on which so many species depend, including ourselves.

Ornithologist Roger Tory Peterson wrote, "Birds are indicators of the environment. If they're in trouble, we know we'll soon be in trouble."

Naturalist John Muir may have said it best: "Tug on anything at all and you'll find it connected to everything else in the universe." 

*David Sakrison serves on the board of directors of Operation Migration. He is the author of the 2007 book "Chasing the Ghost Birds," which chronicles three cutting-edge avian conservation projects, including whooping crane recovery. He also wrote and co-produced the 2011 documentary film, "Saving the Ghost Birds: Whooping Cranes and their Human Partners." Both are available at [videoagepro.com/stgb.html](http://videoagepro.com/stgb.html)*

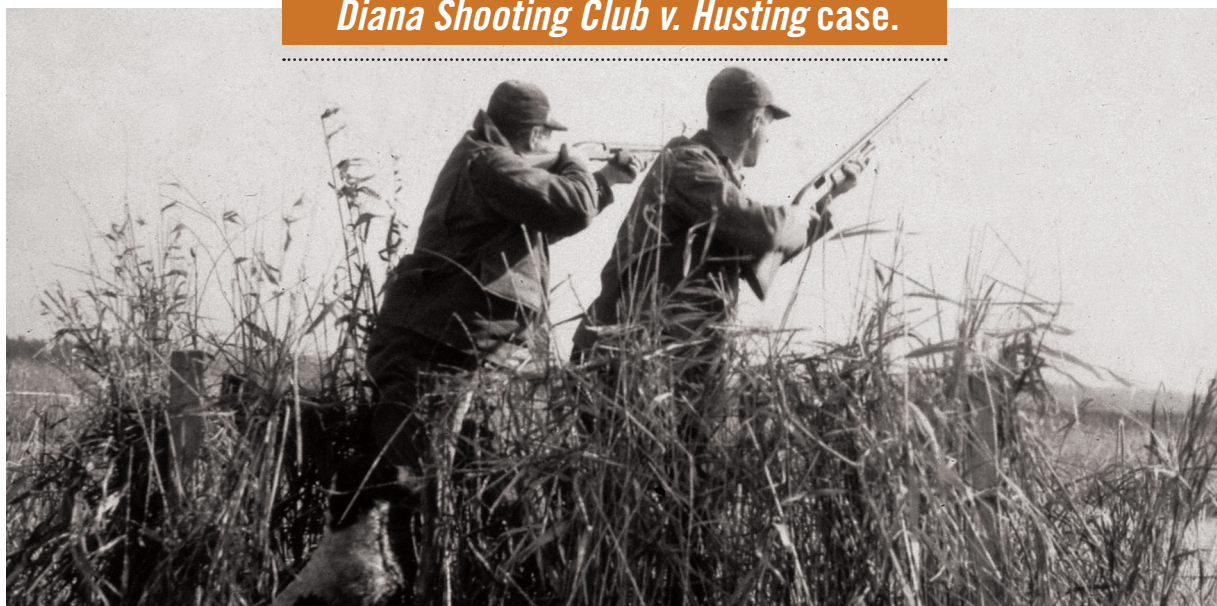
*Much of this article is adapted from "Chasing the Ghost Birds: Saving Swans & Cranes from Extinction" by David Sakrison, copyright © 2007, International Crane Foundation, Baraboo, WI, used by permission.*

## TO LEARN MORE, VISIT THESE WEBSITES

- **Operation Migration**  
[operationmigration.org](http://operationmigration.org)
- **Live Crane Camera (Operation Migration)**  
[operationmigration.org/crane-cam.html](http://operationmigration.org/crane-cam.html)
- **International Crane Foundation**  
[savingcranes.org](http://savingcranes.org)
- **Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership**  
[bringbackthecranes.org](http://bringbackthecranes.org)
- **Journey North - Whooping Cranes**  
[learner.org/jnorth/crane/](http://learner.org/jnorth/crane/)
- **Patuxent Whooping Crane Information**  
[www.pwrc.usgs.gov/cranes.htm](http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/cranes.htm)



The story behind the precedent-setting  
*Diana Shooting Club v. Husting* case.



DNR FILE PHOTO

Horicon Marsh is divided into two units. The southern one-third is a State Wildlife Area managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The northern two-thirds is a National Wildlife Refuge administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. While the marsh is primarily managed as a waterfowl area it hosts a tremendous variety of other birds. This marsh is perhaps best known for the spring and fall migration of Canada geese.

## A historic hunt protects public water rights

Bill Volkert

On an autumn day in 1913, Paul Hustung went hunting on Horicon Marsh. He launched at the Greenhead Boat Landing at the site of a local hunting club where he had been president. He followed the



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Paul Hustung

meandering river course of the east branch of the Rock River to where it opened onto the vast marsh at Malzahn's Bay. He continued from there to the newly-created main ditch, which was being dug to drain this vast wetland. The lateral ditches were yet to be dug, but this effort would change the marsh forever. It turns out that Hustung's hunting trip would forever change the way we use Wisconsin waterways.

As he approached the west side of the marsh he entered the "private" land of the largest and most prominent hunting club on the marsh, the Diana Shooting Club. Here, he was arrested by the club's private wardens and charged with trespass. He appeared in Dodge County court where he prevailed and the case



MAYVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Miescke ditch with Diana Shooting Club guides preparing for a member hunt.



MAYVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Diana Shooting Club hunting shack.

was then appealed to the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Hustung, an attorney, defended himself against the charges and argued for free public access and use of navigable waters. The outcome of

this case defined public water rights in Wisconsin for all of us.

### Private clubs in control

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, Horicon Marsh was largely under the control of private hunting clubs. While vast marsh areas were open to not only public hunting, but also unregulated market hunting, private hunting clubs existed for a relatively regulated waterfowl harvest in order to secure some of the birds for private use.

Market hunters aimed to take all of the ducks they could shoot during the migration and sell them as food, a practice which devastated the waterfowl population. The hunting clubs established the first hunting regulations on the marsh at a time when conservation was still largely a foreign concept to the general public.

According to the hunting clubs' rules, members could not shoot ducks in spring so that the birds could nest, and they set the first bag limits; members were not allowed to shoot more than 25 ducks per day. This may not seem like conservation



to us today, but it was an attempt to restrict the waterfowl harvest.

Six major hunting clubs were established on Horicon Marsh during these years: the Kaw Kaw Club, Fond du Lac Shooting Club, Horicon Shooting Club, Strook's Club, Greenhead Hunting Club and the Diana Shooting Club. These clubs were divided into local clubs and out-of-towner clubs, and each had restricted membership.

The local clubs set a limit on the number of members they would allow, while the out-of-towner clubs restricted membership based on steep membership fees. Like exclusive country clubs today, membership fees were set so high that only the wealthiest of the local members could afford to join and they largely catered to businessmen from Milwaukee, Chicago and Madison.

Of all of these clubs, only one remains today — the Greenhead Hunting Club — located on the east side of the marsh where the east branch of the Rock River flows into Horicon Marsh. According to its charter, the Greenhead Club originally limited its membership by stock ownership and only so many shares were sold. Eventually, members voted to allow new hunters to join, but this truly was a “good-old-boys club” and they wanted to keep membership to a few friends and family members.

By contrast, the Diana Shooting Club was an exclusive hunting club reserved for the wealthy. It took its name from the Roman goddess of hunting and was located on the west side of the marsh on the Miescke farm where it existed from 1883 until 1915. Among the members and club president was Willard Van Brunt, owner of the Van Brunt Factory, a Horicon farm implement manufacturing plant specializing in grain drill production. This company eventually sold out to John Deere.

A few honorary memberships were given to the Miescke family but most members came from Fond du Lac, Milwaukee and Chicago. Those members traveling from Milwaukee or Chicago took the train to Horicon, which was the same line that went from Milwaukee to the Twin Cities and is



Of all the early hunting clubs on Horicon Marsh, the Greenhead Hunting Club is the only one that remains today.

BILL VOLKERT

now the Wild Goose Recreational Trail. This rail line passed along the western edge of Horicon Marsh and the Diana Shooting Club actually had its own rail stop on Swan Road. Hunters could literally board the train in the big cities and be dropped off at Swan Road where a horse-drawn wagon would pick them up for the short ride to the hunting club.

The Diana Shooting Club leased several thousand acres of the marsh for its members and eventually purchased a section for their clubhouse. The club built a dam on the west bay channel in the marsh to flood the nearby wetland to enhance duck habitat and hunting opportunities. The club even employed private wardens charged with arresting anyone who dared to hunt on their part of the marsh.

On the other side of the marsh, at the Greenhead Hunting Club, was a group of local hunters who were used to sharing the marsh with others. While the Greenhead Hunting Club also had limited membership and private use of the clubhouse with access to the river, they did not control land on the marsh. Their clubhouse was located up the east branch of the Rock River and members had to paddle downstream some distance

to hunt on Horicon Marsh, meaning that they were obligated to share this with the public. This club was founded in 1903 and was therefore a late-comer to Horicon Marsh. Hustung was among the club's officers and served as its president for the first six years.

### Putting his law degree to work

Paul Hustung was born in Fond du Lac on April 25, 1866. His mother was the daughter of Solomon Juneau who founded Milwaukee. Hustung's family moved to Mayville, located just east of Horicon Marsh in 1875, and he soon became interested in duck hunting.

Even as a young man, Hustung was stubbornly independent. Refusing to wear the required school uniform, he quit after the eighth grade and went to work in Mayville as a store clerk and as postmaster before moving to Madison in 1895 to attend the university to study law.

He passed the state bar exam and returned to Mayville two years later. He was elected district attorney in 1902 and in 1906 he was elected to the State Senate where he served for eight years. Among his many priorities were issues of citizen rights and natural resources protection. He also was involved in water power legislation and chaired a legislative committee investigating water power, forestry and drainage. In 1911 and 1913 water power bills passed that reflected the work of that committee and Hustung's advocacy for public water rights.

He co-authored three Water Power Acts that gave the state compensation and rights to recapture water power improvements after a determined period. Water power interests fought these efforts in the legislature and the courts, but Hustung and others were able to develop laws that stood up in court and served the public interest.

It appears that these experiences motivated him to test the rights of access to public waterways.

On that autumn day in 1913, Hustung paddled his skiff onto the portion of the marsh claimed by the Diana Shooting Club as a private hunting reserve for the exclusive use of its elite membership and



MAYVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Willard Van Brunt

MAYVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Willard Van Brunt holiday postcard.



thereby claimed the rights to access and use the waters there.

Husting saw this as an effort by the club to privatize a portion of the Horicon Marsh. As he approached the club grounds, he made certain to remain in the original river channel and that's where he was arrested for trespassing.

### Defining full and free use

Appearing before the Wisconsin Supreme Court, Husting challenged his arrest on the grounds that he was on a publicly navigable waterway.

Based on the Northwest Ordinance of 1792, which controlled the Northwest Territory, of which Wisconsin was a part, this early regulation provided for free travel along any navigable waterway, since these were the public highways. Language of the Northwest Ordinance was incorporated into the Wisconsin Constitution. The decision strengthened emerging law in Wisconsin that established the Public Trust Doctrine, giving rights to Wisconsin's navigable waterways to the public.

In its ruling, the court stated, "The wisdom of the policy which, in the organic laws of our state, steadfastly and carefully preserved to the people the full and free use of public waters, cannot be questioned. Nor should it be limited or curtailed by narrow constructions. It should be interpreted in the broad and beneficent spirit that gave rise to it in order that the people may fully enjoy the intended benefits. Navigable waters are public waters and as such they should inure to the benefit of the public. They should be free to all for commerce, for travel, for recreation, and also for hunting, and fishing, which are the mainly certain forms of recreation."

Husting also led efforts to change Wisconsin's system of choosing U.S. senators, removing that power from political parties and putting it before the people through direct vote. On March 4, 1915, he was elected U.S. Senator, but he was to spend only 2 ½ years in the U.S. Senate. His work at the national level also focused on protecting the rights of working people and protecting natural resources.

### A hunting accident silences a hero


On Sunday, Oct. 21, 1917, Husting and his brother Gustav were duck hunting on Rush Lake in western Fond du Lac County. Around 4:30 p.m. a flock of eight mallards came into their decoys. It

appears that Paul stood up to shoot and Gustav swung his gun and accidentally shot Paul in the shoulder. Paul was taken to the nearest house on Rush Lake, the Blackburn home, where he was cared for before doctors could arrive.

The family was notified and came to be by his side. Attending were his brothers Gustav, Berthold and Bonduel, plus several area doctors. His sister Bella Lamoreux and brothers Otto, Max and Leo were not able to be there. At 10:45 p.m. Paul Husting died from his wounds. His last words were, "Tell them I did the best I knew."

A funeral was held in Mayville where 3,000 people attended. President Woodrow Wilson sent a letter to the family stating, "Your son's death has come to me as a great personal grief. He was one of the

most conscientious public servants I have ever known and had entered upon a career of usefulness to his state and to his country which was of the highest promise. I grieve with you with all my heart."

Thus ended Husting's short life. But he left his mark on Wisconsin water rights through his insights and bold actions. He challenged the rich and powerful interests who tried to privatize our natural resources. Today, the precedent-setting case of *Diana Shooting Club v. Husting* is cited in nearly all wetland and water resource legislation as supporting the public rights and interest in publicly navigable waterways. 

*Bill Volkert is a naturalist who worked at Horicon Marsh for 27 years before retiring. While working at Horicon, Volkert conducted more than 3,600 education programs for over 220,000 people.*

## COMMON HIGHWAYS AND FOREVER FREE

### Melissa K. Scanlan

When Wisconsin became a state, the federal government transferred title to the lands underlying navigable waters to the state, just as it did for all other states as they entered the Union.

According to Wisconsin's Constitution, sec. 1 art. 9, these waters are to be "common highways and forever free" to the public. Courts interpret this constitutional provision to form the backbone of Wisconsin's Public Trust Doctrine, which establishes that the state holds navigable waters in trust for the use and enjoyment of the public.

Originally, public rights in navigable waters involved uses for commerce, navigation and travel. It was unclear in 1913 when Paul Husting went hunting whether public rights in navigable waters extended to rivers where adjacent landowners held title to the beds underlying the rivers and whether public rights included hunting.


The Wisconsin Supreme Court explained when Wisconsin took title to the beds underlying navigable waters "it became a trustee of the people charged with the faithful execution of the trust created for their benefit."

When the state decided to grant title to beds underlying rivers to adjacent private property owners those "riparian" owners, "took title to lands under navigable waters with notice of such trust, and subject to the burdens created by it. It was intended that navigable waters should be public navigable waters, and only by giving members of the public equal rights thereon so far as navigation and its incidents are concerned can they be said to be truly public."

Having decided that the navigable river on which Husting was hunting was protected by the Public Trust Doctrine, the court then determined that hunting, like fishing, on navigable waters is a protected public right. Harkening back to English common law, the court reasoned that since hunting was protected by the common law of England it is "perfectly logical" to extend the same rights in Wisconsin.

In this case, Husting was hunting from his boat, which was floating on 12 inches of water and surrounded by vegetation that grew up from the bottom of the river to about five feet above the water surface. The water level in this area fluctuated significantly depending on the time of year.

The court held that public rights extend to the Ordinary High Water Mark of navigable waters and defined that as "the point on the bank or shore up to which the presence and action of the water is so continuous as to leave a distinct mark either by erosion, destruction of terrestrial vegetation, or other easily recognized characteristic."

Thus, hunting on navigable waters is a protected public right when done between the boundaries of ordinary high water marks. 

*Melissa K. Scanlan is a Law and Policy Scholar at the University of Wisconsin Law School and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Freshwater Sciences.*



Kathleen Harris

# After nature's fury

## State parks crews roll up their sleeves.

**O**n Sept. 29, 2011, a major wind storm roared through Door County forcing emergency closure of its five state parks for six days. A year later, storm evidence remains despite hours of cleanup, which is quite normal after a weather event of such magnitude. For the observant visitor, it also offers the opportunity to see the paradox of nature — fiercely tempestuous and serenely restorative.

What storm evidence will visitors see today? Jeff Lange, a facilities repair worker at Peninsula State Park, says there are many downed cedar trees along Shore and Skyline roads including a few barber poles. (High winds that twist tree crowns and create downward pressure, splitting trees vertically, are called barber poles.)

The Department of Natural Resources contracted locally to cut and remove 87.25 cords of wood and 66,640 board feet of logs, including several magnificent red oaks lost to the winds. Lange and other employees helped cut hundreds of trees during and after the storm.

Ranger Alyssa Gove helped with cleanup, including the

night of the storm. Stationed at Peninsula, she remembers standing outside at 8 p.m., noting complete calm. By 8:30, sustained winds of 30 to 40 mph with gusts up to 70 mph were pummeling the park while four-foot and higher waves rolled against piers across the county. Within minutes trees blocked roads and had snapped a utility pole; power was out later requiring WPS repairs at nine separate sites and campers were stranded.

But not for long.

An emergency response plan was quickly implemented. Kelli Bruns, who arrived as Peninsula's superintendent just four weeks earlier, successfully led the response. Campground and nature center hosts pitched in first, helping evacuate campers.

By noon the next day, DNR staff from fisheries, forestry, trails and other state parks were on site, working in crews of three to four, to safely and efficiently reopen roadways. Skilled tree-cutters worked together, using guide ropes and wedges so snags could be safely dropped with the least amount of damage to other trees.



Alyssa Gove

No one was injured when a tree landed on a car at Potawatomi State Park.







"Taking part in such a historic event will stay with me the rest of my life," said Gove. "The way people came together for Peninsula's common good shows what kind of people work for the Department of Natural Resources."

Storm damage wasn't isolated to Peninsula. At Potawatomi State Park, 25 miles to the south, Superintendent Don McKinnon was coordinating cleanup including serious damage to a shower building and the park's fishing pier.

"We had many state workers and volunteers come to our aid," he said. "Disasters like this truly bring out the American caring spirit."

In the course of cleanup, DNR staff cleared and conducted safety inspections for nearly 100 miles of hiking trails, about 40 miles of roads and 748 campsites.

Luckily, there were no injuries during the storm at any state park, though an unoccupied car was crushed by a mighty oak.

As for storm "benefits" the notion of "team" is one. There are others.

Whitefish Dunes naturalist Carolyn Rock described the value of forest nutrient cycling and improved woodpecker habitat.

"Following the storm, visitors com-

monly ask why the Department of Natural Resources doesn't clean up the woods, especially along the Red and Black trails at Whitefish Dunes. Intense winds raged across these paths, pulling up dozens of trees from the shallow, sandy soil," Rock said. "We removed trees from the trails, but left downed cedars where they fell."

Over time, the logs will decompose, enriching the soil with nutrients.

Woodpeckers, which feast on carpenter ants and other insects in the decaying timber, have also become more watchable.

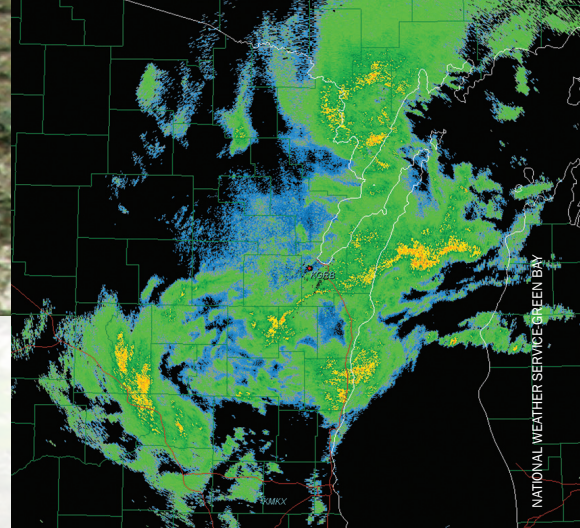
"Visitors report seeing more pileated woodpeckers," said Rock. "This past summer, staff also documented a nesting pair of red-headed woodpeckers, a Wisconsin species of special concern."

Wind-blow has opened the forest to regeneration. More sunlight means a better chance for oak and pine seedlings. In wide swaths, birch trees might take hold. In turn, woodland edge species like red fox and indigo buntings may become more abundant, just as the number of woodpeckers seems to have increased.

Nature is dynamic and unexpected change is always astonishing.



*Kathleen Harris is a naturalist at Peninsula State Park.*



A radar image of a powerful storm moving into Northeast Wisconsin on Sept. 29, 2011.



Crews put in many hours to clear trails and campsites. Some downed trees and brush remain in areas for wildlife habitat.



Trees were uprooted at Potawatomi State Park.



Downed trees littered the golf course at Peninsula State Park.





# Life at its longest is short



**Enforcement  
using the  
golden rule  
doesn't  
always end  
in a ticket.**

*Story and photos by Joanne M. Haas*

Conservation Warden John Buss of Sauk County has been on the outdoor beat in Wisconsin for 27 years — time all spent in one location. Has he seen changes? Plenty.

During his career he's learned that enforcement can occur with education and a handshake. He's learned conversational phrases in new languages to work with an ever-changing Wisconsin population. He's cultivated a friendship and respectful understanding with the Amish community. He's fought to earn the trust of county residents. And he's lived through changes in hunting and hunters.

For Buss, being a warden is more than a job. It's part and parcel of who he was, who he is and who he'll be tomorrow.





Conservation Warden John Buss is well known in his community. After 27 years of working in rural Sauk County he takes pride in teaching over ticketing and that practice earns him respect and results.

### Hunting today is different than in 1985

It is just before dawn the day after Thanksgiving 2011. Lights are on in Buss' rural Sauk County kitchen. He is working on his coffee and paging through patrol reports, notes and citizen tips collected over the first days of the annual gun-deer season.

Gone are Wisconsin's wildly crazy hunting days when cars and trucks lined road shoulders, blaze orange dotted snow-covered fields and hillsides from dawn to dusk while gunshots echoed. Yet, the nine days of this annual Wisconsin tradition still fill the hours for Buss.

"It's still nine days — nine straight days. You know what Sunday is?" he adds with a quick smile. "The last day of

deer season."

Like other conservation wardens, Buss' office is in his home. The quick commute from his front door to the driver's seat of his warden truck means more time to be with his wife Pam and their two children. But it also means work literally comes home — or stops by with citizens who have come to know well the warden with the golden rule-style of enforcement.

Known in DNR's law enforcement bureau as the guy who often gets a hand-shake after he issues a ticket, Buss has been the Sauk County warden for more than 27 years. "It's pretty unheard of to stay this long in one station," Buss says.

But stayed he did in a county where he feels deep connections he worked hard to create. "I just love this whole area."

And with that, the 6-foot or so warden is just about ready to start day seven as he picks up his black bag and computer and heads to the door of his warm home while the kids still sleep. He walks with Pam down the paved driveway to his truck. They exchange best wishes for a safe, productive day and part with a pledge to stay in touch.

### Wild child's epiphany

Buss was something of a wild child playing outside along the Oconomowoc River in Jefferson County. But his dad was a calming influence and taught him a lot. The lessons came not so much by what the man said, but from how he acted. They'd spend hours fishing together at the summer cabin and that taught the young Buss a lot about patience, the outdoors and how to be a good person and enjoy life.

Buss' mother also was very influential, allowing him to hunt, fish and trap as much as he wanted.

"I dragged more dead animals and fish into the basement than most kids will dream of," he recalls. "My mom was the greatest."

One fishing trip, his dad turned to him and said something that Buss has never forgotten: "Life at its longest is short." And that may have been the day Buss picked his life's career.

"I was 13 or 14 when I knew I wanted to be a game warden," he says.

In 1985 he became one.

### A life-changing case

Today, Buss considers his career and

wonders aloud what life will be like after shelving the warden uniform. "It's been a good ride. It's been a good gig. Along the way, it's been difficult."

Difficult arrived with a case that changed Buss forever — it began with a call to assist another officer on Sept. 16, 1986, at 3:05 p.m. in a drug case.

Buss kicked into gear and started following a truck with Texas plates. He followed the driver, believed to be hauling marijuana, to a Sauk-Prairie home. There, Buss waited for the local officer — John Mueller, 40, of the Sauk-Prairie Police Department — who would take the lead.

From there things went fatally haywire — and turned into a national story.

Buss helped Mueller arrest and handcuff the suspect, John Graham, 49. Buss went to the rear of the suspect's pickup truck to look for evidence. Then he heard a gunshot.

Buss saw Mueller standing over Graham's handcuffed body, stomach down on the driveway. Mueller's gun was pointed at Graham's head. And Buss watched as Mueller fired a second bullet into the suspect's head. Mueller then turned, kept his weapon drawn with both arms and aimed as he walked toward Buss.

"You're not going to shoot me, are you, John?" Buss says he asked Mueller.

Mueller lowered his weapon and told Buss there was no point in looking for evidence because it was a case of resisting a federal agent.

Buss went to his warden truck and made a call for assistance on the police radio, knowing Mueller was listening. Then, Buss backed his truck 50 yards, placed his warden's gun across his lap and played turbo-speed mental gymnastics.

"If I leave, John (Mueller) will shoot me and say I shot the suspect. If I stay, he could shoot me," Buss says of his choices that day. "So I made up my mind that I was going to sit there and survive. That changed me forever."

Mueller pleaded not guilty by reason of mental disease or defect. Attorneys said the officer had stopped taking medication to control his psychosis and had gone into a state that had him believing he was an agent in the national war against drugs. Mueller was convicted and sentenced to life in a mental health institution.

"That incident and the weight of this job affected my life," Buss says of



the realities a law enforcement officer faces each day. It is a public service job loaded with the possibilities of violence and death along with the satisfactions of working with and for people. The ability to handle surprises and the unknown with a level head is crucial.

### **Success is measured by education and empathy**

Buss says he used to write a lot of citations. There was a time 20 years ago when writing 300 tickets wasn't uncommon.

"That's how you measured your success," Buss says of a time gone by.

Today though, his success is no longer judged by the citation count.

"I tell recruits to put themselves in their (citizens') shoes. How would you want to be treated?" asks Buss. "At the time I put pen to paper to write that ticket, I ask myself would nine out of 10 sportsmen and sportswomen want me to write that ticket? That really keeps me grounded."

Nowadays, wardens have to sort out complaints. You either have something substantiated or not founded. "I'm going to spend enough time with the person to make sure he or she knows why I am there. The treatment of people is extremely important."

Take the case of a grandfather in a boat with his grandson. They are short a life jacket.

"I could write a ticket for that," Buss says. "But where would I have the greatest impact? How about I take them to the shore, provide them a life jacket and say: 'Hey, we just want you to be safe.'"

Not that Buss puts up with any nonsense, such as swearing at him and answering his attempts at respect with disrespect.

"I'm going to look at the man and say, 'we're done.' I'm not going to put up with the screaming. Treat everyone the same. Add in some common sense. You roughshod someone and that's on the street," Buss says. "I'll always say to the person I stop and issue a citation: 'Do you have any questions? Here is my card, please call me if you do later.'"

"One percent of the people will be mad they got the ticket. And they might go out and do more things because they are mad at you," Buss says. "But, if you make it part of an educational process, the impact is different."

Chief Conservation Warden Randy



Stark says: "John Buss is one of those wardens who can give a citation to someone and by the end, more often than not, the person is thanking him."

### **Checking in, checking up**

The phone rings. It is Warden Wade Romberg of nearby Adams County checking in. Cell phone coverage is spotty on the Sauk County back roads. More often than not, Buss has to try and find an open sky spot to return calls or complete one that was dropped mid-conversation.

This is especially frustrating as about 80 percent of Buss' work with citizens' tips comes through telephone calls.

Up and down a few more country hills, Buss pulls into a driveway to talk with a friend and former neighbor, George Alt, who is still beaming about bagging a big buck the other day with his 11-year-old grandson in tow. The big event happened within the first hour of the day's hunt.

"We got in our tree stand about 6:20," Alt says. "And he (buck) came up to the woods about 10 to 7." Alt says he kept an eye on the roaming deer, thinking it was the smaller buck spotted days earlier walking his property. But once the deer turned a certain angle, Alt knew that was the big one.

"Now, I am not a good shot," Alt says. "Once they (deer) start moving, it's hard for me. But somehow I hit it!"

The harvest was enough to get Alt's grandson thinking he wants to hunt just

as soon as he's old enough.

"He's already set up cans and done some beebie gun practice in the driveway," Alt says. "I'm hoping it rubs off on the younger grandson."

Back on the road, Buss decides to see how his Amish friends are doing. Buss' relationship with the Amish of Sauk County is an example of how striving to understand another culture brings a mutual understanding and trust that brings benefits to all.

Up the hill on Highway 154, Buss pulls into the Amish store known as Valley View Discount. Fresh doughnuts and other goodies are on display. Once inside the store



Amish hunters in the community benefit from Warden Buss' face-to-face instruction in the state laws regulating deer hunting.



the teasing of John Buss by some of the working Amish men and women commences. Buss doesn't wait long to return the friendly fire with some nicknames about their beards. One Amish man turns to the ride-along citizen with Buss and says: "What did you do to deserve this?" More laughter.

Buss gets back on the road, heading to another Amish home where a few young men are outside where some harvested deer hang from the trees. As soon as Buss exits, the young men start teasing Buss who answers back. Laughter and more laughter.

It wasn't always like this. Buss recalls the early days when the Amish clashed with officials about the state laws regulating deer hunting.

"So I had to teach them what the laws were," Buss recalls. As trust was built, the relationship eventually led to an annual August Amish shoot that Buss participates in.

Taking the time to learn the other culture is what Buss also has done to help him deal with people whose first language is not English, and are in Sauk County to fish and to hunt. Buss knows a few conversational phrases or words in Hmong, Polish and Russian.

"That always helps put people at ease," Buss says.

Buss decides the setting sun means it's time to head back to his home. Along the way, Buss makes a second stop at a citizen's home to follow-up on a complaint.

The citizen is not home, but about seven minutes from the close of hunting

Buss sees some activity from a tree stand in the field across the road from the home.

He's about to end this hunting day with an unexpected thrilling moment for a local 12-year-old girl.

### The happy end to a young hunter's season

Buss jumps out of his truck and jogs across the rural road to the field where two hunters are hugging. Just as the hunting day was closing 12-year-old Emily Kieck of Baraboo harvested her second buck of her hunting career. She got her first one last season. Emily's dad was hunting with her sister on another part of the property. Emily was hunting with her father's friend, Leo Bisch of Evansville.

As Buss moves his truck closer to the harvest site so he can use his headlights



Emily Kieck of Baraboo gets her buck and Warden Buss is there to offer her a tag.



A successful hunt is one that ends in smiles and good stories. Warden Buss gets the scoop.

as a spotlight, Emily decides to call her father on her cell phone.

"Hey, Dad, I shot an awesome buck. You should come over as quickly as you can," Emily says to her father while Buss examines the 10-point buck.

Bisch is so excited for Emily it is hard to tell who is happier with the outcome. Emily's father and sister arrive and the sister wonders aloud who really shot the deer. Emily is all too happy to retell the event to her doubting sister. Buss offers to get a tag for the deer so the family doesn't have to travel to a registration station. About the time the deer is tagged, the sun is nearly down.

"You just made it," Buss tells Emily.

"That was a good ending to the day," Buss says with a big grin, reliving the 12-year-old girl's taking of a buck. "That was pretty great."

Buss says the deer hunting season has changed "dramatically" from as recently as 15 years ago.

"Everyday, I was running around to


shootings off the road, from cars. Violations were occurring right in front of you," Buss says. "But it's changed. And it's changed dramatically.

"There will always be violations, but the fabric has changed," he says.

The rampant poaching in Sauk County in his early years has been reduced, along with what he calls his "cops and robbers" days of trying to score citations. And he's proud of that.

Buss calls Pam, asks her about her afternoon and says he'll be home in about seven minutes.

He eases the truck into the driveway and slows to a stop. He gathers his bag and his notes and trudges up the blacktop to the door to become John the husband and dad for a while.

For Buss, life at its longest is short — but it's been a good life and a good gig as a warden with the golden rule touch. 

Joanne M. Haas is the public affairs manager for DNR's Division of Enforcement and Science.





## When trees get a second life, local business can benefit.

*Natasha Kassulke*

The idea for the next American Girl™ doll might be born around a conference table. Perhaps she'll be an arborist, urban forester or artisan.

And that conference table? It could come from a 150-plus-year-old bur oak grown on the site of American Girl headquarters in Middleton. When the company moved to its current location in 1988, American Girl founder Pleasant T. Rowland saw the magnificent tree as a perfect symbol of the



STEVE APPS



STEVE APPS

company's bold beginnings and it served as a steadfast reminder that, "Mighty oaks from tiny acorns grow."

The tree, which had been growing and gaining popularity since it was a seedling in the pre-Civil War era of the late 1850s, was regularly cared for and monitored by certified arborists. But over the years, gypsy moths and harsh Wisconsin weather had their way with the tree.

In 2010, after a couple of years of severe decline, the tree did not leaf out and soon would have collapsed. Based on



AMERICAN GIRL.COM

Pleasant T. Rowland





Harvesting a 150-year-old oak doesn't mean the end of the road for the tree. This oak lives on as useful items with sentimental attachment. Here's the tree's story.

STEVE APPS

the advice of several experts, the company decided to bring down the decaying tree.

On Dec. 11, 2010, just before a major snowstorm, Gere Tree Care Inc. removed the oak. During the snow and sleet-filled day the owner, Sean Gere, and his skilled crew carefully sawed the tree apart, and then used a crane to lower the pieces to the ground.

Most of the small branches were too decayed to preserve. The crew saved the intact smaller limbs, along with large limbs and the main trunk. The parts were removed from the property, but not forgotten.

The tree lives on in beautiful products.

### Coming full circle

The Wood Cycle is a custom woodwork-

ing business founded by Paul Morrison on a 40-acre rural town of Oregon parcel. Morrison, a former engineer, started the business 11 years ago when he gave into the fact that woodworking was in his blood.

Where some people find problems, Morrison finds possibilities. When Morrison first acquired the town of Oregon property that would become The Wood Cycle, it was in disrepair. A barn he moved to the site from its original home two miles away is now the mill's flagship building. The headquarters also house a solar kiln, sawmill (converted turkey shed), workshop with a finishing area and a gallery.

From Fish Hatchery Road, the mill looks like a traditional Wisconsin farm. As you enter the property, you pass a worn-out barn locally known as the "goat barn." The barn earned its reputation when a previous occupant housed goats that would sit on the roof and watch cars drive by.

Morrison built his house at the far end of the property using local wood. In between is space to plant trees for future use.

Morrison was 10 years old when he got hooked on wood working. He grew up on a farm surrounded by hardy Wisconsin hardwoods. His grandfather was a traditional Dutch cabinetmaker and one of many artisans in the family.

### Trees that tell stories

Whether you live in the country surrounded by woodlands or in the city near a park with trees, you probably have a fond tree memory. Maybe you built a tree fort. Or you recall the tree under which you shared a first kiss. Trees connect us to our past but also may be links to our future.

"I like to deal with wood that has a story," Morrison says.

On Aug. 18, 2005, a tornado carved a 10-mile path of destruction across subdivisions and farms just north of Stoughton. Afterward, one family chose to rebuild, using a walnut tree from their property. The tree is a reminder of how the community came together in a time of tragedy to clean up and restore the area.

Morrison remembers bookshelves he made to hold the Wisconsin Statutes collection, crafting the shelves from a tree felled on the Capitol Square.

Another log became a dining room table and chairs. The tree came from a

neighborhood near the Henry Vilas Zoo in Madison. A pulley remains embedded in part of the tree — a remnant of a 1960s neighborhood playtime activity. Monkeys that escaped from the zoo once hid in the tree until recaptured. The tree section with the embedded pulley is drying but will go to one of the adult children who grew up in the home, playing in and around the tree.

Morrison also recalls the desk he made to commemorate the Oregon Library centennial, building it out of pieces of the prior desk along with 15 wood species donated by local residents. And there is the squirrel cage table, an unusual piece that features walnut that re-grew over an old squirrel hole, with nuts still encased.

"The business of reusing trees is part of the growing interest in buying local," Morrison contends. "People also have a sentimental attachment to trees."

That was definitely the case at American Girl, when they commissioned The Wood Cycle to work with the old oak tree.

### Facing foreign competition

Much of Morrison's job is educating clients about the many uses for wood. And patience is a must. Proper wood drying can take over a month, so stump to finished product typically runs three months or more. The Wood Cycle works primarily with unique lumber cuts, incorporating natural log edges whenever possible, seeking knots instead of avoiding them, and emphasizing distinctive heartwood and sapwood coloring.

Terry Mace, a forest utilization and marketing specialist with the Department of Natural Resources, has more than 30 years' experience working with the wood industry.

"We need markets for the forest industry to remain viable," Mace says. "We can't manage just for the sake of managing forests...about 60,000 people work in Wisconsin's forest industry."

Twenty-eight Wisconsin counties look to the forest industry as their primary manufacturing employment sector. But wood products manufacturing, like many other American industries, faces intense foreign competition. China is the largest furniture producer and exporter in the world, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service.

Wisconsin competes well on quality, but not as well on price. To become more price competitive, the forest products in-



dustry needs to adopt more sophisticated production technology, recruit a more highly skilled labor force and diversify.

One Wisconsin company, Arcways in Neenah, has found international success. The company manufactures ornate custom stairways.

Re-purposing sentimental trees is a niche market, but it is gaining popularity. Mace also recommends buying wood grown locally rather than importing products such as bamboo for flooring.

### Wisconsin Act 208

Wisconsin Act 208, signed into law in 2007, directed the forest outreach program at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point along with the Department of Natural Resources to create a basic lumber grading training program. The act permits limited circumstances in which dimension lumber (lumber that has not been grade-stamped under the authority of a lumber grading bureau) to be used for home building.

Under Act 208, the person milling the lumber must sell the lumber directly to the person who will live in the house, or to the person acting on his or her behalf. The act further requires that the milled lumber meet or exceed requirements of the one- and two-family dwelling code.

Act 208 enables the use of locally grown lumber and smaller sawmills that would otherwise find producing grade-stamped lumber cost prohibitive.

Mace teaches short-courses for sawmill operators in how to produce and grade dimension lumber. Graduates earn a place in the Wisconsin Wood Using Industry Online Database at [wood-industry.forest.wisc.edu](http://wood-industry.forest.wisc.edu)

"I would love to see people be aware of the quality of the products they are buying and buy local," Mace says. "It might take a little effort to find the producers, but heirloom quality furniture will last for generations."

### Urban trees earn respect

Dwayne Sperber, founder of Wudeward

Urban Forest Products, LLC in Delafield, is trying to raise awareness and acceptance of urban forest products. Besides being a business owner, he serves on the board of Town and Country Resource Conservation and Development, Inc. (RC&D).

RC&D works to enhance and improve the quality of life in the 13-county area of Southeast Wisconsin by promoting healthy communities, a healthy environment and sustainable economic growth. The region represents 2.7 million residents.

Sperber leads the Urban Wood Market Development project with RC&D.

Sperber defines urban wood as, "lumber from trees removed for reasons other than harvest." Every year, trees from streets, backyards, parks and other green spaces come down due to storms, construction or pests such as the emerald ash borer. Most end up as wood chips or logs in municipal landfills. Sperber

says we can do better.

According to the U.S. Forest Service, urban trees, if milled into lumber, would yield almost 30 percent of the nation's yearly commercial hardwood lumber output or three billion board feet annually.

"That's enough wood to create over 250 million coffee tables or enough flooring for two million homes, annually," Sperber says.

With over 74 billion trees in U.S. metropolitan areas and plantings outpacing removals, urban wood is a sustainable resource. Urban wood transforms our communities' fallen or condemned trees into functional, beautiful products we can use.

Instead of buying lumber shipped from out-of-state or overseas, Sperber wants us to buy local.

"Every tree should have a local destination when it has to come down," he says. "Products created from these lost trees support a sustainable way of living and support local economies, all while benefiting our environment."

A recent product that showcases Sper-

ber's efforts is the Clock Shadow Building in Milwaukee's Walkers Point neighborhood. Ash stair treads and flooring came from Milwaukee area trees that had to come down. Traditional processes were followed in manufacturing products for this project. The only difference was that the wood came from trees that once grew in an urban area — urban wood.

"People forget, sometimes, that wood comes from trees," Sperber says. "And wherever wood is used, urban wood can be used."

Although Sperber has been a commission furniture maker for 16 years, he became more aware of the environmental implications of unwanted trees and became a strong advocate for local wood utilization, founding Wudeward, where along with sustainable hardwood building products, he still creates custom furniture.

"My furniture is simple, yet refined — a union of nature and culture," Sperber says. "Occasionally, the wood takes my design to where it wants to go. I'm never truly in control anyway; we just come to terms."

Sperber says that his craft allows him to make a positive environmental impact and to give a tree a second life filled with "history, emotion and celebration." Flooring is a great option for urban wood. But sometimes it is the artistic value that gets the most press.

His work has been displayed the last two years at the Urban(wood)Encounter furniture exhibit held in Milwaukee as part of the Historic Third Ward's spring gallery night. Urban Encounter pieces had to be produced from wood taken within a 150-mile radius of Milwaukee. Wudeward organized this exhibit and is invited back next year.

"Together we can think differently about sustainability and see the beauty of a resource that may literally be right outside our doors," says Sperber. "The exhibit represents a community — high school and college students, novice and amateur craftsmen, accomplished and celebrated furniture makers — all coming together to increase awareness and acceptance of urban forest products... products from trees otherwise wasted."

Sperber says good things are happening in the urban wood industry — namely, municipalities are recognizing the benefit of returning trees as viable products to the communities where they once grew.



Wood is dried on-site in a kiln at The Wood Cycle in the town Oregon.



Finished products are displayed at The Wood Cycle's Hayloft Gallery.

NATASHA KASSILKE



In addition to losing trees, municipalities must absorb the costs associated with tree removal. Rising labor and transportation costs, increased landfill or tipping fees and lost opportunity costs (money that cannot be spent elsewhere in the community) create a financial burden for municipal tree program managers. In addition, landfill space is dwindling and tree disposal in landfills has been either outlawed or reduced by regulations in many states.

"At this time, the decision to use urban forest products is typically a top-down decision," Sperber says, referring to commercial projects. "Success will come when the public demands this product and when architects, designers and others confidently specify this product. And wouldn't it be wonderful if every condemned tree had a local destination — a second life? I love to tell the story of where wood came from."

#### Mysteries ingrained

For the American Girl oak, it's been a long journey but short trip from tree to table. The journey was more than 150 years of growth, followed by 12 months to saw and dry, and then building the finished products. The short trip refers to the local processing.

After it was brought down in late 2010, parts of the tree were transported to The Wood Cycle sawmill to be split and evaluated. Morrison discovered the tree was home to wasps that slowly awakened as the upper trunk sat in the shop for cleanup and inspection. The tree also was loaded with gypsy moth egg masses. But the fact that they only had to move the wood 17 miles from stump to sawmill to dry kiln to shop saved fuel and protected against further invasive species movement.

Morrison developed a list of potential projects to use the lumber, including pen and business card holders, conference tables, bookshelves and artwork.

He then set aside suitable pieces of wood to turn into wood bowls that showcase the unique grain patterns of the tree. One bowl was presented to Rowland at the company's 25th anniversary celebration.

In late 2011 wood for the conference table arrived at the workshop's finishing room, a space that smells much like an old middle school wood shop. Morrison strives to keep the natural colors of the wood using mostly water-based polyure-

thane varnish. He says the quality of water-based finishes has improved so much it's not necessary to use the less environmentally safe volatile finishes of the past.

When finished in January 2012, Morrison moved the table to the Hayloft Gallery to await its delivery back to its original location.

The American Girl table encapsulates a few mysteries, too.

One mystery is the story behind the bullets embedded in the wood and preserved in the finished table. Another mystery appeared while cutting the base slices. Morrison's crew found three spikes driven into the tree. He speculates one may have been an original survey marker placed as a benchmark while the American Girl facilities were under construction. Another spike was deeply embedded and was probably driven in 60 to 80 years ago.

Bruce Allison, author of "Every Root an Anchor: Wisconsin's Famous and Historic Trees," requested a wood slice with a spike for further research at the University of Wisconsin. Allison, like Morrison, knows that trees have stories to tell. In Allison's book we learn that naturalist John Muir had his first botany lesson under a giant black locust on Observatory Drive in Madison.

"We are a far more mobile society than ever before," Morrison opines. "And the good news is we can take some parts — like our trees — with us." ❧

*Natasha Kassulke is editor of Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine.*



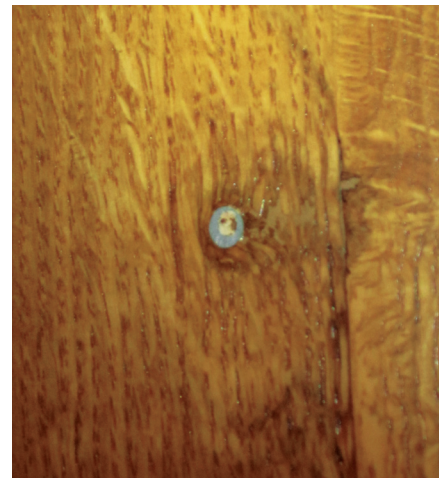
SUBMITTED BY PAUL MORRISON

The finished conference table is the centerpiece of products made from the American Girl oak.



SUBMITTED BY PAUL MORRISON

Pleasant Rowland received a Founder's Bowl crafted from wood from the tree.



NATASHA KASSULKE

A bullet encased in the American Girl tree is a mystery.





## Shelly Allness

Virginia Hirsch is a storyteller and owner of Bayfield Heritage Tours, a walking tour adventure covering the history of this tiny town of 300 that looks out on the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. You can't get any more low impact than a business that relies on walking as its main method of transporting customers where the owner handles operations from the front seat of her Prius.

Perhaps, many would argue in terms of impact, the Lake

Express Ferry of Milwaukee is on the other end of the spectrum. Yet, go to their website where prominent home page real estate is dedicated to their commitment to modeling the next generation of green transportation.

Both businesses rely on visitors to survive and one could argue that both owe their existence to their enviable location in Great Lakes ports. But it's exactly that point where tourism and the natural resources intersect that has given rise to Travel Green Wisconsin™, a program now in its fifth year.

## Preserving the environment and strengthening tourism

Tourism is big business in Wisconsin. Picture it this way: every time



The Bayfield Heritage Tour offers family friendly guided walks featuring history, maritime trails, ghost walks, architect tours and costumed programs.

Where tourism  
and natural  
resources  
intersect.



A fall drive shows off the colors in Marinette County.





250 cars cross the state line, it equals one job supported and \$7,000 in tax revenue. However, pressure from competition means no state or travel destination can rest on its laurels when it comes to attracting travelers. That is where the Department of Tourism, tasked with driving tourism through marketing, steps in.

The state has successfully hung its hat on “fun” to market the state because of its flexibility in telling stories about travel in the state. One of the most popular stories and probably the best selling point to vacationers is its natural beauty and resources.

The state’s tourism industry recognizes how its natural resources are symbiotically intertwined with their business success and how protecting these resources is a responsibility. In fact, many don’t consider it an option, but rather a full time requirement in order to preserve the very resources our visitors are coming to explore.

“We look at Lake Superior every day, our business depends on it. We recognize that from a tourism business standpoint, maintaining the environment is critical,”

says Mike Radke, operations manager of the Madeline Island Ferry.

### The birth of Travel Green Wisconsin™

In 2006, the Wisconsin Department of Tourism brought together tourism and environmental leaders from around the state to discuss the concept of green travel. A nationwide green movement was taking off; Al Gore’s “Inconvenient Truth” was winning Oscar and Nobel awards, the green movement dominated celebrity news and media airways, and certification programs for the building and hotel industries were mushrooming around the country.

It wasn’t clear what “green travel” would look like in Wisconsin, however, then Tourism Secretary Jim Holperin, a former executive director of Trees for Tomorrow, knew that with Wisconsin’s deep roots in stewardship, and a roster of environmental leaders such as Aldo Leopold and Senator Gaylord Nelson, Wisconsin should be leading the way.

Thus, in 2007 Travel Green Wisconsin™ was launched. Today, Travel Green Wisconsin™ is a voluntary certification program that reviews, certifies and recognizes tourism businesses, nonprofits, destinations or events that have made a commitment to continuously improve their operations in order to reduce their overall environmental impact.

Businesses use the application — essentially a minibusiness plan with tools to implement smart business decisions — to score their “green-ness,” which is in turn reviewed by third-party sustainability experts contracted with the state. A minimum score serves as a benchmark to achieve certification; however most businesses go above and beyond the minimum due to their deep passion and commitment to the environment. That is where the phrase “continuous improvement” in the program description comes in.

Travel Green Wisconsin™ members are encouraged to continually boost their scores by seeking out practices to become even more sustainable, but in a way that still makes sense for their operational and profit goals. Businesses and organizations use their Travel Green Wisconsin™ network to share ideas and learn from others. The program helps them evaluate their operations, set goals and take specific actions towards environmental, social and economic sustainability.

### Wisconsin’s green travel network: inclusive and innovative

One of the unique features of Travel Green Wisconsin™ that sets it apart from other state-offered programs is the variety of businesses that can achieve certification. The list now includes tourism experiences from wineries, outtriggers, festivals, marinas and museums to traditional hospitality businesses visitors would expect to see included, such as lodging properties and restaurants.

Since the initial pilot project that started in four communities just six years ago, over 330 tourism businesses, organizations and events have stepped up to offer green travel options to their visitors.

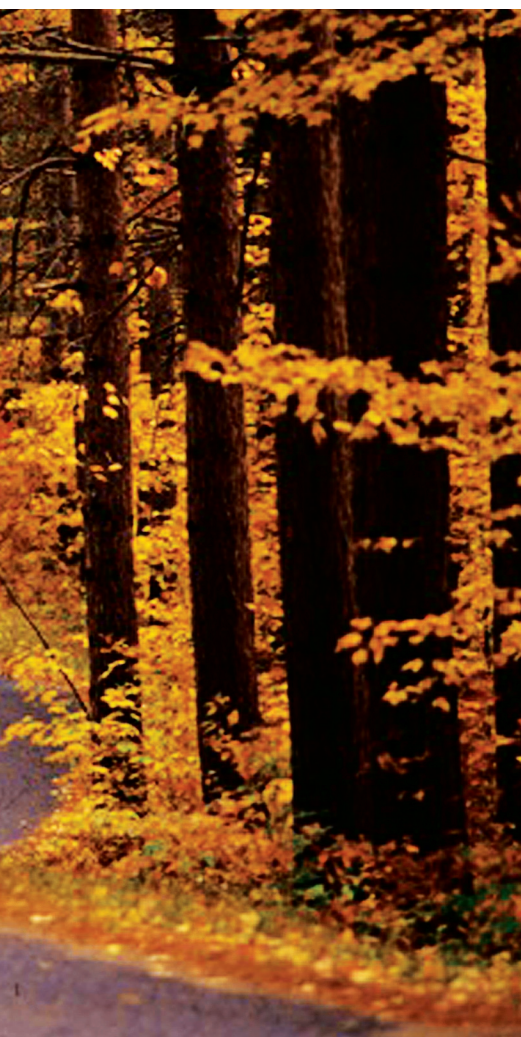
Key to its success is the diversity of members, which has made Travel Green Wisconsin™ the first comprehensive green travel program in the nation. It continues to be a model used by other states. We’ve even had guests from Morocco come learn about our innovative program!

One of the reasons businesses are signing on is because they understand that consumers have come to expect businesses to do their part in preserving and protecting our natural resources. Recent travel research shows that third party green certification is important to consumers in this day and age.

According to a recent TripAdvisor™ survey, travelers are even willing to pay more to be green. Half of the travelers surveyed reported they would spend more money to stay at an eco-friendly accommodation. This is a big step for green travel.

So how successful has Wisconsin’s tourism industry been in making a difference and lessening its environmental footprint? In a recent study conducted by the Department of Tourism, 27 Travel Green Wisconsin™ members surveyed in Door County reduced their annual water use by over 610,000 gallons. That’s the equivalent of 5.8 million filled 13.5 oz. water bottles. Stack them end-to-end and those water bottles equal the distance between Green Bay and Pittsburgh.

Those same Door County businesses have had positive impacts on their energy use, as well. Through energy-saving practices, including simple acts such as turning off power strips and appliances when not in use, those 27 businesses reduced their annual energy usage by over 177,000 kWh, saving more







Left to right: Spur of the Moment Ranch, kayaking Lake Superior and Amnicon Falls.

than \$17,000. This reduction in energy use also results in lower CO2 emissions.

Solid waste production is another area these businesses preserve our resources. Collectively, the Door County businesses reduced their waste production by an estimated 142 tons annually through reuse, recycling and composting programs — the weight of 232 passenger vehicles. Measurements like these just begin to tell the story of the positive impact the tourism industry is making in improving the state's land, water and air.

A pillar of Travel Green Wisconsin™ certification that has been embraced by the tourism industry is that businesses call the shots on how they go about conserving resources. It's not a one-size-fits-all approach to sustainability as the program works with businesses of all sizes and types. What works for the Franklin Victorian Bed & Breakfast in Sparta may not work for the Days Inn™ in urban Madison.

This has spurred innovation and creativity. One example is Great Lakes Distillery in Milwaukee. They obtained permission from the federal government to reuse their product bottles. They are believed to be the only distillery in the nation to implement this. As to why they chose to become a Travel Green Wisconsin™ member, distillery founder Guy Rehorst says, "A lot of consumers are serious about the environment; the Travel Green Wisconsin™ program demonstrates that we are too. The tools Travel Green Wisconsin™ provides allow consumers to easily find businesses like ours that are taking steps to do business in an environmentally friendly way."

The MillerCoors™ Milwaukee Brewery, another Milwaukee-based business, installed a green roof near their public Beer Garden, educating visitors on its year-round heating and cooling benefits. Additionally, in 2011 the brewery installed a system that enables the use of reclaimed water in pasteurizers to reduce the amount of water needed to pasteurize beer.

According to MillerCoors™ Guest Relations Supervisor, Andy Alberti, "water and energy are precious, and MillerCoors™ efforts to reduce the use of these resources resonate well with our guests."

Spur of the Moment Ranch in Mountain has earned high scores for installing

on-demand water heaters and high efficiency in-floor heating in their rental cabins. They purchase organic bar soap for their sinks and use liquid soap dispensers in the showers. Because the ranch allows horse guests, they have undertaken vermicomposting manure to produce worm castings (a natural compost product) that is sold to gardeners and landscapers.

Not every effort has to include green roofs and biofuel-powered vehicles. Even simple acts by the tourism industry are recognized for their cumulative impact on reducing demand and preserving resources. For example, providing newspapers only to customers who request them, implementing a linen reuse program, composting, recycling and taking steps to educate staff and customers, all of these practices play a role in supporting greener travel.

Take Berres Brothers Coffee Roasters™ in Watertown. The owners encourage customers to use bikes by offering them free coffee. They also started a rain barrel program where they provide rain barrels at cost to customers to help reduce runoff in their local watershed.

Deep in the Chequamegon National Forest, Lakewood Resort and Forest Ridge Golf Course takes great care to use only biodegradable food and drink products and has implemented an integrated pest management system to reduce chemical use.

One Wisconsin event has served as the premier learning laboratory for all kinds of businesses in the state. The annual Midwest Renewable Energy Fair is the nation's longest running and largest energy education event of its kind. It's a source for businesses searching for creative ideas and answers to their questions on how a business can take their green programs to the next level.

Wisconsin's own State Fair Park recognizes the importance and value of setting a good example, as well. They continue to seek out green practices that will enhance their sustainability and operational efforts. They have installed solar panels, rain gardens and energy efficient lighting. In 2008, they were recognized by Conserve Wisconsin for having the largest utility savings of any state

agency with a 42 percent reduction.

One of the jewels of Wisconsin's great outdoors is our state park system. The Department of Natural Resources was quick to step up and partner with Tourism in green travel efforts. Today, all of our state parks are Travel Green Wisconsin™ certified; even a few state trails and forests have jumped onboard and become certified. This is an excellent example of support for nurturing tourism in a sustainable manner.

### The Triple Bottom Line philosophy

Saving the earth's resources is also more than a feel-good venture. Businesses find that not only does it provide a marketing advantage; it helps the bottom line, too.

"We subscribe to the 'Triple Bottom Line' philosophy, of looking at the financial, social and environmental consequences of the way we run our business," says Steve and Nancy Sandstrom, owners and operators of the highest scoring Travel Green Wisconsin property, the Pinehurst Inn Bed & Breakfast in Bayfield. "It has to make good business sense and work for our operation."

Tourism businesses and destinations have discovered a return on investment through their participation. Members realize financial savings in the form of reduced energy, water and waste disposal bills. They attract new and repeat customers as a result of the Travel Green Wisconsin™ status. Having the Travel Green Wisconsin™ logo in the window, on the website or brochure lets their visitors know that they care about our resources.

This passion runs deep with our Travel Green Wisconsin™ members, they want to do their part to preserve, protect and conserve our state's beauty for future generations. This certification program offers them that opportunity.

Green travel in Wisconsin is a win-win for our state, for the tourism industry, for the state's natural resources and the visitor. As you plan your own vacations, consider supporting a Travel Green Wisconsin™ certified business. To find out who they are, visit [travelwisconsin.com](http://travelwisconsin.com)



*Shelly Allness works at the Wisconsin Department of Tourism.*



## Fostering a healthy conversation between hunters and non-hunters.

Last October, we ran a story about the dilemma conservation agencies face from declining hunter numbers. Hunting license revenues have traditionally funded a large proportion of wildlife conservation programs and we asked readers to write in with suggestions for how such programs could be funded in the future.

"Well, readers definitely responded and they accurately identified many of the challenges that hunting participation faces," said Keith Warnke, DNR's Hunting and Shooting Sport Coordinator. "From declining habitat quality — which won't support as many deer as in the past — to a growing number of other recreational activities, to a deer population which is lower than it was several years ago, all these issues challenge current and future hunters.

# WE ASKED-READERS ANSWERED!

"In our efforts to promote the hunting heritage, it's important to recognize that there are challenges, but there are also opportunities. Working hard to kill a deer is something hunters are clearly committed to. But as factors in our lives change — including land ownership and access, amount of free time, costs, expenses, and job commitments — the balance of value in hunting is shifted in some hunters' lives and they may drop out. Our role is to

popularize the tremendous contributions to conservation that hunting has made and will continue to make and to develop opportunities for those interested in hunting to get started."

Warnke adds, "It will take continued active participation from Wisconsin citizens to maintain our conservation heritage and readers' comments were filled with ideas and suggestions all of which will make a large contribution to the efforts to ensure the next generation of hunter-conservationists."

So here they are. Our aim was a healthy conversation between hunters and non-hunters. We think it's a start. (Note: some letters have been edited for space.)



MICHEL @ WILDS, FLICKR, CREATIVE COMMONS

### URBAN REFUGE

Regarding the sad deer hunters, I wish those hunters could sit in our backyard here in Rock Island, Ill. Yes, in the midst of the city. We have had as many as eight or 10 deer back there as we live near a ravine. They have a regular path through our yard, which we refer to as "the garden of eatin'" — they devour roses, hostas, impatiens, lilies, tulips, petunias and have trimmed our apple tree up as far as they can reach. We cannot even put out birdseed any longer, as they will eat that too. One morning recently, I opened my

bedroom blinds, and there was a stag three feet from the window, calmly eating our rose bush in our front yard. Last summer a doe and twin fawns trotted down the middle of our street. They are not afraid of people at all. Our city is looking into coming up with a solution, but so far nothing has happened. I think the deer have found a refuge in the cities.

Sally Schroeder  
Rock Island, Ill.

It is a bad partnership when non-hunters pay for 90 percent of the \$1.66 billion purchase of our state and county parks and Stewardship lands, only to have it prioritized to the 10 percent killing the wildlife we want to see. It is a bad partnership to have zero say in governing our own wildlife and public lands because we do not kill wildlife. Funding game animal killing as a central paradigm is grossly unfair to the 90 percent and to the balance of nature.

The Department of Natural Resources has a responsibility to open up the powerful secretive annual statewide election that is supposed to elect representation for all citizens. For 80 years, the Conservation Congress has deliberately privatized this election to 5,000 avid hunters and trappers, excluding the general non-hunting public. All 360 delegates have always been from the rod and gun clubs. This election is the center of citizen power and only hunters understand it.

Follow the money. Just as only saving licenses would be unfair, only killing licenses are a disaster. General public funding tied to democratic representation for all citizens is the remedy.

The problem has been that hunters and trappers have not wanted to give up their exclusive power to democratize the funding and power-share fairly. We wildlife appreciators are willing to legislate our \$175 million to the Department of Natural Resources or a parallel agency, only if it is tied to first-time democratic representation.

Patricia Randolph  
Portage



DNR FILE PHOTO

### NON-HUNTERS SHOULD HAVE A VOICE IN PROCESS

I don't have to wonder how outraged hunters would be if they walked into the Department of Natural Resources to buy hunting licenses and found only "saving" licenses. That is how deprived I am to find only killing licenses. According to the October article inviting non-hunter

input on funding, "The primary principles that evolved were wildlife 'belongs' to the public, and the scientific management of game species is funded by users, specifically hunters and anglers." Read that as wildlife belongs to all citizens, but 10 percent of the public has structured the Department of Natural Resources for their exclusive control by licensing only their exploitation to fund it.



## CULL WEAK FOR HEALTHIER HERD

The article was salutary. With but one exception; namely, trophy hunting should be discouraged. What farmer or rancher would send his best breeding stock straight to the slaughterhouse? Natural predators, such as wolves, bears and cougars also cull the weak and infirm, thereby helping to preserve healthy herbivores. Next time you see a particularly magnificent specimen within shooting range, please do not shoot it! Save your ammo for a less well specimen, such as a puny one with an asymmetric rack. Take its carcass home and make it into food. That way, you will help preserve a healthier population.

Andres Peekna  
Waterford



DNR FILE PHOTO

## HUNTER EDUCATION TEACHES OUTDOOR ETHICS

I have hunted since 1958, deer hunted since 1973 (in Wisconsin since 1984), and I have been a hunter education instructor since 1973 (1973-1993 in Iowa, 1994-present in Kansas). As an outdoor educator I have always emphasized the "eco-redneck" philosophy. While I am a hunter, I am also a part of all that is the out-of-doors. I have always emphasized the "respect of" and "responsibility to" that one needs to develop to be a part of the outdoors — the land, the landowner, the animal hunted, the critters who also share the woods. I am supported by a cadre of instructors — volunteers all — who also believe that the hunt is part of the whole, not the end-goal, and who donate thousands of hours to see to it that their view is expressed to new, prospective hunters.

Those who feel the way I do can volunteer to educate the next generations. I know Wisconsin has a hunter education program. That is the way you can have the greatest impact, and it is YOUR responsibility to pass on your beliefs and values — as a parent, a hunter and a lover of all that is the outdoors.

As to the outdoor media, they are selling a product much like all media and extremism apparently sells. It is an act, and should be viewed as such. I value the interaction with a chickadee sitting on my rifle barrel as much as the thrill in taking an 8-point whitetail with my handgun, all are part of the experience of the outdoors that I cherish.

Dick Fultz  
Manhattan, Kan.

## NEED "WATER ETHIC" TOO

Most hunters embrace Leopold's "land ethic," especially in the area of Quality Deer Management (QDM). QDM is not just about "big bucks," it is about promoting healthy deer herds by creating openings and increasing the overall biodiversity. While hunters enjoy time outdoors, being close to nature and spending time with family and friends, the motivation to being out there in the first place is to harvest game, whether it is a deer, turkey or grouse.



DNR FILE PHOTO

While "land ethic" is important let's talk about another important facet to the land and that is "water ethic." Take a look at lakes Monona and Mendota, the Crawfish, Rock and Bark rivers which are in pathetic shape. Aldo Leopold would be disgusted with the management of our waters. Talk about trophy hunting, local fishing clubs and the Department of Natural Resources have established a "trophy fish" mentality where the harvesting of edible fish is restricted on many waters to allow "trophy" populations. Fishermen want to eat fish just like hunters want to harvest game. It is time the DNR managers recognize this and make an effort to manage for the majority and not the minority. We need to improve the productivity of public lands and to establish a "water ethic." That would make Aldo Leopold proud!

Bruce Markert  
Sun Prairie

## WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT NEEDS INPUT FROM NON-HUNTERS

I am a retired forester who served for 34 years with a national multiple use management federal agency and tried to seek election to the Conservation Congress and provide non-hunting input to that organization. Of course, I failed as have others of the public who are not hunters, trappers or fisher people. Hunting and fishing should continue but something needs to be done to permit other voices to be heard and included in determining wildlife management by the Department of Natural Resources and the Legislature. Please allow democracy in your magazine and allow other voices to be heard.

Gaylord Yost  
Milwaukee

## FEWER DEER MEANS FEWER HUNTERS

I have been a hunter of both deer and waterfowl since 1968 when I returned to my home state of Wisconsin. For the first eight years of my hunting I was privileged to hunt on the Shawano/Waupaca County line; PRIME deer country! I would see deer all the time in herds of 25 and more. I don't recall hearing of "deer management" in those years. With all of the deer management I have experienced in my years, the herds are declining in number. I am not a "trophy" hunter, although I have shot two nice 10-point bucks which I had mounted. I love venison and we use it. My concern is the few deer I see now. I went bow hunting on Nov. 11, all day and never saw a deer. Snow on the ground, full moon, no deer. For all the "deer management" there seem to be fewer deer. In my estimation, that is why there are fewer hunters. "Deer management" to me is making sure there are deer to hunt. One of the best things you did was including on

## FINANCIAL INCENTIVE IS LACKING

I'm afraid your promotion of recreational hunting will have limited success due to a lack of financial incentive. I was born in 1940 and lived on a farm until I was six. On the farm I never saw a wild animal — not a deer nor rabbit nor grouse nor goose. My dad didn't hunt but I suspect the neighbors needed to keep food on the table. Growing up, I can remember hunters talking about the price of a deer license versus the value of the meat. In later years, hunting was valued for the companionship and tradition. Even in today's difficult economy, people spend a much smaller percentage of their wages on food than when I was a child, giving them more income to spend on recreation. Two of my grandchildren live in a rural area. Outdoor recreation among teenagers seems to revolve around ATVs and snowmobiles. Perhaps it is time to think seriously about alternate funding for conservation.

Helen Hoar  
Ashland



DNR FILE PHOTO



the deer registration form the question “how many deer did you see?” If you keep asking that question, noting the county where the hunter is, you will get a pretty accurate count of the deer out there. I sit in my stand from an hour before dawn to sundown and stay fairly alert all day, as do most “serious” hunters. I appreciate it when you ask for the opinion of hunters; keep it up.

P.S. I did my part in perpetuating the number of hunters; I have two sons who hunt with me, and now two grandsons, ages 11 and 7. They will be with us opening day!

*Pastor Bob Rosenberg  
Oshkosh*

### **FOLLOW-UP FROM PASTOR ROSENBERG**

I wrote you earlier in the month in response to your concern regarding fewer numbers of hunters. Thought I should give you a report on our 2011 hunt. I was in my stand at 5:45 a.m. opening day with my 11-year-old grandson. My eldest son was in his stand with his 7-year-old son at the same time, and a friend was in another stand with his 12-year-old son. One deer was seen by my son's friend early in the day. That was it for three hunters on opening day.

We were back in our stands Sunday by 6 a.m. (Although I am a preacher I have taken opening day as a vacation Sunday because I have enjoyed hunting.) We sat until 10:45 a.m. and no one saw any deer. My son and I hunted Thanksgiving morning from 6 a.m. until 11 a.m. and saw no deer. I sat all day Friday, Nov. 25; saw no deer. I sat Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon until sundown; saw no deer. During all my “sitting” I heard very few shots which said to me, no one was seeing deer.

This was the worst deer hunting in my entire life. I'm glad the kill was up; it means other hunters had a good experience. Almost all of the guys I know who hunt in many different counties had a similar experience. My point is when I don't even SEE deer it isn't any fun. If this continues, there will be one fewer hunter in the woods.

*Pastor Bob Rosenberg  
Oshkosh*

### **QDM IS NOT TROPHY HUNTING**

I'd like to comment on one of the questions asked in “Wisconsin's hunting heritage.” The question is “Most of the stories we read are about quality deer management that push towards trophy hunting. They don't do service to the concept of hunters as conservationists, do they?”

Please don't confuse QDM with trophy hunting. They are two very different things. Trophy hunters spend a lot of time and money (sometimes lots of money) to try to kill the largest antlered whitetail that they can. Sometimes even behind high fences. Nothing to do with conservation. QDM hunters spend a lot of time and money (sometimes lots of money) to try to grow the healthiest deer herd they can. They do this by working the soil in food plots, planting trees for both wind breaks and shelter, as well as fruit trees, and monitoring total

### **PREDATOR HUNTING NEEDS RE-EXAMINATION**

It takes quite a stretch of the imagination to regard yourselves as “land stewards” when “continuous open season” on coyotes allows “hunters” using GPS-collared dogs to run down lactating mothers, leaving orphan pups to starve to death in our harsh Wisconsin late winters. What sort of “tradition” is this to teach a child? Apparently you think we have so many coyotes — who fill the niche vacated by once-extirpated wolves — that this cruelty is warranted. Apparently, we also have “too many” possum, skunk, weasel and snowshoe hare — also “unprotected” — which coyotes happen to eat. Anyone who reads Aldo Leopold knows his “land ethic” has nothing to do with trophy hunting, or hunting for entertainment. It's after shooting a wolf that he realizes our “traditions” concerning top predators is wrong — and he dedicates the rest of his career to proving, and teaching it. If you're hunting deer for meat — and why else would you teach a child to kill an animal? — it doesn't really matter whether it has antlers, or not. If “A land ethic also involves caring about the creatures that inhabit the land and the laws and administrative rules that govern their protection” (*The Face of Wisconsin Hunters: Courting a Land Ethic*, Wisconsin Natural Resources, Feb. 2012), at some point in our evolution we will have to make a distinction between trophy hunting and hunting animals for subsistence, and address those “laws and administrative rules that govern their protection.”

*Laura Menefee  
Sturgeon Bay*



DNR FILE PHOTO

deer numbers, noting how many bucks to does, keeping accurate numbers on age of deer killed, weight and sex. They advocate the passing up of killing young bucks, to conserve the “chance” that they will get older, larger, and yes, support a larger set of antlers. All hunters want a chance at that.

I invite readers to go to qdma.com, especially if you are a skeptic of QDM as conservationist. Hit on “QDM defined.”

P.S. I've killed one quality buck in 10 years of QDM on 80 acres, and 32 antlerless.

*Don “Katty” Katterhagen  
Rice Lake*

### **LETTERS DESERVE REPLY FROM WILDLIFE MANAGERS**

Why in the world would you publish two letters (Greg Sebold and Michael Hron, February 2012, Readers Write) from disgruntled hunters [complaining] about things they obviously don't understand? Worse yet, you did not publish an answer from one of the many wildlife management professionals available in the Department. You did nothing but give credit to the whining, sniveling malcontents that now dominate public forums with their shrill vitriol.

*Tom Bahti  
Green Bay*

### **HUNTERS PART OF NATURAL ORDER**

I have been hunting and fishing for more than 40 years, and was a trapper for over 20.

My father and I hunted and fished to complement our larder. We enjoyed our time together afield (and separately) immensely, but we also enjoyed eating what we brought home. There was no “catch and release,” no “I will only shoot this specific deer” or animal. We were, and are, meat hunters. We could not afford to fish or hunt purely for the joy of doing so. I firmly believe that we would not have done so even if we could have. We were simply

natural predators doing what comes naturally.

My father grew up on a northern Wisconsin farm and he and his family knew the nature of living off the land. Their farm not only provided needed crops, it also was the natural setting from which they hunted many birds and animals for food, and trapped many others for their fur. I believe my father and his family's connection to the land and their deep appreciation for and understanding of the natural world is lacking in too many of today's “sportsmen.”

Diminishing resources and hunting opportunities have led to a greed mentality among too many hunters. This should not be confused with legal limits which allow for the safe consumptive exploitation and continuation of resource populations, but the attitude that leads one to believe the resource is theirs. I believe this attitude and behavior must be addressed by the hunting community if non-hunters are to believe hunters are real conservationists.

Also, my father and his family, and I and mine, in all our combined years of hunting have never “harvested” an animal. We killed and ate them, pure and simple. Hunters should not play semantics in an effort to be politically correct and avoid insulting perceived sensitivities. We do hunting (and fishing and trapping) an injustice by trying to sugarcoat the outcome of the consumption of any natural resource. Broken down to its essence, you may harvest crops but if you intend to eat an animal you must kill it first. We, as hunters, are a part of the natural world. There simply is no denying it, and explaining that to future hunters will help them understand the hunter's role in nature. Hunters do not trespass upon the natural world, they become a part of it.

*Gary Polar  
New Franken*





## ROLE OF "GOOD FIRE" SHOULD BE HIGHLIGHTED

I recently read the article "Fire! Wildfire Prevention and Control in Wisconsin" in the April 2012 issue. It was an excellent and accurate article on the successes and challenges Wisconsin faces with wild fire risk and suppression. Beyond question, Wisconsin DNR suppression staff provides a vital service to the people of Wisconsin. They should be commended for their work, which they conduct in an efficient, safe and professional manner, often with limited resources.

I was, however, disappointed to see no mention of the historic role fire played in shaping Wisconsin landscapes and, similarly, no mention of the substantial prescribed fire program the Department of Natural Resources and many other partners implement in the state. Upwards of 40,000 acres a year are treated with this critical management tool in Wisconsin, while many times more acres than that are considered fire-dependent systems that actually need to be burned to thrive. While it is critical to inform people of "bad fire," it is a missed opportunity not to simultaneously educate about "good fire" and the benefits it provides to both natural and human communities.

While no one wants to see fires burning out of control in unplanned incidents, prescribed fires are a way to balance natural and human community needs. In 2005, the magazine addressed the role of fire in Wisconsin, and I was pleased to see the June 2012

article "Reinforcing a foundation in oak" also addressed the role of fire. But there has yet to be an article that addresses the current controlled burning programs that are active in the state; how professionals, volunteers and private landowners implement burns, how weather conditions are carefully chosen to mitigate risk and what the public can expect to see on the landscapes during burn season.

Over the past 10 years, the use of prescribed fire as a management tool has increased in the state as managers and private landowners learn more about the role of fire and expand their implementation. Similarly, more of the public is curious about the why, when and how of implementing fires as they see more smoke columns in the spring and fall. I would encourage the magazine to consider a future article on the role of fire from a statewide ecological perspective, which includes interviews with prescribed fire practitioners and shares the current successes and opportunities of "good fire" on the landscape.

Hannah Spaul  
Director of Land Management  
The Nature Conservancy

## INDIGO BUNTING

We enjoy your magazine and wanted to share a picture that I snapped in our backyard. This bird hit our window so I went out to make sure it was okay and picked it up. He enjoyed riding on my hand around the yard for quite a while and then flew off. It's always fun to see all of the different species of birds in our yard each spring.

David Cook  
Brownsville



## WHAT SNAKE IS THIS?

I was weeding alongside our raised raspberry patch and must have startled this snake. He was along the south edge of a railroad tie. He certainly startled me! By the time I got back from the house to take his picture, his head was not visible. He was approximately 14-16 inches long, with a fairly pointed tail and if memory is correct, his head was pointed. We live three miles west of the city of Hayward in Sawyer County in a very rural area. I have shown the picture to a few farmers and they were very sure that it is a bull snake.

Phyllis Lorenzo  
Hayward



To illustrate how difficult it can be to identify a plant or animal from a photograph, we asked some DNR wildlife biologists for help, and they were unable to determine with 100 percent confidence which snake species this is. They did agree it is definitely not a bull snake whose color and markings don't match this one. Because the photo only shows a small portion of the body and doesn't include the head, they believe it is either an eastern hognose or a western fox snake. The hognose, also known as the puff adder, has a sharply upturned pointed snout, a heavy body and a pair of dark black blotches on its neck that look like "eyespot" when it flattens its neck. They are considered common across most of the state, except in north central and eastern counties. The western fox (or pine) snake is also common and can be found in all counties statewide. Although their coloration usually ranges

from brownish to yellow or olive, this could be a juvenile which tend to be gray. Fox snakes are sometimes mistaken for venomous snakes like copperheads — which do not live in or near Wisconsin — and rattlesnakes, because they rattle their tails in dry leaves when disturbed. But their pointed tail distinguishes them as a non-venomous species.

## BLUE HILLS WORTH A VISIT

I was reading Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine's April 2012 issue [listing a field trip on Baraboo Hills geology]. I must write about the blue hills northeast of Rice Lake near the Rush County line and Ladysmith. They are the oldest rock outcroppings in North America. They are true marvels in the state for they were high mountains that changed in geologic history. There is an area of harsh gravel that has stones to pick up and look for minerals.

Richard G. Kortsch  
Milwaukee

## WE LIKE NORTHWEST WISCONSIN - REALLY!

I recently read the August 2011 issue of Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine. The articles are generally interesting, but it remains frustrating that the western and northwestern Wisconsin areas continue to have virtually no coverage (vis-a-vis articles), while the eastern, southeastern and southern parts of the state are written about in piece after piece. Each month I draw an imaginary line from Ashland straight south to the Wisconsin-Iowa border and estimate what amount of editorial coverage is about any of those counties. Usually there is nothing. I don't know if your magazine's staff or Wisconsin natural resources experts forget that this area exists, but often it seems that we must live in an arid wasteland or all inhabitants must suffer from some severe and contagious

## COMMENT ON A STORY?

Send your letters to: Readers Write, WNR magazine, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707. Or email letters to [dnrmagazine@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dnrmagazine@wisconsin.gov). Limit letters to 250 words and include your name and the community from which you are writing.

## NO ACCESS TO THE WEB?

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



disease, because coverage of western counties and our natural flora, fauna, geology and geography is pathetically absent. Take a careful look at the August issue. Every one of the articles produced by your editorial staff features information about events or locations in the eastern two-thirds of the state. ("Jake's Journal" was a submitted piece.) It seems odd. Our area of the state sports the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers and their flyways and fisheries, the Crex meadows, the Blue Hills, three converging ecological forest types in Pierce and St. Croix counties, and yet, we might as well look west to Minnesota for any meaningful coverage. Any comment?

Richard Timmerman  
River Falls

Your point is well taken, but we certainly do realize the importance and unique resources of your part of the state. In the first three issues of 2011, we carried a story about the Bayfield fish hatchery; a listing of Natural Resources Foundation field trips, including some in western Wisconsin; a story about improvements in trout fishing in the Coulee region and other parts of the state; an account of a youth turkey hunt near Rice Lake; a story about Karner blue butterfly habitat restoration efforts near Crex Meadows and other parts of the state; two back-cover features of State Natural Areas in the Apostle Islands and Wyalusing State Park; and several listings in Wisconsin Traveler. Although our small magazine staff is stationed in Madison, we regularly recruit writers from other DNR staff statewide. We welcome suggestions for stories and promise to continue to feature programs, activities and efforts from your part of the state.

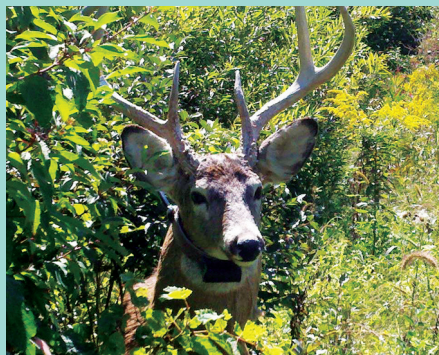
#### WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

My wife and I enjoyed reading Charles Fonaas' cicada article ("The buzz on cicada," June 1999) after we found one on our window screen!

Patrick Kearns  
Town of Richmond  
Walworth County



## HUNTERS: PLEASE HELP WITH DNR'S BUCK SURVIVAL AND DEER MORTALITY STUDY



Don't shy from shooting a deer that has a collar or a tag. These deer are part of a DNR study on deer mortality. Treat marked deer like any other deer in the woods.

In 2011, the Department of Natural Resources began an ambitious deer research study in Wisconsin looking into the survival rate of bucks and causes of death among both sexes and across all age classes of deer. During January, February and March in 2012, researchers and volunteers captured deer using a variety of techniques including box and netted cage traps, drop nets and darting. Captured deer were fitted with radio collars and ear tags or just ear tags. Pregnant does were fitted with transmitters that would indicate when they gave birth. In late May and early June researchers again took to the woods (and swamps) to locate the newborn fawns which also were fitted with expandable radio collars and ear tags.

"We have just finished up our second year of capture and are really pleased with the number of deer we have caught and all the help we have received," says DNR Senior Research Scientist Mike Watt. "This is a great opportunity for anyone who has an interest in deer to get involved with research on the ground. In addition to the hundreds of landowners who let us trap on their land, we had over 500 volunteers help us in the 2012 capture season alone! We have had kids as young as 5 and men and women in their 60s and 70s participate. We owe these people a debt of gratitude and we certainly couldn't have done it without their help."

The goal is to learn more about the specific causes of Wisconsin deer deaths: weather, disease, predators, vehicles or hunters. This knowledge will be used to refine the DNR's population estimating formula and to understand the impact various types of mortality have on deer survival.

### VOLUNTEERS ARE STILL NEEDED

The need for volunteers will continue through winter 2014 in the case of the adult deer mortality study and possibly through spring 2013 for the fawn recruitment study. If you want to volunteer or learn more about this and other deer research, go to [dnr.wi.gov/org/es/science/wildlife/deer/](http://dnr.wi.gov/org/es/science/wildlife/deer/) and get involved.



DNR FILE PHOTO

DNR FILE PHOTO

## Grandma's hunting tale

Continued from page 2

To say it was a sleepless night for me would be an understatement. I kept replaying the hunt. Morning couldn't come fast enough. I had to drive the school bus again, so after I got home I called up the neighbors and got permission to go back after the buck. But another sleepless night followed. And it was a sleepless night for my boys, too. They had spotted the buck while tracking him and said that when I described it as the biggest of my life, I was not doing the buck justice — not even close.

On Wednesday the hunt for the buck of a lifetime continued. My family found him first. Meeting up with them was the longest walk of my life. When I got down to the ditch where the buck was laying, I saw that my family had covered the rack only to prolong my excitement.

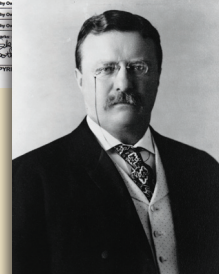
When it was finally uncovered, there were many tears of joy, yells and tons of high-fives. This "69 years in the making buck" deserved it. After many pictures we took it to the landowner who we have been friends with forever. More pictures and then we got it registered.

It was a crazy afternoon and night. People stopped by to hear the story, give me a hug, shake my hand and take pictures. Friends, family and even people I didn't know stopped in just to touch and hold the rack. I had another sleepless night, but this time it was worth it.

The buck was recorded as a 13 pointer since the brow tines and other points were broken off. The rack has a 19 and 7/8-inch inside spread and 25 and 2/8-inch outside spread. After the 60-day drying period, the rack ended up with a gross Boone and Crockett Club (the official scoring system for North American big game trophies) score of 184 3/8 and a final score of 167 3/8 (A minimal score of 160 is needed for a whitetail deer to be recognized by the Boone and Crockett Club).

Another farmer gave me a trail camera photo of the buck when it still had its brow tines. The buck I shot was amazing, but to see these photos with the brow tines made me shake my head in awe.

Truly a buck of a lifetime. ❧



Theodore Roosevelt founded the Boone and Crockett Club to promote the conservation and management of wildlife and its habitat, and encourage ethical standards of sportsmanship.

Harriett Breunig lives in Sauk City and when she isn't hunting she is busy with a big family. Her buck of a lifetime was shot on land in Dane County on Nov. 23, 2011.

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# Comforts

## Getting a jump on spiders – or is it the other way around?

Story by Amanda Laurenzi and photos by Kate Redmond

**I have a personal pact with spiders: pick a corner in my ceiling, make your web to catch the nasty pests that fly around my house, and stay where I can see you at all times. When the spider breaks this pact, I feel like I am suddenly thrown into an arena much like the gladiators of Ancient Rome, fighting off lions and other wild beasts as a crowd cheers me on...**

Okay, so that is a bit dramatic. They're just little spiders, right? And they can be very beneficial if you live in an area that attracts pests like mosquitoes and house flies.

I'm not sure if it's the eight eyes that seem to look into my soul when a spider is perched on a shelf above me, or perhaps the eight legs that scurry in a blur from (what must seem like) my ginormous body; I just don't like to be in contact with them. And I think many people can empathize with that notion.

Now that fall is here and the spiders are looking for a place to escape the frigid winter only Wisconsin can deliver, it's time to decide whether you want to be bunking with them for the season or take action to prevent their stay.

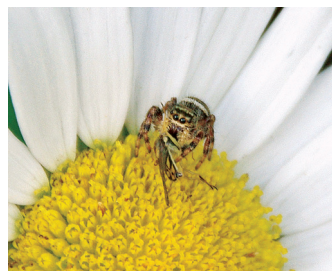
I have always had encounters with jumping spiders in my home. They have made my skin crawl for years and until now I have wanted nothing more than to have them out of

The jumping spider family (Salticidae) contains more than 500 described genera and about 5,000 described species making it the largest family of spiders with about 13 percent of all species.



my house. But after looking at some of the benefits of their stay (such as eating other vermin) and how rarely they actually bother humans, I have a little different outlook. They still creep me out, but at least I can honestly say I'm not as scared of them as I used to be.

Jumping spiders (*Phidippus audux*) have thick bodies and prominent eyes. Usually green in color, the two front eyes are the biggest of the eight, with two smaller ones on the side, and the last couple rows positioned on the cephalothorax. They usually have a red or white dot on their abdomen and smaller spots around the



rest of their body. Their size ranges from 3 to 12 mm in length.

Jumping spiders are unique in their hunting style in that they do not create webs and wait for prey to fall victim to the silky strands of death. Instead, they use their quick jumping skills to catch insects such as

flies and mosquitoes. They are one of the fastest arthropods due to their jumping ability.

Phil Pellitteri, Insect Diagnostician for the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Entomology, provides insight into what attracts these creepy crawlies and how they can be stopped from moving in.

"Spiders can be found by windows and doors because that's where the insects come in," says Pellitteri. "The other problem is structural weakness in a house — the weakest point is where the siding meets the foundation. Make that space tighter and you should see a decrease in numbers of spiders and insects alike."

Although it can be startling to run into a spider, they really don't bother anything unless provoked. Jumping spiders will most likely move away from you if you attempt to get close. But if you corner it by, for example, putting your foot in a shoe where it has created its living space, you may be bit. Jumping spiders do not deliver a serious or life-threatening chomp and they rarely bite more than once.

"Ninety-five percent of what people call spider bites have nothing to do with spiders," says Pellitteri. "Spiders have two fangs; therefore, if the bite has two holes, it came from a spider. Usually there is only one hole, and that results from insects."

If you still would rather not have spiders in your home, the best thing to do is to vacuum corners that have spider webs. If another web appears shortly after, you can see where the spider is and go from there, says Pellitteri.

Another error people make is having an outside light right above their front door. The light attracts a plethora of insects that spiders consider food. Since the insects are close to the door, spiders also reside there to catch them. To fix this problem, Pellitteri suggests having a pole with a light at the top and shining the light at your door. This way, the insects are attracted to the top of the pole and away from your door.

The jumping spider's eye pattern is the clearest single identifying characteristic. It has eight eyes.



Amanda Laurenzi is an editorial staffer at Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine and battles spiders at the family's rural home in Blue Mounds. Kate Redmond writes the Bug of the Week series column for the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Field Station.



## Traveler

# Fall in love with Wisconsin foods and festivals.

Amanda Laurenzi

Great food and family fun is plentiful in October and November. As fall sets in and starts to chill our bones, our stomachs rumble with anticipation for some of our favorite winter foods featured in festivals hosted throughout the state. Take some time with your family to travel before the snow comes and traps you in your house for the season!

Join the **33rd Annual Cranberry Fest** on October 6-7 to celebrate the Cranberry Harvest with arts and craft shows, a tour of the marsh and winery, an antique market, a farmers market and much more. It's fun for the whole family at Vilas County Fairgrounds, Eagle River. Admission is free.

Don't let the colder weather bring you down — take a mental vacation to Bali with a physical trip to Wausau for the **Cudamani** performance being held at the Grand Theater on Artsblock on October 11. Through dance and enchanting music, the performance group

will tell tales of gods, heroes and other traditions of the Balinese culture. For ticket information visit [grandtheater.org/calendar/view.aspx?id=345](http://grandtheater.org/calendar/view.aspx?id=345)

Fall is the perfect time to sit outside and star gaze with the family, a special someone or in solitude. Learn about the cosmos through **Starsplitters' Astronomy Program** at Wyalusing State Park in Prairie du Chien October 13 and 27. Sessions start at 8:30 p.m. at the observatory.

They've been on the Late Show, Comedy Central, Nickelodeon, HBO's Young Comedians, various

commercials and have done over 2,500 live performances — they're **The Gizmo Guys!** And now they're coming to Sheboygan to perform their juggling skills and rich comedy at the Stefanie H. Weill Center for the Performing Arts on October 20. Come see Allan Jacobs and Barret Felker for a one-of-a-kind show you won't want to miss! Check out their video at [thegizmoguys.com](http://thegizmoguys.com) Halloween only comes once a year,



THEGIZMOGUYS.COM

but it isn't always conveniently placed on a Friday or Saturday night. If you want to take a night to celebrate Halloween with a good old traditional scare, pay a visit to **Red Ridge Ranch** anytime this month! Friday and Saturday nights feature a haunted corn maze, along with the activities featured every day: painting and designing pumpkin faces, tractor/horse drawn rides, a hay maze, a petting zoo and guided trail rides. For more information about the stable, call (608) 847-2273.

At the Exposition Center in West Allis the weekend of November 10 and 11, come to America's largest operating model railroad show for **Trainfest 2012**. Kids can race trains on a bone-shaped track, join in on face painting, crafts and coloring and a circus train ride. Sixty fantastically detailed railroads will attract your attention as they display running trains.

Head up to River Falls on November 23 to visit Santa and Mrs. Claus as they spend a day at the annual **River Dazzle Extravaganza** with reindeer, camels and llamas. Sales will be held throughout the day on Main Street, as well as the 6th annual chili cook-off and free hayrides around town. The day

The Gizmo Guys produce a show full of humor for all ages.

will end with the lighting of the trees and the River Dazzle Parade.

Enjoy a day at the **London Dairy Alpaca Ranch Open House** November 23-25 in Two Rivers to shop at the gift store for exotic alpaca scarves, mittens, gloves and more. Then visit the animals with the whole family. Visit [londondairyalpacas.com](http://londondairyalpacas.com) for more information.

After a week of recuperating from an oversized Thanksgiving feast, gear up for a chocolate



ROXY HITTLEDORF ©

overload at the Rotary Gardens in Janesville for the **Taste of Chocolate Event** on November 30. Start the evening by sharing some cocktails with friends followed by a meal. Then brace yourself for the chocolate



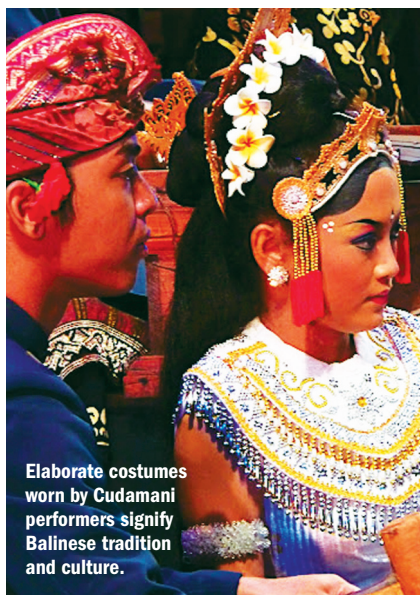
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The River Dazzle Parade is held at night to showcase the elaborate lighting.

overload. The event ends with an elegant Lighting of the Holiday Light Show throughout the gardens, with live musical entertainment. The event runs 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Visit <http://rotarybotanicalgardens.org/> for more information.



UCLA CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCES

Elaborate costumes worn by Cudamani performers signifying Balinese tradition and culture.

Amanda Laurenzi is an editorial staffer for Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine.





## Wisconsin, naturally

### BLACK EARTH RETTENMUND PRAIRIE STATE NATURAL AREA

#### Notable:

Cresting the brow of a low Driftless Area ridge, this small, but diverse, dry prairie harbors more than 130 native plant species. In autumn, the prairie blazes with color, from the muted hues of grasses such as big bluestem, little bluestem, Indian grass and northern drop-seed, to the more vibrant colors of fall-blooming asters, goldenrods and gentians. Earlier in the summer, visit the prairie to see striking displays of prairie lily, dwarf blazing star, purple prairie clover, compass plant and butterfly weed. In spring, look for pasque flower, yellow star-grass, wood betony, shooting star and prairie smoke. Several rare plant species also grow in the thin, rocky soil, including white camas, pomme-de-prairie and the state-threatened round-stemmed false foxglove. The diverse flora attracts an equally diverse fauna, with several species of grassland birds, reptiles, butterflies and other insects finding refuge here. Eastern meadow-lark, indigo bunting, eastern bluebird and kingbird are known to nest on or near the prairie. Black Earth Rettenmund Prairie was used by noted University of Wisconsin-Madison plant ecologist John Curtis as an outdoor classroom and featured in his classic book *Vegetation of Wisconsin*. The natural area was purchased by The Nature Conservancy in 1986 and recently transferred to The Prairie Enthusiasts, which now owns and manages the preserve.

#### How to get there:

From the intersection of Highways 78 and KP in Black Earth, go west on KP 1.1 miles, then south on Highway F 0.25 mile, then west on Fesenfeld Road 0.2 mile to a small parking area south of the road. Please stay on the marked trails. Visit [dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna/index.asp?SNA=210](http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna/index.asp?SNA=210) for information and a map of the site.

