

PLUS:

**2019 WISCONSIN
FISHING REPORT**

**SPECIAL PULLOUT HIGHLIGHTS
WAYS TO GET INVOLVED**

WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES

wnrmag.com
Spring 2019 \$3.50

NRF FIELD TRIPS

Explore the outdoors

**Banner year
for Smokey Bear**

**Favorite river
flows free**

**When flooding
strikes, DNR
responds**





Blooming pasque flowers are a welcome sign of spring.

KEVIN COLLISON

A message from WNR magazine staff

With spring comes new beginnings, and the spirit of renewal that accompanies the season can be quite restorative. Sometimes all it takes is a mild and sunny day after weeks of unpleasant weather or a glimpse of that first robin to elevate the mood.

Spring means yet another great issue of this publication, featuring a cover story on field trips offered by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin. For more than 25 years, *Wisconsin Natural Resources* has partnered with the NRF to highlight its field trips. The program brings natural resources outings to you — often guided by Department of Natural Resources staff.

Another story in this issue celebrates the 15th anniversary of the Wisconsin Citizen-based Monitoring Network, which coordinates ever-expanding volunteer efforts to aid the state's plants, animals and ecosystems. At the center of this issue, an insert from DNR's Natural Heritage Conservation Program relates to citizen-based monitoring and features ways to help frogs and toads, owls, mussels, bumble bees and monarch butterflies, also featured in the magazine. We encourage you to remove and save the informative panels of this insert for future reference.

A special report in this issue looks back at 2018 and devastating flooding that hit the state, highlighting ways the DNR responded in difficult and sometimes dangerous situations. Spring can bring a new round of weather-related woes — from floods to wildfires — and DNR will again be poised to step up when needed.

There's plenty of other great content in the magazine and much enthusiasm at hand as we look forward to spring. At DNR, the sense of newness also comes with new leadership at the agency. Following last fall's election of Tony Evers as Wisconsin governor, Preston D. Cole was appointed by Gov. Evers to serve as DNR Secretary.

Cole's roots in natural resources management



Preston D. Cole

MICHAEL I. KIENITZ



run deep. With a Bachelor of Science degree in forestry management from the University of Missouri, he began his career with the Missouri Department of Conservation then served as parks superintendent for the city of St. Louis. Cole, a Michigan native, eventually moved to Milwaukee, where he was a city forester, environmental services superintendent, director of operations for the Department of Public Works and, most recently, commissioner of the Department of Neighborhood Services.

In 2007, Cole was appointed to the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board, the policy-setting board of the DNR. He served on the NRB, including a term as chair, until being designated to lead the DNR.

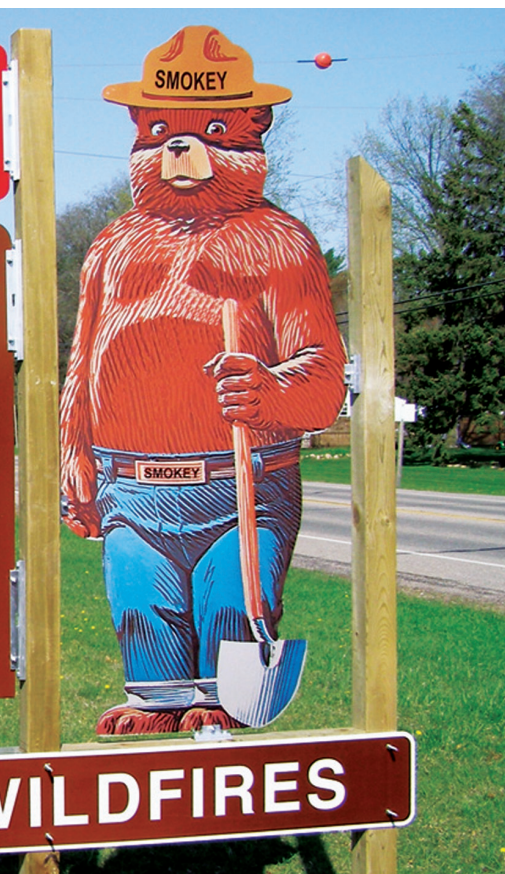
The excitement of spring is merited for many reasons. It won't be long before turkey season is upon us, with the general inland fishing opener not far behind. The 2019 Wisconsin Fishing Report included in this issue will help get you ready for that.

State parks and other properties begin to refresh in spring — themselves and their visitors. Planning for all the fun ahead might include making camping reservations at wiparks.net. And check dnr.wi.gov, keywords "Get Outdoors," to search for upcoming events and get set to savor the season. At *Wisconsin Natural Resources*, we look forward to enjoying it along with you.



WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES

Spring 2019 | Volume 43, Number 1



DNR FILES

ABOVE:
Smokey Bear has been helping warn the public about wildfire dangers — which are particularly high in spring — for 75 years.

FRONT COVER:
The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin offers a wide array of field trips to give participants an up-close experience with nature, including this juvenile bald eagle that's part of a raptor program.

PHOTO BY MICHELLE MILFORD

BACK COVER:
As its showpiece and recreational center, Yellowstone Lake State Park in Lafayette County features a 455-acre manmade lake created 65 years ago. Fishing is a favorite pastime along with boating, hiking, camping and more.

DNR FILES

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Governor Tony Evers

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INVESTIGATE AND APPRECIATE THE **wonders on the outside**

DISCOVER THE BEST OF WISCONSIN ON A
NATURAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION FIELD TRIP.

Christine Tanzer

With DNR professionals and expert naturalists as your guides, join the Natural Resources Foundation on a field trip to get hands-on and learn in-depth about Wisconsin's lands, waters and wildlife. From frogs and fish to butterflies and birds, from bogs and barrens to prairies and old-growth forests — there are more than 230 field trips offered from April through November. Enjoy this unique opportunity to learn about ecological riches and natural wonders that span all corners of the state. Grab your hiking boots, bicycles and canoe paddles, and explore Wisconsin!

Check out these field trip highlights and see Page 9 for planning details, including map and color legend.

VIEW THE FULL LIST OF
234 FIELD TRIPS AND
REGISTER ONLINE AT
WISCONSERVATION.ORG.

>>> ABOUT THE NRF

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

- **CONTRIBUTED** more than \$7.25 million to public and private conservation efforts to protect the lands, waters and wildlife of Wisconsin;
- **DEVELOPED** an active membership of more than 5,000 families who are dedicated to Wisconsin's natural heritage and conservation;
- **WORKED** with private donors to create the Wisconsin Conservation Endowment, which includes more than \$7 million in assets that permanently conserve lands, protect wildlife and promote conservation;
- **COORDINATED** more than 2,600 field trips, where nearly 55,000 attendees have explored natural wonders in all counties of Wisconsin;
- **SUPPORTED** more than 653 grassroots conservation projects and 112 outdoor environmental education opportunities in every county of the state through grant-making efforts.

In addition, the NRF has joined in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources to grow the Cherish Wisconsin Outdoors Fund to nearly \$600,000. This endowment is dedicated to the care and management of public lands in Wisconsin and is funded through small donations made by hunters, anglers and campers when purchasing their annual licenses. Learn more or donate at CherishWisconsin.org.



1. MIGRATION MAGNIFICENCE AT TERRELL'S ISLAND

Behold spectacular views of thousands of migrating birds and learn about wetland ecology as we venture on a 4-mile hike around the breakwall of Terrell's Island on the southern shore of Lake Butte des Morts. Spy terns, egrets, herons, waterfowl, cormorants, pelicans and wildlife. Ages 8+

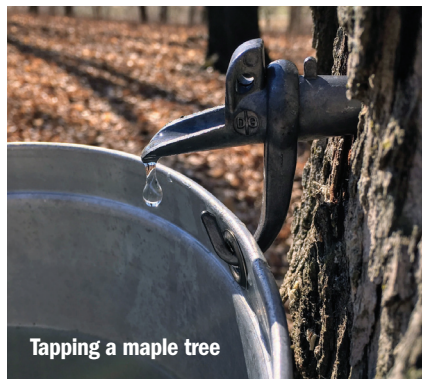
Saturday, April 13, 8-11 a.m.

Omro, Winnebago County

Leaders: Shannon Davis-Foust and

Anita Carpenter

Limit: 30 / \$15 adult, \$5 child



CHRIS TALL



3. MAKING MAPLE SYRUP

Learn all aspects of making maple syrup — from tree to bottle — including how to tap trees and cook sap into syrup. Enjoy a hayride through the sugarbush woods to view gravity flow and bucket collecting. Sample syrup, too! Ages 5+

Saturday, April 13, 10 a.m.-noon

De Pere, Brown County

Leaders: Theresa Baroun, Jon Baroun and Don Van Deurzen

Limit: 30 / \$15 adult, \$5 child

11. READING & WRITING THE EDGE OF NATURE

Explore new terrain in environmental literature by reading — and writing — stories that reimagine traditional approaches to nature writing. Read about 150 pages of select writings in advance, then gather to discuss readings, explore urban nature in Madison and put pens to paper. Enjoy guided writing exercises and discover fresh ways of experiencing and expressing your own connection to nature.

Saturday, April 27, 1-5 p.m.

Madison, Dane County

Leader: Lauren Koshere

Limit: 15 / \$23



15. CATCHING THE PEAK: MIGRATORY BIRD BANDING

The annual Neotropical migration of millions of birds is one of the world's most awe-inspiring phenomena. Marvel at birds up-close as we assist the capture and banding of many passerines that pass through the savannas, woodlands and prairies at the Waupaca Biological Field Station and Emmons Creek Barrens State Natural Area. Fundraiser for Bird Protection Fund. Ages 8+

Three session options, all times

6:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.:

15-A, Saturday, May 4

15-B, Saturday, May 11

15-C, Saturday, May 18

Waupaca, Waupaca County

Leader: Robert Welch

Limit: 25 / \$45 adult, \$35 child

18. BIRDS, PRAIRIES & PARTNERSHIPS: ADAM BIRDING CONSERVANCY

See yellow-headed blackbirds, various waterfowl species and more at this eBird hot-spot situated on 331 acres along the Bark River. Discover prairie restoration efforts as well as partnerships with universities in small mammal research, drone-based mapping, fen restoration and geofences to broadcast the conservation story. No bathrooms.

Saturday, May 4, 9 a.m.-noon

Cold Spring, Jefferson County

Leaders: David Adam and

Michael Adam

Limit: 25 / \$15

28. TRAIN RIDE & BIRDS: TIFFANY WILDLIFE AREA & LOWER CHIPPEWA RIVER

All aboard! Ride on an antique open-air train into the most remote areas of the Tiffany Wildlife Area. Enjoy stops with short hikes into floodplain forests, wetlands, savannas and prairies. We may see up to 75 bird species during peak migration. Fundraiser for conservation efforts along the Lower Chippewa River.

Saturday, May 11, 7 a.m.-noon

Durand, Buffalo County

Leaders: Dave Linderud,

Steve Betchkal and Anne Geraghty

Limit: 64 / \$40



30. TOUR HOO'S WOODS RAPTOR CENTER

Go behind the scenes at Hoo's Woods. Tour the facility, learn about raptor rehabilitation and meet educational birds such as a golden eagle, snowy owl, peregrine falcon and many other species of eagles, hawks, owls and falcons.

Weather permitting, witness a flight demonstration too! Ages 4+

Two session options, both times

10 a.m.-noon:

30-A, Saturday, May 11

30-B, Saturday, Sept. 28

Whitewater, Walworth County

Leader: Dianne Moller

Limit: 40 / \$25 adult, \$13 child

40. RUSHING WATERS TROUT FARM TOUR

Go behind the scenes of the nation's leading producer of all-natural, chemical-free rainbow trout. From hatch to harvest, see the process of raising a rainbow trout, learn how aquaculture helps feed the world, and then enjoy a smoked fish tasting.

Two session options, both times

10-11:30 a.m.:

40-A, Friday, May 17

40-B, Saturday, Sept. 7

Palmyra, Jefferson County

Leader: Peter Fritsch

Limit: 35 / \$30



NICK ANICH

53. KIRTLAND'S WARBLERS UP CLOSE

Chance to see one of Wisconsin's rarest birds! Explore the carefully protected pine barrens to learn about Kirtland's warbler life history and management initiatives. Look for barrens wildflowers, reptiles and other birds such as the clay-colored sparrow. With a bit of luck, see or hear the elusive and rare Kirtland's warbler. Fundraiser to support Kirtland's warbler conservation.

Wednesday, May 22, 6:45-10 a.m.

Rome, Adams County

Leaders: Amy and Rich Staffen,

Davin Lopez, Sarah Warner,

Barry Benson, Mark Pfost,

John Robaidek and Jens Jenson

Limit: 36 / \$45

57. MIGRATION AT WISCONSIN POINT

Wisconsin Point juts into Lake Superior and offers some of the richest concentra-

tions of birds found in Wisconsin. Look for a spectrum of waterbirds, boreal songbirds, shorebirds and raptors. From scenic woodlands to expansive shorelines and a seemingly endless Great Lakes horizon, the birding is a treat to behold! Fundraiser for Bird Protection Fund.

Tuesday, May 28, 6-11 a.m.

Superior, Douglas County

Leader: Erik Bruhnke

Limit: 20 / \$45

59. BIKING FOR BIRDS IN WHITE RIVER WILDLIFE AREA

Like biking and birding? Combine the two for double the fun! Pedal 13 miles through the White River Marsh on a Rustic Road that crosses lowland forest, shrub-carr, sedge meadow and cattail marsh. Enjoy many stops to spy bitterns, rails, cuckoos, flycatchers, wrens, and sandhill and whooping cranes. Fundraiser for Bird Protection Fund.

Saturday, June 1, 5 a.m.-noon

Berlin, Green Lake County

Leaders: Thomas and Wendy Schultz

Limit: 12 / \$35

74. FISH PASSAGE ALONG THE MILWAUKEE RIVER

Years of hard work have reconnected more than 130 miles of rivers and streams in the Milwaukee River Watershed, allowing native fish access to high-quality spawning habitat. Discover this important project on a historic river as we visit dam removals, habitat restoration projects and a fish passage with an underwater camera. Ages 10+

Friday, June 7, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Thiensville, Ozaukee County

Leaders: Matt Aho, Andrew Struck

and Kristina Kroening

Limit: 20 / \$15 adult, \$5 child

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

Enjoy a paddling journey through the scenic backwaters of the Mississippi River with two DNR biologists in the lead. Compile a bird list, search for mammals and learn about river habitat along the way. No bathrooms. Participants must bring their own canoe/kayak. Ages 10+

Friday, June 7, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

De Soto, Crawford County

Leaders: Brenda and Scott Kelly

Limit: 25 / \$15 adult, \$5 child

79. GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLERS

Spy the elusive golden-winged warbler and other birds of the state's Northern Dry-mesic Forest on this 3-mile hike. Learn about efforts to reestablish habitat in northern Wisconsin that benefits the declining populations of golden-winged warblers and other young forest nesting species. No bathrooms. Fundraiser for Bird Protection Fund.

Saturday, June 8, 7:30-10:30 a.m.

Lake Tomahawk, Oneida County

Leaders: Randee Smith, Callie

Bertsch, Carly Lapin and

Nancy Richmond

Limit: 30 / \$45

83. HORICON: PONTOON & HIKE

Birds and wildlife abound on this enjoyable naturalist-guided pontoon tour of the famed Horicon Marsh, home to more than 300 bird species. Venture on a boardwalk hike to enjoy more birding and a different perspective of the marsh. Ages 10+

Two sessions, both Saturday, June 8,

7:30 a.m.-noon:

83-A, Pontoon then hike

83-B, Hike then pontoon

Horicon, Dodge County

Leaders: Elizabeth Herzmann,

Jeff Bahls, Marc and

Gayl Zuelsdorf

Limit: 40 / \$34 adult, \$24 child

99. PICNIC POINT PANORAMA: A PENINSULA ADVENTURE

Picnic Point juts nearly a mile into Lake Mendota with spectacular views of the UW-Madison campus and the State Capitol. Hike 1.5 miles to explore diverse habitats, learn fascinating history of the area, and get hands-on with incredible plants, fungi, insects, worms, reptiles and amphibians. Family-friendly fun. Ages 5+

Saturday, June 22, 9:30 a.m.-noon

Madison, Dane County

Leaders: Michael Hillstrom and

Bernie Williams

Limit: 30 / \$15 adult, \$5 child

119. TOUR THE RAPTOR EDUCATION GROUP

View spectacular birds up-close during a behind-the-scenes look at the Raptor Education Group, one of Wisconsin's most important bird rehabilitation and research facilities. They take in all native injured avian species, but specialize in bald eagles and other raptors. Ages 8+



Banded eaglelet

DAN GOLTZ

Two session options, both Friday,
July 12:

119-A, 9-11 a.m.

119-B, 1-3 p.m.

Antigo, Langlade County

Leaders: Marge Gibson and

Hope Fisher

Limit: 20 / \$20 adult, \$10 child



121. CANOE THE UPPER WAUPACA CHAIN O' LAKES

Canoe through a chain of five connected lakes to learn about glacial features, Native American influences, animals and plant life. Paddle through bubbling springs, crystal blue lakes and the pristine Pope Lake State Natural Area. Participants must bring their own canoe/kayak. Ages 10+

Two session options, both
10 a.m.-2 p.m.:

121-A, Friday, July 12

121-B, Saturday, Aug. 17

Waupaca, Waupaca County

Leader: Sue Eiler

Limit: 25 / \$20 adult, \$10 child



124. TROUT STREAM HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

Trout streams in the northern Driftless Area are receiving extensive habitat improvements thanks to volunteers and groups partnering together. Join volunteers and scientists to visit several restored streams and discover the insect life, wild trout and native plants, birds and animals now thriving in this scenic



Milwaukee's Lakeshore State Park

DNR FILES



Paddling getaways are popular.

PATTY HENRY

landscape. Ages 8+

Saturday, July 13, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

River Falls, Pierce County

Leader: Perry Palin

Limit: 25 / \$25 adult, \$15 child



137. NATIVE BUTTERFLIES UP CLOSE

Get up close with native Wisconsin butterflies! See more than a dozen native butterfly species in the Beaver Creek butterfly house and caterpillar rearing lab. Learn about butterfly life cycles, migration, ecology and the garden plants that attract them. Ages 8+

Saturday, July 20, 9:30 a.m.-noon

Fall Creek, Eau Claire County

Leader: Jim Schwiebert

Limit: 20 / \$23 adult, \$13 child



140. MODERN LANDFILLS: CREATING RENEWABLE POWER & COMPOST

Learn how an innovative landfill is constructed and operated, and how the gas collected can be used to create renewable power. This facility also leads the way in commercial food waste collection, turning it into rich compost. Ages 10+

Saturday, July 20, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Eau Claire, Eau Claire County

Leader: Mark Vinall

Limit: 15 / \$15 adult, \$5 child

144. LAKESHORE STATE PARK: URBAN OASIS

Lakeshore is one of the newest and most urban of Wisconsin's state parks. Located on a peninsula in Lake Michigan in downtown Milwaukee, it sports spectacular views of both the city and lake.

Hike short-grass prairies to learn about ecology and marvel at the surprising diversity of wildlife, plants and birds that inhabit this beloved park.

Friday, July 26, 10 a.m.-noon

Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

Leader: Angela Vickio

Limit: 25 / \$15



164. EXPLORING NORTH AMERICA'S WILD WATERFOWL

Enjoy a tour of Flyways Waterfowl Experience museum, where you'll see world-class waterfowl dioramas, waterfowl art, interactive exhibits and U.S. conservation history displays. Then visit the Fairfield Marsh Waterfowl Production Area to watch birds and learn about current habitat management efforts. Ages 6+

Friday, Aug. 9, 9-11:30 a.m.

Baraboo, Sauk County

Leaders: Nichol Swenson,

Craig Swenson and Bruce Luebke

Limit: 20 / \$20 adult, \$10 child



166. TREASURES OF THE CHIPPEWA RIVER: NATIVE MUSSELS

Wade in the cool waters of the Chippewa River to search for one of our state's most diverse yet hidden treasures: freshwater mussels (clams). Learn about our 52 native species, their fascinating life cycle and amazing contributions to the history of Wisconsin. Great fun for kids and adults! Ages 5+

Saturday, Aug. 10, 9 a.m.-noon

Meridean, Dunn County

Leaders: Lisie Kitchel and

Jesse Weinzing

Limit: 25 / \$15 adult, \$5 child

174. HORICON MARSH SUNSET CRUISE

Enjoy a hike through beloved Horicon Marsh to learn about ecology and discover wildlife. Then board pontoon boats for an enchanting sunset cruise in search of birds and autumnal delights. Fundraiser for NRF.

Friday, Aug. 16, 3:30-8 p.m.

Horicon, Dodge County

Leaders: Elizabeth

Herzmann, Jeff Bahls,

Marc and Gayl Zuelsdorf

Limit: 40 / \$50



179. OUTDOOR SURVIVAL

You never know what Mother Nature will throw your way — learn basic survival and outdoor skills to build your confidence for any outdoor excursion. A great hands-on experience for learning how to start a fire, construct a debris shelter and build situational awareness. Ages 7+

Saturday, Aug. 17, 10 a.m.-noon
Monona, Dane County
Leader: Virginia Wiggen
Limit: 30 / \$22 adult, \$12 child

180. EARLY EARTH GEOLOGY: CONTINENTAL COLLISION IN FLORENCE COUNTY

Discover some of the very oldest rock in North America! The Niagara Fault formed 2 billion years ago when the Marshfield and Superior Plates collided. Learn about the fascinating geology of this area and enjoy a bus trip to several sites to hike along the scenic gorges with plunging waterfalls. Fundraiser for NRF.

Two session options, both
10 a.m.-6 p.m.:
180-A, Saturday, Aug. 17
180-B, Saturday, Sept. 14
Florence, Florence County
Leaders: John Roberts and
Wendy Gehlhoff
Limit: 20 / \$35



187. LAKE STURGEON REINTRODUCTION PROJECT

Lake sturgeon can live for 50-plus years and grow to 9 feet long! Once common in the Great Lakes, they were absent from the Milwaukee River for more than a century — until recently. Learn about sturgeon biology, tour a rearing facility and see the river from the standpoint of this ancient fish. Ages 8+

Two session options, both
Saturday, Aug. 24:
187-A, 9 a.m.-noon
187-B, 1-4 p.m.
Newburg, Ozaukee County
Leader: Mary Holleback
Limit: 20 / \$20 adult, \$10 child

191. SOILS, TREES & HISTORY OF THE CHEQUAMEGON

The composition of Wisconsin's Northwoods is the result of a long history of geologic forces, soil development and land-use changes. Hike and learn about the connections between the natural history and human history that have

shaped the forests and the ongoing need for balancing resource use and land conservation. Fundraiser for Bayfield Regional Conservancy Fund.

Sunday, Aug. 25, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Ashland, Ashland County
Leaders: Tom Fitz, Michelle
Copley and Jon Martin
Limit: 25 / \$50

202. A NIGHT OUT WITH CHIMNEY SWIFTS

Witness the amazing spectacle of several thousand chimney swifts coming to roost together! During late-summer evenings, these birds form large tornado-like flocks above chimneys and then simultaneously funnel down into the opening. See it with your own eyes and learn more about these aerial insectivores and how you can help conserve them. No bathrooms. Fundraiser for Bird Protection Fund.

Friday, Sept. 13, 6-8:30 p.m.
Okauchee Lake, Waukesha County
Leaders: Spencer Stehno,
Mary Cullen and Meredith Cullen
Limit: 40 / \$35

203. TRAIN RIDE & BLUFF PRAIRIE HIKE: TIFFANY WILDLIFE AREA

A full day of fun! Enjoy a morning walk in the Five-Mile Bluff Prairie State Natural Area for amazing views of the Chippewa and Mississippi rivers as we learn about glacial geology, goat prairie management and timber rattlesnakes. Then off to the tracks for an open-air train ride into the remote areas of the Tiffany Wildlife Area, stopping for short hikes into prairies, savannas and floodplain forests. Enjoy one of the most ecologically and historically unique areas of the state! Fundraiser for Lower Chippewa River conservation.

Saturday, Sept. 14, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Durand, Buffalo County
Leaders: Mark Rasmussen and
Dean Edlin
Limit: 64 / \$48

204. SMALL PRAIRIE RESTORATION, THE EASY WAY!

Join a landowner to learn how you, too, can start and maintain a small prairie. Hike the 7-acre upland and lowland prairie to see 90 native plant species. Learn how to attract kestrels, monarch butterflies, mason bees, snakes and frogs to your property.

Saturday, Sept. 14, 10 a.m.-noon

Waupun, Fond du Lac County
Leaders: Darrel, Jerry and
Ruthann Gunderson
Limit: 30 / \$15

214. WIND ENERGY 101: BLUE SKY GREEN FIELD WIND ENERGY CENTER

Discover how wind turbines are constructed and operated, and see what one looks like inside. Learn about research conducted to minimize fatalities of birds and bats while maximizing the generation of green energy.

Two session options, both
Friday, Sept. 27:

214-A, 9 a.m.-noon
214-B, 1-4 p.m.

Johnsburg, Fond du Lac County
Leaders: Devan Zammuto,
Susan Schumacher and
Steve Schueller
Limit: 30 / \$15

219. WISCONSIN'S GEOLOGIC PAST & FUTURE

Join the state geologist on a tour of the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey's vast collection of rock cores and learn what they tell us about Wisconsin's ancient history. From mountain ranges and volcanoes to tropical seas and giant glaciers, see the connection between our ancient rocks and the future of our water resources.

Saturday, Oct. 5, 1-4 p.m.
Mount Horeb, Dane County
Leaders: Carol McCartney,
Ken Bradbury and Carsyn Ames
Limit: 30 / \$15



223. SAW-WHET & LONG-EARED OWL BANDING

Have your own close encounter with Wisconsin's smallest owl! Experience how the experts mist-net and band these adorable birds at Linwood Springs Research Station, which bands up to 700 migrating owls annually. Chance to see long-eared owls, too. Ages 7+

Six session options, all 7:30-10 p.m.

223-A, Saturday, Oct. 5

223-B, Friday, Oct. 11

223-C, Friday, Oct. 18

223-D, Saturday, Oct. 19

223-E, Wednesday, Oct. 23

223-F, Saturday, Oct. 26

Stevens Point, Portage County
Leaders: Gene and Lorraine Jacobs
Limit: 40 / \$35 adult, \$25 child

THE COLOR OF THE TRIP TITLE INDICATES ITS PHYSICAL DEMAND:

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



PLANNING IS EASY AS 1, 2, 3

1 PICK YOUR FIELD TRIPS.

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

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

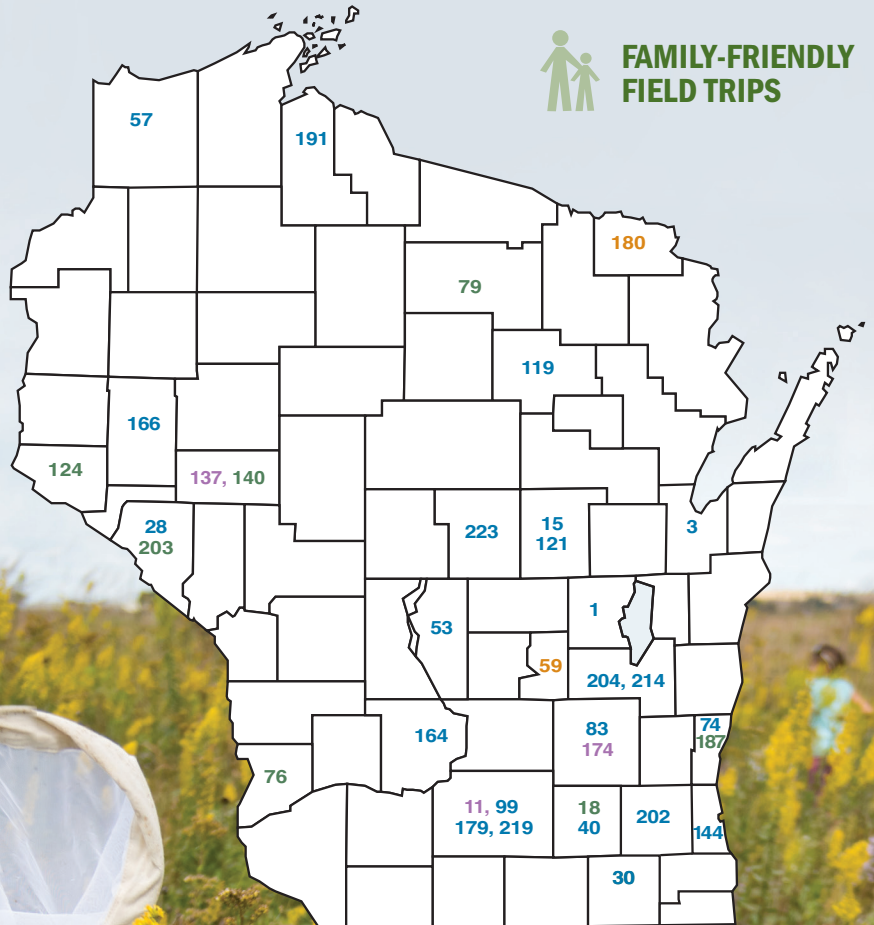
Field trips are only open to members of the NRF and their guests. Easily become a member online at WisConservation.org with a \$25 tax-deductible donation. Your membership donation supports conservation projects across the state. (Note: Receiving or subscribing to this magazine does not mean you are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

3 REGISTER FOR YOUR TRIPS AT WISCONSERVATION.ORG STARTING AT NOON, MARCH 27.

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



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Happy birthday, Smokey Bear

FIRE PREVENTION ICON MARKS 75 YEARS.

DNR FILE PHOTOS

Smokey Bear is a popular figure in public appearances at such places as Peninsula State Park, left, and today's costume is a far cry from the original suit, created in Mercer. That costume is now housed at the DNR Ranger Station in Mercer with a nameplate that reads: "NATION'S FIRST SMOKEY BEAR COSTUME CONSTRUCTED BY FRANK BRUNNER JR., MERCER, WI. 1950."



Catherine Koele

Not many people have the opportunity to say, "Today, I'm going to be Smokey Bear." As the wildfire prevention specialist for the state of Wisconsin, well, sometimes I do!

My job has many facets, from administering burning permits to creating outreach materials to handling media relations during fire season. But the one thing that always makes me smile is when I get to work with Smokey Bear. On occasion, I even get to jump inside the Smokey Bear costume for special events.

As he celebrates his 75th birthday this year, it's clear Smokey Bear has stood the test of time. He's a true American icon. And let me tell you, not only do the kids love him, but the grownups do, too.

Many of us remember Smokey from our childhoods. We'd see him in parades, on posters, in magazines or occasionally in TV commercials. If we were lucky enough, maybe he'd stop by the classroom and teach us about never playing with matches, making sure the campfire was out and not throwing cigarette butts in the woods — which I thought was funny because I was about 8 years



COURTESY OF CATHERINE KOELE

As a youngster, DNR forester and story author Catherine Koele already was a fan of Smokey Bear — and had the T-shirt to prove it.

old at the time and didn't smoke.

I always liked Smokey. I'm not sure why, but he must have made a rather big impression on me. As I got older and saw my dad put on a suit and tie for work every day, I knew that life wasn't for me. I wanted to work in natural resources and ended up in fire.

Let's be clear, I'm not out there digging lines, blasting water and chasing smoke like some of my brave colleagues. My job is a little more desk-oriented and I mostly opt for sneakers instead of fire boots on a daily basis. But being a part of the wildland fire community, in any capacity, could not be more exciting and rewarding.

That includes those occasional times when I get to be Smokey. What an experience!

First of all, once you get into that costume, you can't see your feet. Your

vision includes a swath of about 45 degrees out of two very small and slightly obstructed holes for eyes. Not to mention the suit is hot — very hot! There's nothing worse than getting inside that suit during a Fourth of July parade with not even a hint of a breeze outside.

Playing Smokey is a rite of passage for many of our DNR foresters. The greenhorns are usually the ones in the suit at those events. But the best side to being Smokey Bear for the day is the reaction you get from the public — an endless number of "bear" hugs and high fives from people of all ages.

Story of Smokey

As far as recognition goes, Smokey Bear ranks right up there behind Santa Claus and Mickey Mouse. The Smokey Bear wildfire prevention campaign is the longest-running public service campaign in U.S. history. Since 1944, Smokey Bear has taught millions of us about our role in preventing wildfires. Seventy-five years later, in August this year, Smokey will celebrate his milestone birthday.

It all started back in 1942 during World War II. Shells from a Japanese submarine exploded close to the Los Padres National Forest in southern California. Forestry officials were afraid future attacks might start widespread forest fires.

Protecting national forests became a matter of high importance because firefighters and able-bodied men were overseas fighting the war. To promote fire

prevention awareness, the U.S. Forest Service organized the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention campaign with the help of the Wartime Advertising Council and the Association of State Foresters.

On Aug. 9, 1944, a bear was picked as the image to represent the campaign and the character eventually was named Smokey after a New York City Fire Department hero, “Smokey” Joe Martin. Illustrator Albert Staehle drew the first Smokey Bear. Posters and various prevention materials were sent around the country promoting fire prevention with Smokey as the new mascot.

The campaign’s original catch phrase was “Smokey Says, Care Will Prevent 9 Out of 10 Forest Fires.” In 1947, it was changed to “Remember, Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires.”

Wisconsin's place in history

The image of Smokey Bear has evolved over the years. During the spring of 1950 in the Lincoln National Forest of New Mexico, a wildfire was started by someone who was careless with a match, cigarette or campfire. A young bear cub found himself caught in the burning fire. He took refuge in a tree and though he managed to stay alive, his paws and hind legs were badly burned.

Warden Ray Bell, one of the firefighters who retrieved the bear cub, was so moved by the little bear’s bravery that he named him Hotfoot Teddy. Soon after, the cub was renamed Smokey after the national campaign. He became the living symbol of Smokey Bear, residing at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., until his death in 1976.

Other images of Smokey include those depicted by longtime U.S. Forest Service artist Rudy Wendelin, with some of the most memorable drawn during the 1980s. Beautifully painted landscapes accompany a more human-like Smokey, with kind expressions and pleading words asking the public to protect our forests. Over the years, versions of Smokey have included a cartoon-rapping bear and a computer-generated Smokey that resembled something from a “Planet of the Apes” movie.

The Wisconsin DNR has some unique history with Smokey Bear. In 1950, the Firemen’s Convention Parade in Hurley, a town just north of Mercer, debuted a life-sized Smokey Bear statue mounted to a float decorated to look just like a 1948 Smokey poster with the quote: “... and please make people careful, amen.” Wisconsin Conservation Department



A Smokey Bear costume circa 1958 is shown below. At left is a painted image of Smokey Bear created in 1990 by Rudy Wendelin, a longtime artist for the U.S. Forest Service.



employees in Mercer loved seeing the amazement from children, which gave them the idea to create the very first Smokey Bear costume.

Back then, the suits were made from real bear hides. Now they’ve evolved to synthetic fur with battery-operated fans that circulate air in the ranger hat and

ice-filled “cool packs” for the body. These days, the DNR manages more than 40 Smokey Bear costumes across the landscape, with still more owned and used by fire departments, the U.S. Forest Service and

>>> A PARTNERSHIP WORTH CELEBRATING

Throughout Smokey Bear’s 75th birthday year, Smokey himself will be giving back to local communities by celebrating somebody else’s birthday! The Department of Natural Resources is partnering with the nonprofit organization Box of Balloons to support fire prevention and the mission to make a child’s birthday happy, celebrated and memorable.

Box of Balloons, with 12 chapters across the state, provides birthday boxes to children below poverty level. This year, Box of Balloons will highlight outdoor recreation with Smokey-themed birthday boxes including party favors, biodegradable balloons, coloring book, stuffed Smokey doll and more. The best part is, each birthday celebration will include a surprise visit by Smokey Bear — played by DNR forestry staff — who also will provide fire prevention activities.

This unique partnership will assist both organizations in expanding into rural communities, targeting fire-prone areas of the state in hopes of getting Smokey’s message to children while also helping them feel special and celebrated on their birthday.

Requests for birthday boxes are identified by social workers, community leaders and organizers. To learn more about the Box of Balloons’ mission or support these efforts, visit boxofballoons.org.

— Catherine Koele



At 75, Smokey Bear still delivers — whether it’s high-fives during an Arbor Day celebration at the State Capitol, celebratory cupcakes or an important message of fire safety.



other partners of the agency. Smokey is a popular figure in public appearances statewide.

Smokey has had great success educating the public about preventing fires — the vast, sweeping wildfires of 150 years ago have been significantly decreased. Yes, we still have much devastation as a result of uncontrolled fires, but the challenges today are more related to homes and communities built adjacent to the wildland-urban interface, where structures meet untreated wildlands.

Fine-tuning Smokey's message


Some may feel Smokey has had almost too much success. The message that all fires are bad can actually be a detriment at times because it fails to help educate the public about such forestry tools as prescribed burning.

The use of fire under specified conditions is a good thing, and we use this tool right here in Wisconsin. With proper timing, prescribed burning can control many undesirable woody plants and herbaceous weeds, while stimulating desirable plants, improving wildlife habitat and reducing the potential of damaging wildfires.

In 2001, Smokey changed his slogan from “Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires” to “Only You Can Prevent Wildfires.” This helps to differentiate between “good” and “bad” types of fires. The use of the phrase “wildfires” instead of “forest fires” has been growing.

I routinely use Smokey's image to promote a positive image of the DNR and instill the idea of personal responsibility when using fire. One of the easiest ways to prevent a wildfire is to get a burning permit — nearly a third of all wildfires in Wisconsin are caused by people burning debris.

Sharing Smokey's message, considering alternatives to burning or simply encouraging friends and family to be more careful with fire can make a difference. Doing your part will help to ensure Wisconsin's most treasured landscapes — and the people and wildlife who call them home — are safe from devastating, unplanned and unwanted fires.

There is so much we can learn from Smokey Bear's past, and his image and message undoubtedly will evolve again along with our culture and the environment. In the end, we can be assured Smokey has the best of intentions to keep us safe from harm. Cheers to another 75 years, Smokey Bear! 

Catherine Koele has been the DNR's wildfire prevention specialist for nearly 18 years. She lives with her husband and two children in Minocqua.



FISHING ADVENTURES
TAKE NEW TURN
WHEN CHANGE
COMES TO FAVORITE
CHILDHOOD
WATERWAY.

Prairie River flows

Jim Servi

Trout bring out the passion in anglers like few other fish species. For many, trout fishing also is a family affair. It gets in the blood. The river becomes more than just a body of water — it becomes a sacred place full of memories.

Just as life changes through the years, however, the river of my youth also has changed. That's the Prairie River, which runs about 40 miles from its headwaters at Horseshoe Lake in Langlade County to where it drains into the Wisconsin River at Merrill, in Lincoln County. Unlike when I fished it as a kid, the Prairie River now flows free.

Two prominent dams, the Prairie Dells Dam and Ward Dam, were landmarks on the river in my youth. Built to support the Wisconsin logging boom of the late 1800s, both were rebuilt in 1905 in hopes of generating electricity.

During the 1990s, the dams simply became too expensive to maintain. With the nationwide trend of removing dams and restoring flow to cold-water rivers, both were removed.

The Prairie Dells Dam went first. It was never actually used for electricity — an engineering error during reconstruction meant its turbines literally couldn't create enough power. The turbines eventually were removed but the dam stayed for eight more decades, supporting a 2-mile pond. Lincoln County invested substantial resources to find a way to save the dam, but it was ultimately blasted in 1991.

The Ward Dam removal came several years later, and not without challenges. The drawdown of the 118-acre lake above the dam began on Labor Day weekend in 1999. Several lawsuits attempted to stop the process, but by mid-November the dam was gone and the Prairie River flowed free for the first time in more than 100 years.

Eager to explore

Only a few short years after the removal of the Prairie Dells Dam, research showed a 30-fold increase in natural brook trout reproduction. The Prairie Dells Scenic Area, northeast of Merrill on Highway 17, continues to be a popular destination.

This is where my brother Jeff and I began a memorable journey on the opening morning of fishing season in 2016. We knew the river well but had never seen it like this. Starting at the base of the old Prairie Dells Dam, where remnants are still visible, our opening-day plan was to kayak back to the location of the former Ward Dam, fishing the entire way.

Our target, naturally, was trout — brookies and browns — but more so we were after adventure. In our youth, we had fished different stretches of the



COURTESY OF ROBIN L. COMEAU



After removal of the historic Prairie Dells Dam, far left, paddlers and anglers have clear access to the Prairie River. At left, Scott and Christy Vachavake prepare to cook fresh trout on the riverbank. Below, Jeff Servi paddles at sunrise near the remnants of the dam. And at bottom left, Kevin Staus shows off his trophy brown trout.

free



JIM SERVI



JIM SERVI

river but had never explored too far. Our curiosity for the unknown always left us wondering what was upstream and down.

As adults, we decided to put the wondering to rest. This was our chance to see the river differently, and we weren't disappointed.

Like many good fishing adventures, it started well before dawn. There's something magical about watching the sunrise over your favorite body of water. The day was perfect. Warblers fluttered on the bank, eagles soared overhead and even a mink showed its face with a minnow dangling from its mouth.

By noon, everything was going according to plan. We had enough trout for a meal, although a new Wisconsin record would have to wait. The Prairie River is home to the state record brook

trout, caught in 1944, at 9 pounds, 15 ounces. Our brookies were nothing huge but perfect for eating.

We stopped for lunch on the bank at one of our favorite childhood fishing holes. While I cleaned the fish, Jeff cast a line. Within seconds, that familiar twitch of the rod told us we had another trout. We added it to the grill and thoroughly enjoyed our catch before continuing our journey.

The expedition ended that evening at Prairie Trails, the park created following the Ward Dam removal. After the dam was gone, a sea of green ensued with wild grasses and sedges combined with planted rye, trees and shrubs. International Papers donated the land to the city of Merrill and another park was added to the list that has earned Merrill its well-known designation as "City of Parks."


New tradition takes root

Although Jeff and I didn't catch any trophies on that outing, we found some hidden holes to fish another day. For a moment, our wondering about what was around the next bend was finally

put to rest. Reminiscing, one fishing hole at a time, about our childhood adventures as we floated downstream added yet another memory.

We were so captivated by the journey on these now free-flowing waters that we started a new tradition of floating the Prairie River each year at the opening of fishing season. And each year that tradition has grown.

In 2017, our friend Kevin Staus joined us and not only caught his first legal brown trout, but then proceeded to catch his first trophy brown only hours later. In 2018, we had a procession of six kayaks floating downriver as my brother Scott and sister Christy joined us, along with our friend Shane.

The fishing was slow, but the adventure was not as two of our kayakers made an unplanned plunge into the chilly water. All's well that ends well, though, as we enjoyed a delicious meal of trout on the river bank once more — and added another unforgettable day on the Prairie River. 

Jim Servi is a freelance writer from Hamburg, in Marathon County, who spends every opportunity he can in the great outdoors with his family and friends.

A first-rate record of PARTICIPATION

CELEBRATE THE STATE'S SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEERISM AS THE WISCONSIN CITIZEN-BASED MONITORING NETWORK TURNS 15.



Eva Lewandowski

In 1900, what eventually would become the National Audubon Society proposed a new twist on a classic holiday tradition. Rather than competing to harvest as many birds as possible on Christmas Day, a popular 1800s pastime, people instead were encouraged to count the birds they saw. With that notion, the Christmas Bird Count, one of the longest-running citizen science projects in the country, was created!

Here in Wisconsin, one intrepid soul in North Freedom participated in that very first count, reporting 12 bird species including northern bobwhite, hairy woodpecker and brown creeper. The 1900 count is one

of the earliest examples of Wisconsin's long and proud involvement in citizen-based monitoring.

This type of monitoring is a subset of citizen science, which is when members

of the public volunteer to participate in scientific research and monitoring. Citizen-based monitoring deals specifically with the long-term monitoring of plants, animals and ecosystems.

From the humble beginnings of a single Christmas Bird Count participant in 1900, Wisconsin citizen-based monitoring has expanded beyond what anyone could have imagined back then. Over a century of dedication from volunteers, professional scientists, agency staff and others eventually led to the 2004 creation of the Wisconsin Citizen-based Monitoring Network to support such efforts. The WCBM Network makes Wisconsin relatively unique in offering such a widespread, solid infrastructure to support volunteer monitoring of our natural resources.

In 2019, the WCBM Network is celebrating 15 years of successes that include eight statewide conferences, an ever-growing collaboration of over 190 monitoring projects and groups, and more than \$1.2 million in support of citizen-based monitoring efforts. In honor of its 15th anniversary, the WCBM Network is commemorating not just the last 15 years, but the entire history of citizen-based monitoring in the state.

Research takes off

After the initial Christmas Bird Count in 1900, the count was somewhat slow to catch on and suffered from particularly low participation during both World War I and II. However, by 1950 volunteers were participating at 17 different Wisconsin lo-

Hawthorn Hollow Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum introduces students to stream monitoring through the Kenosha WATERshed Program.

cations. That number ballooned to 96 in 2010 and a staggering 111 in 2017, with multiple volunteers at most locations.

By the mid-20th century, when the Christmas Bird Count was beginning to take off, monarch fever arrived in Wisconsin. Volunteers tagged butterflies and mailed reports of the annual monarch migration to Fred Urquhart, a leading monarch scientist, who partnered with volunteers to discover where monarchs went when they flew south each winter. Some of those reports were included in Urquhart's 1960 book, "The Monarch Butterfly" (University of Toronto Press).

In 1958, L.L. Griewisch of Green Bay reported "a very poor year," and Mrs. K.W. Ruge of Jefferson wrote, "I perceived but an approximate dozen Monarchs all summer. ... I didn't see the first one till about August." In other years, though, monarchs were present in spectacular numbers. Ralph Washichek of Wauwatosa reported seeing 2,000 monarchs flying south over Milwaukee's airport, Mitchell Field, one September.

In the 1950s, it was clear monarchs made a long journey each year. A 1955 monarch tagged in Milwaukee was found just three days later in Texas, more than 800 miles away! We now know monarchs travel all the way to Mexico each fall, but that wasn't confirmed until 1976.

As the 20th century progressed, more and more citizen-based monitoring projects emerged. Wisconsinites participated in the inaugural North American Breed-

ing Bird Survey in 1966, and the Annual Midwest Crane Count was created and launched in Wisconsin in 1976.

After that, Wisconsin-specific projects began to emerge, with LoonWatch (1978), the Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey (1981), and the Citizen Lake Monitoring Network (1986) among some of the most prominent and successful. The final decade of the century saw volunteers joining the Volunteer Carnivore Tracking Program (1995), the first Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas (1995), Water Action Volunteers stream monitoring (1996), and the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project (1996).

Many of the citizen-based monitoring projects in the state were created by the Department of Natural Resources or by joint DNR/UW-Extension efforts. A few, such as LoonWatch and the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project, were coordinated by universities, and a handful, like the Christmas Bird Count, by nonprofit organizations.

Finding a home for monitoring projects

While the creation and management of these citizen-based monitoring projects was occurring at the state or national level, there was a clear need for local coordination of recruitment, training and scheduling of volunteers. Wisconsin's nature centers became an essential part of the citizen-based monitoring community by providing local homes to many projects.

Riveredge Nature Center in Ozaukee County was one of the first nature centers to participate in volunteer monitoring when it joined the Christmas Bird Count in 1969. In the 1990s, the Urban Ecology Center in Milwaukee emerged as a citizen-based monitoring powerhouse, and in 1999 North Lakeland Discovery Center in Vilas County followed suit, coordinating volunteer efforts of birds, rare mammals, lake levels and more. Outagamie County's

Mosquito Hill Nature Center also became involved by coordinating volunteer monitoring of monarch butterflies, birds and, of course, mosquitoes!

In 2003, Beaver Creek Reserve in Eau Claire County doubled down on its investment in citizen-based monitoring programming and broke ground on its Citizen Science Center, an entire facility devoted to involving the local community in authentic scientific research and monitoring.

The explosive growth in citizen-based monitoring and its clear utility for research, conservation management, regulation and education led DNR staff to explore ways to link together the many organizations and individuals involved in citizen-based monitoring. Partnering with organizations such as UW-Extension, Wisconsin Wetlands Association, Beaver Creek Reserve and more, they organized and held the first Wisconsin Citizen-based Monitoring Conference in 2004, which was attended by over 120 people.

One of the major takeaways from the conference was the need for a statewide infrastructure to facilitate networking opportunities, the sharing of resources, funding and communication within Wisconsin's growing citizen-based monitoring community. Attendees decided the next step should be to form a statewide group — and the WCBM Network was born!

Opportunities on the rise

The WCBM Network's mission is to improve the effectiveness of volunteer efforts that monitor our plants, animals, waters and habitats. It supports these efforts by offering resources for volunteers, project staff, researchers, land managers and other members of the citizen-based monitoring community. The network's website (wiatri.net/cbm) offers a searchable directory of monitoring projects and groups, an event calendar and resources for starting



HANTHORN HOLLOW

a citizen-based monitoring project, selecting monitoring protocols and even finding equipment and funding.

One of the most popular resources continues to be WCBM Network conferences, the eighth of which was held in 2018. The conferences offer an opportunity for anyone involved in citizen-based monitoring to share their work, learn from others, network and attend training.

These opportunities encourage increased partnership and participation within the WCBM Network. One participant who attended training for the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project wrote, "I attended the butterfly workshop, enjoyed and understood the presentation, walked out with the equipment I needed, and I'm ready to do my citizen science!"

As interest grows statewide, new projects emerge

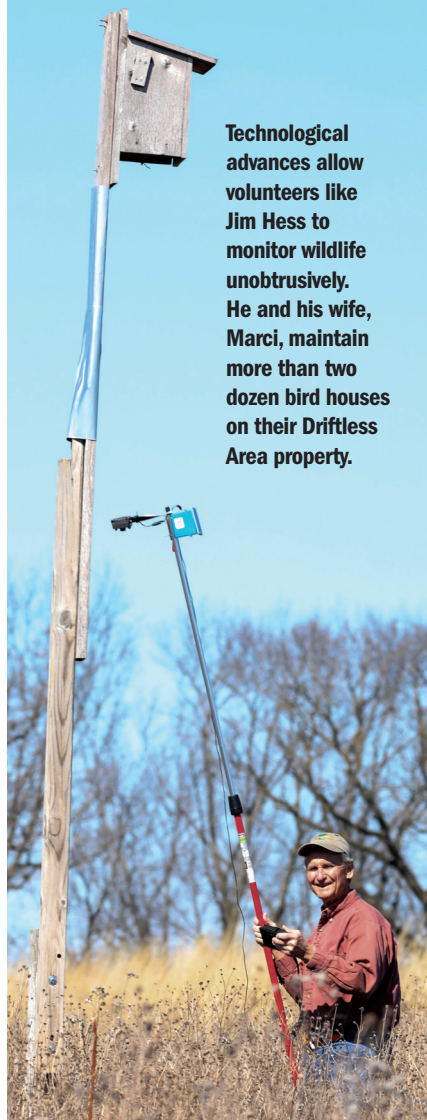
In the 15 years since it formed, the WCBM Network has steadily expanded its offerings of resources and programming. At the same time, many exciting new projects have emerged. Since 2004, DNR has increased its collection of statewide monitoring projects, partnering with volunteers to monitor native mussels, bats, turtles, rare plants and more.

"I am amazed at the growth in interest in citizen-based monitoring since this program was initiated 15 years ago," says Nancy Turyk, who was involved in the initial formation of the WCBM Network and is a member of its advisory council. "Not only are more people involved in collecting data, they are collecting data on a broader range of species and habitats."

Advances in technology have allowed new types of DNR projects to emerge. In 2016, Snapshot Wisconsin launched, creating a statewide network of trail cameras with wildlife images that can be viewed and identified online by people across the world. Jennifer Stenglein, a DNR research scientist, says the project already has collected a staggering 25 million photos, which are being put to good use.

"A primary goal of Snapshot Wisconsin is to improve efficiency in wildlife monitoring and we are beginning to see Snapshot Wisconsin's important role in wildlife decision support," Stenglein says.

In 2018, DNR began a different type of photography project when it created the Bumble Bee Brigade, in which volunteers use digital photography to monitor the state's native bumble bees. All photos and observation data are submitted online, where they can be easily accessed by project coordinators and will eventually be



Technological advances allow volunteers like Jim Hess to monitor wildlife unobtrusively. He and his wife, Marci, maintain more than two dozen bird houses on their Driftless Area property.

MARCI HESS

available to the public.

UW-Extension also has increased its involvement in citizen-based monitoring. 2013 saw the creation of the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program, which trains and supports volunteers who engage in environmental education, stewardship and citizen science. A year later, the Wisconsin First Detector Network was formed, empowering volunteers to monitor and manage invasive species.

Data collection makes a difference

Over the years, the contributions of volunteers to citizen-based monitoring efforts have been significant. Monitoring data are routinely used in scientific research and publication, such as when Monarch Larva Monitoring Project observations were used to estimate the number of milkweed plants needed to produce a single migratory monarch butterfly (29) or when observations from the website eBird were used to investigate aggressive behaviors between crows and ravens.

Citizen-based monitoring data also contribute to decisions to award federal protection to species under the Endangered

Species Act. This was the case with the rusty patched bumble bee, some of the last remaining populations of which can be found right here in Wisconsin.

Reports from volunteers also can lead to on-the-ground conservation action, such as when Rare Plant Monitoring Program volunteers notified DNR staff of rare orchids being threatened by encroaching woody plants. DNR staff responded by conducting a prescribed burn to improve habitat.

Participating in citizen-based monitoring can have a profound effect on the volunteers as well. In addition to being immersed in nature and learning new science and natural history skills, many find it a great way to socialize.

Barbara Duerksen, a long-time birder who received an award for Outstanding Achievement in Citizen-based Monitoring from the WCBM Network, enjoys spending time with other birders. "I enjoy talking with people about birds," she said. "It's fun to hear the volunteers' reports after they come in from the early morning sandhill crane count — they are so excited about what they saw in the marsh."

Volunteers often meet new people or connect with friends and family members while monitoring. It's not uncommon to find young people volunteering alongside their parents and grandparents or to meet spouses who volunteer together.

Some volunteers have even been known to woo potential partners on a romantic nighttime survey. One dedicated Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey volunteer invited someone out to monitor frog calls as a first date — and ended up marrying her!

We can't guarantee that all volunteers will find romance during citizen-based monitoring, but it is a wonderful way to connect with nature, fellow volunteers and your community.



Eva Lewandowski is a DNR conservation biologist in the Natural Heritage Conservation Program. She coordinates the Wisconsin Citizen-based Monitoring Network and co-leads the new Wisconsin Bumble Bee Brigade.

>>> GET INVOLVED

Help celebrate the Wisconsin Citizen-based Monitoring Network's 15th anniversary by making 2019 the most successful year to date! Pledge to volunteer your time with citizen-based monitoring and contribute to the understanding and protection of our plants, animals and ecosystems. In this 15th anniversary year, volunteers also can share monitoring memories on social media with the hashtag #WCBMat15. Learn more and find ways to help at wiatri.net/cbm.

MAKE A PLACE FOR MONARCHS



EMPHASIS ON HABITAT CAN HELP SAVE THESE BUTTERFLIES, ONE MILKWEED STEM AT A TIME.

Lisa Gaumnitz

Third-generation farmer Larry Alsum planted milkweed and wildflowers on “dry corners” of the family’s irrigated potato farm near Spring Green and takes pride in the monarchs and rare butterflies, bees and birds using that habitat.



Xcel Energy planted milkweed and native wildflowers on 7 acres of land beneath transmission lines running through Camp Decorah north of La Crosse.

And Julie and Al Hillery tend more than 200 milkweed plants on their Boulder Junction-area property, collect milkweed seeds for a seed distribution program, and convinced their local highway department to change its mowing schedule to avoid milkweed while monarch caterpillars are munching away.

They’re among the growing number of Wisconsin people, businesses and organizations planting and protecting habitat to save monarchs. Monarch caterpillars eat only milkweed, and widespread loss of habitat



AL HILLERY

with milkweed and the nectar plants adult monarchs depend on has caused monarch populations east of the Mississippi River to plunge more than 80 percent in the last two decades. (The smaller western monarch population has dropped even more precipitously, including an 86 percent decline just in the last year.)

“After we heard about the crash in populations in Mexico, that kind of sent up all kinds of flares for us,” says Julie Hillery. “We read an egg has a 1 percent chance of surviving to adulthood and we thought maybe we could make a difference. It felt like, we’ve got to do something!”

Wisconsin is in the core breeding ground for the eastern migratory population of monarchs. The state’s milkweed feeds and produces several generations of the iconic black and orange beauties each spring and summer before a final wave gorges itself on wildflower nectar and embarks on a 1,700-mile journey to central Mexico.

These long-distance fliers, the weight of a paper clip, spend their winter resting in fir trees in the mountains before migrating north. They get as far as Texas before laying eggs and dying. Their offspring take up the journey, and it is mostly this generation of butterflies that reaches Wisconsin in the spring and lays their eggs, beginning the cycle again.

Finding ways to increase habitat for monarchs — around utility lines and in “dry corners” of farm fields, for example — can help to stop recent precipitous declines in population.



XCEL ENERGY



AL HILLERY

Julie Hillery of Boulder Junction has become an advocate for monarchs, emphasizing the need to increase milkweed stems to support the species. Each fall, she collects milkweed pods to harvest the seeds so others can add more of the plants that nourish monarch caterpillars and adults alike.

'We'll need all hands on deck'

The good news for monarchs is 70 groups and individuals formed the Wisconsin Monarch Collaborative in 2018 to catalyze voluntary monarch habitat planting on a massive scale. Participants include representatives from the Department of Natural Resources and other state and federal agencies, utilities, transportation groups, agriculture groups, university researchers, conservation groups and nature centers.

By 2038, they hope to have inspired and aided farmers, urban and rural residents, utilities, highway departments, conservation landowners and others to add more than 119 million native milkweed stems to Wisconsin. The milkweed ideally will be in a mix of native wildflowers, which produce nectar the adult monarchs need and which also benefit other pollinators and insect-eating migratory birds like warblers, Baltimore orioles and vireos.

Wisconsin's effort is part of the Mid-America Monarch Conservation Strategy, a larger campaign by 16 states to add 1.3 billion milkweed stems to the region over the next 20 years.

"Decades of research show that 50 percent of the monarch butterflies that overwinter in Mexico come from the Corn Belt, and that it takes about 30 stems of milkweed in the Midwest to produce a single monarch that will attempt the migration to Mexico," says Owen Boyle, DNR species management chief and the agency's lead representative on the collaborative.

"The work we're doing here in Wisconsin is important and we'll need all hands on deck to conserve monarchs for future generations."

The collaborative aims to coordinate and better leverage habitat efforts already

underway. Brenna Jones, a conservation biologist for DNR's Natural Heritage Conservation Program, coordinates the effort and supports its six working groups as members finalize sector-specific strategies for adding the habitat. Strategies will address agriculture, utility and transportation rights of way, urban and green space, protected lands, education and outreach, research and monitoring.

As Midwest milkweed vanishes, monarchs do, too

Midwestern states, including Wisconsin, once provided more than 85 percent of monarch butterflies in the eastern migratory population. The introduction of herbicide-tolerant corn and soybeans and the accompanying increase in herbicide use in the 1990s inadvertently led to steep losses as milkweed disappeared from between rows of corn and soybeans, according to studies by scientists including Karen Oberhauser, a longtime leading monarch researcher and Wisconsin Monarch Collaborative member.

To return native milkweed to the landscape, collaborative members will encourage farmers to add milkweed and nectar-producing wildflowers to non-productive areas including ditch banks, field margins and farm yards, says Oberhauser, director of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum.

Other sectors — urban, suburban and rural residents, transportation and utility companies controlling land along roads and under transmission lines, public and private owners of conservation lands — will need to do their part, she says.

She is optimistic about the Wisconsin Monarch Collaborative and the larger



AL HILLERY



PAUL SKAWINSKI



LUANNE WASHBURN

Migrating monarchs roost on an oak tree at the Monarch Trail sanctuary in Wauwatosa.

national effort on behalf of monarchs.

"This gives me hope — the fact that monarchs have galvanized people and so many organizations," she says. "Monarchs are this flagship species that will encourage people to create habitat, and when we create habitat for monarchs we create habitat for other organisms and make the world better for people."



Larry Alsum, of Alsum Farms near Spring Green, has been using unirrigated areas of his farm fields to plant wildflowers, milkweed and prairie grasses since the 1990s and now has about 17 acres of restored pollinator habitat.

COURTESY OF ALSUM FARMS & PRODUCE

Growing crops and monarchs

Alsum Farms started planting prairie grasses, milkweed and wildflowers in the “dry corners” of fields, where water from their center pivot irrigation systems didn’t reach, in the 1990s as part of the Wisconsin Healthy Grown Potatoes Program. That partnership involved Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association members, the University of Wisconsin, International Crane Foundation and Defenders of Wildlife, among others. It encouraged farmers to reduce pesticide use, plant native habitat and protect water quality.

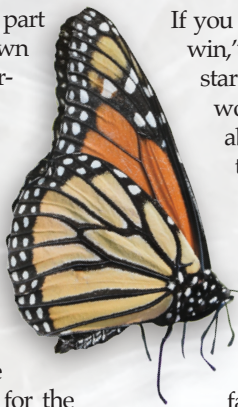
“He (Larry Alsum) felt like he wanted to do something more for the environment,” says Beau Hartline, farm manager. “We realize we are a monoculture type operation.”

Alsum Farms now has about 17 acres of restored pollinator habitat with more planned. One 4-acre patch planted five years ago shows the potential impact: Monarchs, federally endangered rusty patched bumble bees and state endangered regal fritillary butterflies have all been found there.

“Just using these little strips, we’re starting to see things come back,” Hartline says.

He thinks farmers are receptive to planting more habitat. “Most farmers love the outdoors. The biggest thing for them is to know they’re going to have help.”

Farmers and other large landowners will find more opportunities in Wisconsin in 2019 to get technical, financial and volunteer help on creating habitat for monarchs and other pollinators. Information about these resources is found at the Wisconsin Monarch Collaborative website, wimonarchs.org, under the “Create Habitat” tab. Perhaps most importantly, Congress recently renewed the 10-year Farm Bill, which is the single-largest source



of conservation funding for farms.

“The cost-share programs will be the key,” says Steve Bertjens, a state biologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service. “The seed mixes can get very expensive — \$500 to \$800 per acre — and then there is the cost of planting the seeds and maintaining the habitat once it’s up.”

Having the collaborative’s agriculture partners engaged and spreading the word will help.

“We have to get out that message that it doesn’t have to be 20 acres or 5 acres.

If you can do half an acre, that’s a big win,” Bertjens says. “My hope is by starting small and learning what works for them, they’ll get excited about it and that may encourage them to plant more acres.”

Andy Wallendal, recent past president of the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association and co-chair of the collaborative’s agriculture working group, says the tough farm economy means more farmers are looking for alternatives. Adding habitat for monarchs also helps other pollinators, something many Wisconsin vegetable and fruit growers are interested in doing to aid pollinators necessary for their crops.

“Let’s try getting more ecosystem services from the farm,” Wallendal says. “Ag has been pretty stoic and not tooting horns about the ecosystem services they provide. This is an opportunity to foster goodwill among communities and get all sectors working together. It can be a win-win scenario.”

Keeping the lights on for monarchs

Xcel Energy started planting native wildflowers, grasses and milkweed more than 25 years ago as part of its drive to better manage its land. The Eau Claire-based utility now has 20 habitat projects covering 1,300 acres in Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota, says Pam Rasmussen, Xcel senior manager for siting and land rights.

Most of the monarch and pollinator habitat in Wisconsin is at a power plant site south of Eau Claire that was never built on, but most of Xcel’s habitat projects have been smaller and in or near commu-

nities. The utility puts up signage at the sites, brings in community members for the planting and invites the media, as they did for a June 2018 planting at their corporate headquarters, Rasmussen says.

“Our goal is more the educational aspects of showing business and homeowners, you can do this,” she says.

Starting small and having a big impact

Back in Boulder Junction, Julie and Al Hillery got interested in helping monarchs in 2006 when they noticed monarch caterpillars covering the six milkweed plants in their restored prairie patches.

Julie’s concern the caterpillars wouldn’t have enough to eat led the couple to start raising them to adult butterflies and providing them to North Lakeland Discovery Center for education and tagging programs. They had so much fun they planted more milkweed and raised more monarchs.

The couple has been moving away from raising monarchs as scientific concerns have grown that raising monarchs can spread disease. But they’ve doubled down on adding habitat.

“That’s where the emphasis should be,” Julie Hillery says. “The more I learn about it, the more I want to do and raise awareness.”

Their original six milkweed plants are now 200 and Julie convinced the local highway department to change its mowing schedule and practices to avoid milkweed entirely. She and Al collect milkweed pods from area roadsides in the fall and supply them to Monarch Watch’s seed distribution program. And they keep adding to what they do for monarchs.

“I talked to our librarian (in Boulder Junction) and next summer we’ll be able to have caterpillars and a display at the library,” Julie Hillery says. “I’ll have little baggies of milkweed seeds there for people to take. We may also arrange for a monarch program at the library.”

Lisa Gaumnitz is a natural resources educator and program and policy analyst for the DNR.



>>> INFORMATION

To learn more about the Wisconsin Monarch Collaborative, check wimonarchs.org.

DNR steps up in disaster

2018 FLOODING EVENTS BRING SWIFT, EFFECTIVE RESPONSE.

As frightening floodwaters raged, determined conservation wardens from the Department of Natural Resources joined daring rescue efforts. As lakes rose to record levels, DNR water management experts were tapped for technical support. As state, municipal and other properties experienced storm and flooding damage, dedicated DNR staff worked to ensure safety, begin extensive cleanup, facilitate road infrastructure repairs and simply help people cope with the aftermath of the devastation.

When natural disaster strikes, the response from DNR is manifold, tailored to the needs of the occasion. It can be small and simple, targeted to the local level, or complex and wide-reaching — whatever the circumstances dictate. Very often, work is done in collaboration with a long list of others, from local officials and emergency responders to other state agencies to business interests and private citizens.

With 2018 bringing several high-profile weather events to the state, the DNR true to form provided crucial response in a variety of ways. Here are three snapshots of the agency in action.

With Nick Webster driving the boat, Jake Holsclaw scans the flooded streets of Viola for signs of people in need of help. The two DNR recreation wardens offered aid in the southwest Wisconsin community after torrential rains caused devastating flooding in late August.



Wardens flash their rescue skills

DNR Warden Shawna Stringham helps a woman and her dog escape their flooded home in La Farge, guiding them to a flat-bottom boat to take them to safety.

ED MCCANN

Joanne M. Haas

In southern Wisconsin, Aug. 28 was yet another in a string of late August days punctuated by record rainfalls, damaging storms, historic floods and property damage.

The latest storm line had especially targeted Vernon County, south of La Crosse. In the communities of La Farge and Viola — rural areas of about 700 each along the Kickapoo River — floodwaters roared through with a fury and force that unearthed buildings, sent fuel tanks floating, downed electric lines and more.

DNR conservation wardens responded to call after call to help stranded residents. In hindsight, they say those missions rank among the scariest of their careers.

It was mid-afternoon on that Tuesday when the Vernon County dispatch called for help from Wardens Shawna Stringham and Ed McCann, who were staged in La Farge and skilled in water rescues thanks to countless hours patrolling the Mississippi River. The wardens used their shallow-water boat with a mud motor to respond when floodwaters began overwhelming the village.

McCann had driven through La Farge

before but that was in his truck — on dry land.

"I have never driven my boat in a city before. The water was raging. It was moving fast, like rapids," McCann said.

Operating a boat in swift water is nothing like driving a boat in smoother waters, Stringham added. First, the boat operator must find a place to launch — forget the docks.

"We put the boat in just off the highway," she said. "You have to know what you are doing in these conditions. There were electric lines coming in the water all around and things like propane tanks going by."

The wardens' first stop was to get three adults and a dog out of a home and back to dry land, then it was right back out to get another adult and a dog. After that, they started checking other homes and came upon a mother and her two children who needed help.

On to Viola

Their work in La Farge wasn't the end, though, not even close. In the early hours of Wednesday morning, the two wardens left La Farge with their shallow-water boat and headed for Viola to meet

DNR Wardens Cody Adams and Aaron Koshatka for more rescues on the raging Kickapoo River.

"We ended up rescuing about eight or 10 more people in the dark," McCann said. "It was quite possibly the scariest thing I've done in my career. We had to take a moment at the end to think about how lucky we were."

The darkness was what made those Viola rescues so harrowing, Adams added. "There are trees down, high power lines, things in the water — it is so much more dangerous to try and get people at night."

And don't forget the incredible strength of the flood's current.

"Although (La Farge) was scary, the events of Viola topped it all," McCann said.

Adams, who grew up in southwestern Wisconsin, has seen his share of flood rescues in his 10 years as a DNR conservation warden. But this was by far the most extreme. "I have never seen anything like this in Viola."

The wardens worked with local officials such as the Viola Fire Department on rescues that in one case included carrying an 85-year-old man to the boat.

"The Viola Fire Department was incredible," Adams said. "We never would have been able to do the rescues without them."

DNR Recreation Wardens Nick Webster and Jake Holsclaw also pitched in to help in Viola, rescuing three people using their 17-foot flat-bottom boat.

Koshatka, a new warden, said it was "phenomenal" to watch the DNR in action and see how the agency was able to provide resources to help. Adams recalled how the wardens had to manage communication issues and logistics while looking out for objects in the darkness in the rushing water.

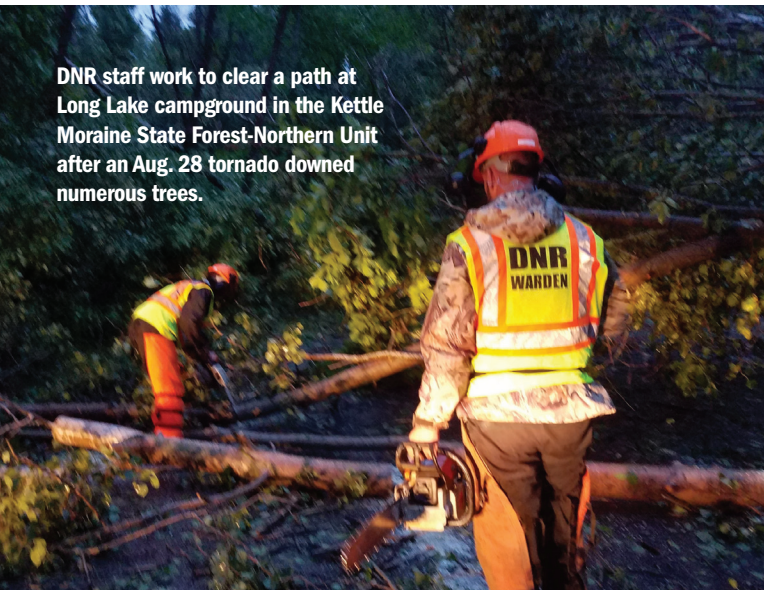
And Adams said in addition to the rescues, he will remember one truly wonderful thing.

"One of the things we heard from people we rescued was, 'We have nowhere to go.' When we got them to shore, the community was there," he said. "There were first responders and citizens with private cars there to help anyone. It was incredible the way these communities come together and help."

In floods and a tornado

Other communities in southern Wisconsin also were affected by the Aug. 28 storms and flooding — and helped by

DNR staff work to clear a path at Long Lake campground in the Kettle Moraine State Forest-Northern Unit after an Aug. 28 tornado downed numerous trees.



JOE JERICH

DNR wardens and others. Lt. Mike Green, who heads the Sauk Warden Team, assisted the Sauk County Sheriff's Department in searching back roads and backwaters for stranded people when floodwaters from torrential rains overwhelmed the village of La Valle, near Reedsburg.

Further east, at the Kettle Moraine State Forest-Northern Unit, nearly a dozen DNR staff responded along with local officials after a tornado touched down at the property. The twister blasted through the Long Lake campground, home to 200 mostly wooded sites.

"At least half of the campsites had trees on top of them," Lt. Joe Jerich said. "It was a lot of downed trees — a lot. The good thing was since it was a weekday, the campground was not as busy."

Together staff cleared debris and checked campsites, verifying no one was injured. Then they cleared a path, with those who were certified manning chainsaws, so campground users and staff could get out safely. Teamwork!

This in no way names all the DNR staff who helped during and after those Aug. 28 storms, which felled trees and dumped incredible rains. Many wardens jumped in to offer aid all over the place, as usual. They just do this in all sorts of conditions — sometimes at their own peril.

Dramatic rescue on the Sugar River

In Dane County a week earlier, one death was attributed to raging floodwaters at a Madison intersection during storms on Aug. 20. Another potential tragedy was averted during that same storm, however — thanks in part to the preparedness and expert boat handling of DNR Conservation Warden Jake Donar.

Donar was finishing his shift around

midnight when he got the Dane County emergency call about a man in trouble at the Sugar River, near the Military Ridge State Trail. Dane County Sheriff's deputies arrived on the scene to find the man sitting on top of his car, stuck in rising floodwaters. And not just that, but his leg was pinned in the car.

"Nobody could get to him because of the ripping current," Donar said. "And the water was rising rapidly."


The emergency responders requested a swift-water boat. Donar raced to the DNR's Fitchburg Service Center to get his flat-bottom boat and grabbed enough life jackets for all. Meanwhile, back at the river, emergency responders were able to toss the trapped man a flotation ring.

Donar arrived with the boat and dropped it in the rising, rushing waters. Then he and two sheriff's deputies sped into the raging dark waters. Donar tapped his training and knew exactly how to operate the boat in the harrowing conditions.

By the time he and the two deputies got to the man, the man was holding the flotation ring around his chin to keep his head above water — and he was still pinned to his car. Other emergency responders in a second boat were able to provide a crowbar.

As Donar tells it, one deputy held the man up so he wasn't gulping water as the other deputy used the crowbar to free the man. He was guided quickly into the boat, then back to shore to medical personnel on site.

"This rescue would not have been possible without every person working together — and there were multiple emergency responders," Donar said, noting the sheriff's deputies, Madison Fire Department and officials from Pine Bluff, Verona, Fitchburg and more.

"Everyone deserves credit," he added. "In the time we were out there, the water went up about another several inches. That man would have drowned without the teamwork of all the emergency responders who came to the scene." 

Joanne M. Haas is a public information officer for DNR's Bureau of Law Enforcement.



Kevin Feind

The summer of 2018 will go down as one of the wettest in Wisconsin's history — and a destructive one for both private and public lands throughout the state. Between June and September last year, 32 DNR properties in 21 counties sustained nearly \$8 million in damage due to rain, flooding and tornado events. More than 70 percent of staff in the parks and recreation management program responded to and assisted in recovery efforts.

It all began in June with record-setting rains in the northwest counties of the state. In a four-day stretch June 15-18, northwest Wisconsin received anywhere from 7 to 12 inches of rain, according to the National Weather Service.

The heavy precipitation caused flooding of area rivers and streams, washed out roads and damaged state parks, forests and trails. Several Wisconsin State Park System properties experienced damage and closures due to the rain and flooding in Douglas, Ashland, Bayfield, Iron, Burnett and Price counties.

In Douglas County, two area state parks were particularly hard-hit by flooding. Waterways running through the properties were raging from all the rain. Pattison State Park has the Black River flowing through it and Amnicon Falls State Park has the Amnicon River.

Both parks suffered damage but Pattison, about 13 miles south of Superior,



Heavy rains in mid-June led to a dam failure that washed out the Highway 35 bridge at Pattison State Park near Superior.

KEVIN FEIND

had far more destruction because so many facilities there are located near the river. As natural resource property supervisor at Pattison State Park, I found myself in the middle of a difficult situation on June 17. A dam on the Black River just east of State Highway 35 was in trouble.

Early that morning, a Sunday, I met with one of our park workers at the dam. Though the gate had been lowered significantly two days earlier in anticipation of the rain, more relief was needed. The two of us worked together to open all gates completely to allow more water to flow through.

At about 10 a.m., however, the water level had risen by about 5 feet and was nearing the catwalk over the dam. The water was now flowing through the tunnel overflow and was starting to breach the dam's south berm.

Late that Sunday, Wisconsin Department of Transportation staff made the decision to close the bridge. The closure of Highway 35 and many other surrounding town roads resulted in area residents being trapped at or away from their homes.

As the dam overflowed its south berm, it caused excessive erosion to the highway's base and damage to the north and south bridge approaches. As the south berm washed away, the flowing water caused even more erosion to the bridge's south approach. Eventually, the south concrete approach to the bridge dropped completely into the void below.

Safety first

Our staff at Pattison State Park worked with WisDOT, the Wisconsin State Patrol, Douglas County Sheriff's Department, Douglas County Highway Department and the Town of Superior Fire Department to keep traffic, both vehicle and pedestrian, from unsafe areas of the park. Many areas were barricaded or signed as closed.

One of the biggest challenges was checking on the park's Little Manitou Falls. With Highway 35 closed, it created a drive of 15 miles just to get there.

Public safety was the No. 1 concern. Many people were entering closed areas, so staff spent a lot of time directing them away from those parts of the park. And we frantically tried to keep traffic from the damaged bridge.

Douglas County Highway Department personnel helped by dumping piles of sand in the highway to prevent vehicles from going around blockades. Law enforcement from the DNR, State Patrol and Sheriff's Department took over traffic control and worked around the clock to staff detours.

I was briefed regularly as days progressed. A plan was discussed with officials including DNR transportation liaisons, engineering and dam safety staff on how to temporarily fix the dam and permanently fix the highway.

In the wake of the dam failure, Interfalls Lake was drawn down and the

Pattison Beach was closed. Park trails and day-use areas also were closed because of damage.

Meanwhile at Amnicon Falls State Park, southeast of Superior, the Amnicon River rose to more than 6 feet over flood stage during the mid-June rains, threatening the integrity of the Amnicon River bridge to the office and campground. Fortunately, the bridge avoided damage.

The park's Civilian Conservation Corps Bridge wasn't so fortunate. There was damage to the mortar and stone bridge



OTHER STATE PROPERTIES TAKE A HIT

Pattison and Amnicon Falls state parks in the northwest part of the state were among the state properties significantly damaged by storms and flooding in 2018, but they were not the only areas affected.

Other damage and weather-related temporary closures from storms or floodwaters occurred at Interstate, Merrick, Big Bay and Copper Falls state parks and Governor Knowles and Brule River state forests. Most of those areas recovered quickly.

In late August, heavy rains and storms caused the temporary closure of Wildcat Mountain State Park in Vernon County and approximately half of the Long Lake campground in the Northern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest in Fond du Lac County, where the National Weather Service confirmed a tornado had touched down (see wardens story). There were no reported injuries from any of those storms.

Two of DNR's prized state fishery areas also sustained significant damage last summer including Coon Creek and White River, with estimates totaling more than \$2 million. Other smaller fishery properties and natural areas in west central and southwest Wisconsin also sustained damage.

In addition, a number of state trails were affected by flooding in 2018 — closed either in full or in part for varying stretches of time. That included the 400, Badger, Elroy-Sparta, Saunders, Wild Rivers, Gandy Dancer, Tuscobia, Sugar River and Military Ridge state trails.

As of this writing, closures continued at state trails including the 400 (from La Valle to Elroy), the Elroy-Sparta (from Norwalk to Elroy), the Saunders (entire trail) and the Gandy Dancer (northern segment in Douglas County).

For the most up-to-date conditions including closure information at state parks, trails or other state properties, check dnr.wi.gov, keywords "current conditions."

— DNR staff

abutment. A local mason was hired and fixed the abutment later in the summer.

Park staff worked hard to keep campers and visitors safe, monitor property damage and keep pedestrians out of damaged and dangerous areas.

Documenting the damage

In the wake of the damaging storms and rain, numerous DNR staff stepped up to help at Pattison and Amnicon Falls and across the state, including staff from different work units, the program management team, central office and other programs throughout the agency.

DNR also worked with other state agencies. On June 18, WisDOT inspected the bridges at Amnicon Falls and deemed them safe, so the park reopened that day. Some areas remained closed until they also were considered safe for visitors.

Back at Pattison State Park, evaluation and repair work on the Highway 35 bridge were expedited by DNR transportation liaisons and WisDOT. On June 25, Janke General Contractors from Athens put the repair plan into motion and by June 29 the highway had reopened.

As water levels receded at both parks, DNR staff worked to document the extent of the devastation to prepare for what would become one of the program's largest claims in a decade to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Work began at both parks to fix damaged trails and roads so as many facilities as possible could be reopened quickly.

At Amnicon Falls, almost all trails are now open. At Pattison, access roads were constructed during summer and fall so heavy equipment could be brought in to rebuild both the East Beaver and West Beaver trails. As of this writing, those trails are still closed for repairs, as are Little Manitou Trail and Pattison Beach. All other areas at Pattison are open.

We have been working with DNR experts, consultants, contractors and others on repair plans for the dam and park trails and hope that most areas at Pattison will be open and accessible for visitors at some point in 2019. Some elements that are more complex, such as the Pattison dam, may take slightly longer to repair.

All projects are expected to be completed well before the 100th anniversary celebration at Pattison State Park in 2020.

Kevin Feind is the DNR's natural resource property supervisor at Pattison and Amnicon Falls state parks.



Andrea Zani

DNR water management engineer Rob Davis was in the throes of some very long days — and nights — during late summer last year.

Torrential rainfalls on Aug. 20 in Dane County on top of an already wet June had filled the Yahara Chain of Lakes to overflowing and pushed the all-important Tenney Dam to its limits. Flooding affected not only the population center of Madison's isthmus between the larger lakes Mendota and Monona, but communities all the way down the chain.

Davis, whose expertise is in dam safety and floodplain management, was the logical choice to join an ever-expanding group working to deal with the growing crisis situation. With the Dane County Land & Water Resources Department in the lead, the group navigated the precarious process of managing water in the Yahara Lakes.

It was a delicate "balancing act," Davis said, as experts grappled with the ramifications of every move they might make involving water flowing through the

lake chain. Not only that, but the threat of more rain always loomed.

Davis played an important support role, especially in working with John Reimer, the assistant director for Dane County Land & Water and the "real genius" in dealing with the crisis, Davis said. He credited Reimer for being quick to reach out for counsel on Tenney Dam in particular.

"He didn't want to operate in a vacuum," Davis said of dam operations during the flooding period. "I was working closely with (Dane County) for technical support. We would talk through things. We talked a lot."

Davis even recalled getting some "2 a.m. texts" from Reimer during the ongoing flood management, which stretched into October. Reimer didn't expect an immediate reply at that hour, Davis said with a smile, "he waited until 7:01 a.m. to call."

Davis was highly impressed with Reimer's leadership and knowledge. "Given the conditions and circumstances that were in place, I don't know how Dane County could have handled things better," Davis said.

All eyes on Tenney Dam

Computer analysis and modeling were used to help determine best flow amounts through Tenney Dam between lakes Mendota and Monona at the “top” of the Yahara chain. Tenney is one of three dams — along with Babcock, at the outlet of Lake Waubesa, and La Follette at Lake Kegonsa — controlled by Dane County using motorized mechanisms for quick adjustments. The chain also includes the Stoughton Dam downstream, operated by city officials there.

Tenney was the most critical of the three county-managed dams and where much of the attention was focused during last year’s flooding events, when avoiding overtopping was the highest priority. Although there were no indications that dam failure was imminent, everyone had to be ready.

“We (DNR) were involved for our role with dam safety. The huge thing we were weighing was protecting the Tenney Dam,” Davis said.

Officials had to weigh the difficult matters of Tenney’s “flow,” carefully considering the consequences of letting water through to protect the dam, including when and how much, while knowing any additional flow would raise water levels and create flooding issues on the other side.

Downstream municipalities “were in a tough spot,” Davis said. The strategy was to have water pass through Tenney in a measured way, letting people in affected areas know ahead of time their water levels would be rising because of it. That bought time for sandbagging and other protective measures in advance, unlike what occurs in flash flooding.

In addition, other activity was undertaken to increase the flow of water out of the lakes — where flow is naturally slow anyway because the area is so flat. That included more work in the Yahara River to harvest aquatic plants, which inhibit flow. As a reference point, Dane County notes that about 400 dump truck loads of aquatic plants are removed in an average year; in 2018, it was 700 loads.

In praise of professionalism

Overall, the management strategies worked to stave off what could have been a truly tragic situation. That and the fact the area dodged subsequent rainfall events in early September. “As bad as it was, we got lucky,” Davis said.

Davis credited the professionalism of

the numerous stakeholders involved, each bringing different needs and considerations to the table. Conference calls that eventually included nearly 40 participants became a regular occurrence as officials worked through the situation.

All the cities, towns and villages affected by the flooding were represented, as were the DNR and other state agencies. Also involved were local emergency management and health officials, the Red Cross, National Weather Service, UW-Madison, MG&E and others.

“People were professional, people were understanding — despite the fact their municipalities were facing these difficulties,” Davis said. “The smaller communities aren’t going to get the press that the city of Madison will get, but they were also taking a beating.”

Addressing the challenges ahead

Going forward, there is sure to be much talk of the Yahara Chain of Lakes and strategies to help mitigate future flooding. In early February, a technical work group convened by the Dane County Board released a 50-page report that presents several adaptation and mitigation options. Davis and DNR Policy

Advisor Shelly Allness are members of that group, which has continued to meet regularly for review and policy analysis.

Nearly a dozen other DNR staff provided input for the report, weighing in on fisheries, aquatic plants, wetlands, water resources and more. Long-established water level orders from DNR — guided by state statutes and per the request of Dane County and the city of Madison — set minimum and maximum seasonal levels for the Yahara Lakes that seek to balance a wide variety of competing interests.

As challenging discussions about lake levels, rainfall, development, runoff, flow rates, impediments and other buzzwords continue, everything will be on the table, Davis predicted, and there will be no quick fix. “It will likely be a number of strategies pieced together.”

A main goal in his view is to keep the public informed.

“It’s tough because flooding is very emotional,” Davis said. “What we want to try to do is educate people — really educate people — in a manner that helps manage expectations for the system.”

Andrea Zani is managing editor of Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine.

>>> FLOODING’S MANY-FACETED EFFECTS

When extreme weather brings torrential rains and flooding, as happened plenty throughout the state last year, the response from the Department of Natural Resources includes high-profile activity such as the warden work, park cleanup and dam and floodplain monitoring detailed here. But the agency also toils in numerous ways that may hover under the radar, though they’re no less significant.

THE WATER WE DRINK: Assuring the safety of drinking water is vital anytime but possibly even more so in the wake of flooding. Both private wells and public water supplies can be affected, and the DNR plays a role in monitoring, testing, permitting and more. The agency also offers recommendations for assuring safe drinking water specifically when wells are inundated.

IN THE LAKE AND ON THE BEACH: Recreational areas can become polluted, contaminated or full of dangerous debris after heavy rains and flooding. DNR works to ensure Wisconsin’s lakes, rivers and beaches are safe for use.

RUNOFF: The DNR’s response to flooding events may involve monitoring and assessing agricultural areas, where flooding can increase the risk of manure runoff polluting waterways and killing fish.

SANDBAG DISPOSAL: While piling up sandbags can keep water out during flooding, it might not be obvious what to do with them once water recedes. Proper handling is required to avoid potential spreading of harmful bacteria, for example, or to avoid misuse of non-degradable sandbags. DNR offers recommendations and guidance.

PLANTS AND WILDLIFE: When areas are flooded, it can be tough on ecosystems. Animals, aquatic life, habitats, plant growth and more can be affected. DNR staff in any number of disciplines may be called upon to lend their expertise.

TO LEARN MORE: The DNR’s web pages include detailed information on a number of flooding-related topics.

- “Coping with flooding,” dnr.wi.gov/emergency/floodCoping.html
- “Floodplain management,” dnr.wi.gov/topic/floodplains
- “Dam safety,” dnr.wi.gov/topic/dams
- “Wetlands,” dnr.wi.gov/topic/wetlands
- “Waterway protection,” dnr.wi.gov/topic/waterways
- “Wells,” dnr.wi.gov/topic/wells

— Andrea Zani

SAND LAKE Legacy

FORMER CAMPER RETURNS TO WISCONSIN'S NORTHWOODS TO OVERSEE SUMMER EXPERIENCE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

In the summer of 1997, Jason Feldgreber went away to overnight camp in Eagle River. Camp Menominee was only five hours from his parents' house in suburban Chicago, but it looked like another world through the eyes of a 10 year old.

Long before six weeks passed and it was time to head home, Feldgreber had fallen in love with the Northwoods and concluded "CM" was one of the greatest places on Earth. So much so, he returned every summer for more than a dozen years — working his way up from camper to counselor-in-training to counselor to associate director.

After graduating high school, he attended the University of Texas. Upon earning his degree in accounting and eventually his master's degree, he followed the "expected" path and began his career at a major corporation. But those childhood summers spent on the shores of Sand Lake were never far from his heart or mind.

In 2013, the young accountant took a life-changing leap. He traded in his suit and briefcase for shorts and a megaphone and went to work for a camp on the East Coast. Two years later — nearly 20 years since that first unforgettable summer in Eagle River — Feldgreber took an even greater leap. He purchased Camp Menominee.

At the age of 28, he was now the proud owner of 65 acres of land in the Northwoods of Wisconsin. But this was about much more than investing in real estate.

Dating back to 1928, CM's previous owners — the Wassermans, Kleins and Kanefskys — had all been hands-on leaders who helped shape the lives of many young people. Feldgreber was eager to carry on that legacy. So, in addition to buying the property, he took on the responsibility of running the camp's day-to-day operations — which includes overseeing approximately 250 boys between 7 and 16 years old as well as 70 employees every summer.

Now in his fifth year at the helm of Camp Menominee, Feldgreber sat down for an interview with author (and CM alum) Greg Siegman to talk about the full-circle journey that led him back to Wisconsin and to reflect on his efforts to introduce new generations of boys to the Northwoods.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JASON FELDGREBER

Camp Menominee in Eagle River is in the blood for Jason Feldgreber, who began as a camper (top and center, in green shirt), spent time as a counselor and associate director, and now owns and directs the 65-acre site on Sand Lake.



GREG SIEGMAN: Do you remember the ride up to Eagle River for your first summer as a camper at Camp Menominee?

JASON FELDGREBER: I do. We were about 20 minutes from camp when the nerves kicked in. When we stepped off the bus, I saw a lot of older campers greeting each other, embracing and reuniting after being apart for 10 months. I felt like a bit of an outsider at that moment. That feeling didn't last long.

GS: What was the first thing you noticed when you arrived and got the chance to look around?

JF: On the bus, as we were getting closer to camp, I was struck by the woods. They were spectacular. When we pulled in, I was taken by how green the grass was and how vast the fields were. It was a gorgeous, sunny day.

GS: Was there a particular person at CM who shaped your appreciation for Wisconsin's outdoors?

JF: Every year, Koz (the camp's waterfront director) gave a waterfront safety talk. During that talk, he'd explain how our camp was connected to the world outside of it. That always stuck with me. Beyond that, I think my appreciation for Wisconsin's natural resources has to do with the overall values we were taught at camp. We always say, "Leave places cleaner than we found them." Eagle River is where we learned to canoe, swim, build a fire, camp and grow plant life. We want to preserve this sacred space for generations to come.

GS: The world has changed a lot since you were a camper. One big change has been technology. Cell phones and tablets and social media have become a prominent — even overwhelming — part of so many kids' lives. Does that get in the way of their experience at CM?

JF: I couldn't agree more that technology has become overwhelming for kids today. They spend so much time glued to screens. Our policy is "no screens" for our campers. Tech has its advantages, but the month or two of unplugged time can be so beneficial for them. The ironic thing is when the boys who have phones turn them in at the start of camp, they complain for five minutes, but then they don't bring it up again all summer. They are so engaged with each other and with camp activities that they don't miss their phones at all.

GS: From a distance, it might seem like those activities are just "fun and games," but the kids also learn a lot along the way. For those who haven't been through the

experience or had a child go through it yet, can you explain how a summer at overnight camp can have such a meaningful, life-changing impact on kids?

JF: I think it comes down to two things: interpersonal growth and relationships. At camp, you learn about independence, leadership, problem solving, teamwork, community involvement and so many other "soft skills" that parents would like their sons to learn as they grow up. You also learn how to work through your own problems without your parents holding your hand, which is such an important thing to learn in life. The best part is the kids get to develop these skills while having an amazing time. It also creates relationships that will bond you for life.

GS: Every year, CM participates in a two-day competition with Camp Kawaga. Many Menominee alums say, looking back, that competition was one of their greatest childhood memories — even if they lost — and helped cement those lifelong bonds you are talking about. At a time when some groups give "participation" trophies to kids, why do you feel kids benefit in the long run from a competition where one team wins and one team loses?

JF: Let me start by saying I think kids today are lucky to have parents who love and care for them so much that they'd go to any length to protect and guide them, but I think if we try to protect kids from ever struggling or experiencing any defeat, it's often to the kids' detriment. Enter camp, and this competition. We come together as Team Menominee, prepare as best as we can, play hard, pick up our teammates and cheer on our friends. ... We win as a team, we lose as a team. You will never see us focusing on individual effort, especially in a loss. This teaches our kids how to compete the right way, and it teaches them what it means to be a contributing member of your community. In years we have lost, we praise our boys for playing their hardest and teach them that results are not the end-all-be-all. We talk about ways we can improve and what we can do different next year, and we all get better because of it.

GS: The counselors play a big role in teaching those lessons. That requires them to be a lot more than just talented at tennis or archery. When you recruit counselors, what do you look for?

JF: It is important for our staff to have the relevant skills, but it's way more important to us that they can be responsible caregivers for the boys. We love to see

someone who has coaching experience or who already has worked with kids. We want staff members to be able to truly empathize with our kids. We look for leadership, a sense of community, a willingness to step outside your comfort zone and a true desire to work harder than you have ever worked for a common goal. We also know this job provides an amazing growth experience for our staff so we try to make sure we are helping them meet their goals as well.

GS: Speaking of goals, was owning and running your childhood camp always part of the career path you planned out in your head while you studied in school and worked in accounting — or did it seem like too much of a pipe dream to actually view it as a realistic goal?

JF: In the back of my mind, owning the camp I went to as a boy was always the dream, but I also had to be realistic about whether that opportunity would present itself. I was passionate about the industry and working with kids. So, no matter what, my goal was to own a camp, even if it wasn't Camp Menominee. But I got lucky with the timing. CM became available, and I got to fulfill my dream.

GS: Is there a specific piece of advice that has resonated with you throughout these first few years as the camp's owner and director?

JF: You can't do this job alone.

GS: How do you spend your time when summer is over?

JF: Running a camp is actually a year-round process. Between September and May, we evaluate how camp went and address issues that parents bring to our attention. We re-enroll campers, host reunions and travel to meet families of potential new campers. We budget for maintenance and groundskeeping projects. We rehire old staff and recruit new staff — which includes domestic and international travel for staffing fairs. We organize staff orientation. We plan the next summer's camp. We get the property ready for a new camp season — paint, mow, clean, you name it.

GS: You mention the budget. As a business owner, I'm sure the budget is something you always have

in the back of your mind, especially with your background in accounting. And yet, you offer camp scholarships known as "camperships" for some kids with financial need. Why do you feel so strongly about doing that, even though it doesn't add to the "fiscal bottom line" of the business?

JF: I do what I do because I believe in the power of camp and the impact it can have on our campers' lives. A family's financial situation should not preclude their son from having this incredible experience. So, we have committed to opening spots for campers whose parents cannot afford it. Through our partnerships with the Nate Wasserman Camp Fund and Camp for All Kids, we offer about 15-20 camperships each summer. Even if we are operating at capacity, we still ensure that we make room for scholarship campers each summer.


GS: Say you had 24 hours all to yourself during the summer and you could spend it anywhere in Wisconsin. Other than CM, where would you go?

JF: I would go rafting on the Peshtigo River and Menominee River. I have incredible memories of doing it as a child.

GS: As a camp owner, you're always going to be associated with summertime. Other than summer, what is your favorite time of year in Wisconsin?

JF: Definitely the winter. Camp is covered in 2 or 3 feet of snow. The lakes are frozen. We are in the snowmobile capital of the world. It is unlike any place on Earth during the winter.

GS: Do you have a set plan for how long you'd like to own Camp Menominee?

JF: Forever. I'd like to pass it down to my kids someday. 

Greg Siegman, a former Camp Menominee camper, is co-author of "The First Thirty." Find his website at www.FirstThirty.com.

>>> INFORMATION

For more on Camp Menominee, visit www.CampMenominee.com.



Activities at Camp Menominee include everything from archery to water sports, but it's the friendships that often make the biggest impression.

Readers

Write



SIGNS OF SPRING

This photo was taken last year in South Milwaukee and the tulips were some of the first full blossoms of the year! They caught my eye because of their beautiful and distinct colors. I believe the featured tulips are a type of "burning heart" tulips and are a mid-spring blossom.

Amber Wilbur
Cudahy

COMPLIMENTS FROM THE CLASSROOM

I am emailing you as a part of a class I am enrolled in for school, where I had to compare two different magazines of my choice. While comparing this magazine with one completely opposite, it made me appreciate the amount of information and detail you include in the magazine.

I am a person that usually doesn't take the time to read a magazine but learned that most magazines are filled with ads and unimportant information, unlike *Wisconsin Natural Resources*. I just wanted to take the time to note that you guys do a great job with your magazine, which highlights a lot of beautiful areas throughout Wisconsin while also demonstrating all the opportunities to take part in within the outdoor landscape of our state. Thank you!

Mikayla Endres
Lone Rock

OVERNIGHT BUTTERFLY BOARDING

One evening in September last year, at the peak of the bloom of the goldenrod, monarch butterflies kept fluttering around and gathering on part of a tree in my backyard. That night, there were a couple hundred gathered on a few branches. In the morning, the first to be in the sun were the first to fly away.

I have 3 acres, of which 2 acres are native prairie plants, mostly goldenrod, with scattered milkweed, thistle and other wildflowers and shrubs. I have fond memories of monarch butterflies and caterpillars from childhood — have noticed the decline in their numbers. Hoping they survive!

Mark Howe
Hobart



MOURNING MEETING

We've always had mourning doves around here but I never saw them grouped like this before — 16 in all I counted circled on the mulch under a maple tree in our backyard. They all appear to be facing out from the circle (on guard?).

The mulch under the maple is raw wood chips so I suppose it's composting a bit and giving off a little heat. Cool and rainy this a.m. I figure maybe they are starting to flock together for migration time, maybe a layover through the night. They all flew away together after about 15 minutes.

The ducks and geese have been running premigration flights over the house for the last week or so. Winter is coming too fast for me. Give me about three months of fall first at least.

Mark Lang
Menomonee Falls

DNR wildlife biologist Ryan Brady provided this explanation: Although difficult to say with certainty, the image appears to show a number of juvenile doves. This suggests the flock represents several family groups associating with each other, which is not uncommon, especially as fall approaches. The birds were likely able to stay drier, and perhaps warmer, on the mulch vs. the longer wet grass. Flocking up indeed provides many eyes for spotting Cooper's hawks, foxes and other predators, although not to the extreme that bobwhite quail coveys do!

NAME THAT FROG

Today is Dec. 19 and above-average temperatures over the past month or so. I have seen this little guy in my unheated out-building whenever we have nice weather. Not sure where he lives within the building. Today I counted four of these frogs within my building. Can you help me identify what they are and how unusual it is to see them in December? You may notice by the ladybug in the picture how small these frogs are. The bug in the pic was not intentional, just an odd year to still be seeing bugs so late. Thank you.

Mark Zuberbuehler
Kenosha County

Richard Staffen, a conservation biologist with DNR's Natural Heritage Conservation Program responds: Dear Mark, verified with a few other herpetologists and we agree this is a chorus frog. It is not uncommon to see them active during winter months during these warm spells. The chorus frog overwinters under debris (rocks, logs, duff) or in cracks/crevices where they try to get below the frost line, but can easily emerge or stay active as long as the weather permits.



Write



CREATURES OF RARE BEAUTY

When you walk through the woods of northern Wisconsin and spot one of these white deer, it is a haunting experience. To see two together is a real treat. This photograph was taken near Boulder Junction.

Mark Boettcher
Brookfield



PRETTY, WITH A PURPOSE

I enjoy driving the Wisconsin back roads year round. Last summer, I was driving along Highway F out of Ixonia going south. Just before West River Road, there is a farm on your left. I was surprised by the beautiful, brilliant yellow field of black-eyed susans and other wildflowers. I challenged myself to find the owner of these fields so I could share some of the photos.

The farmer was thrilled to get the photos and tell me of the project he started with the Oconomowoc Watershed Protection Program. Unfortunately, I didn't get this nice farmer's name. I did learn about the watershed program. A few other area farmers are also participating. The farmers are filling their fields with wildflowers that have deep roots. The roots will help hold back all types of water runoff. I was very pleased to learn that farmers are actively working with their area watershed groups to clean their local water runoff from area creeks and such.

Wendy Kubokawa-Wells
Watertown

PASS THE BUCK

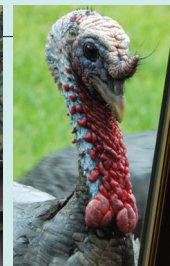
What a great article Ron Weber wrote in your 2018 Winter edition ("Buck of a lifetime"). I, too, have dreamed of a buck of a lifetime and although one has not appeared in front of me, I, like him, have aimed and passed on a few bucks that have come before me. It's a special feeling to let them walk and live another day and gives true meaning to hunter ethics. By his action, he has now joined a special group of hunters that end the hunt not with a shot but with a memory of a lifetime!

Roy Lindeman
Green Bay

COUPLE OF COUNTRY BIRDS

Here is a picture of a Cooper's hawk that landed on top of the outhouse I built for storing gardening tools. I also found another picture that I thought you would appreciate seeing. We live out in a country subdivision between Milton and Janesville, and we have frequent turkey visitors. This one would stop by and peck on our patio window.

Elton Duffy
Milton



WHOOPING CRANE FAMILY LIFE

Hi, I am a nature photographer in Rome, Wisconsin. This past year, I have been making a photo history of the local whooping crane family, a slide show that shows the progression of the chick from a little fuzz ball to a bird that is capable of controlled flight. It shows the different terrain that the cranes use, some of the foods that are consumed and the daily life of the family unit.

Bob Stoil
Rome



THANKS FOR THE GIFT

I enjoyed reading about the three generations of the Ruegger family ("DNR memoirs," Fall 2018).

However, it seems you left out some information about the benefactors of the Ojibwa Park — see my picture. I don't know the details of the funding of the Sawyer County wayside park, but you should have mentioned the three parties listed on the marker (Robert W. Baird and his wife, the Ojibwa Sales Co., and Northern States Power). It is a lovely sight and the township campground on the south side of the highway is superior to the DNR campgrounds in many respects. P.S., enjoy the magazine very much!

John G. Powles
Middleton



HOOKED ON THE HUNT

We wanted to share a picture of our son Matthew, 14, enjoying a morning waterfowl hunt. This picture was taken during the two-day youth hunt. We are grateful for the opportunity to participate in such a fantastic program to introduce our youth to Wisconsin's great hunting tradition. He's hooked!

William and Andrea Muench
Turtle Lake

Back in the day

Smelt runs were cause to celebrate — and crown queens!

Kathryn A. Kahler

As annual traditions go, smelt dipping has seen its ups and downs over the decades.

Dipping, or seining, is the typical method of catching these silvery herring-like fish that swim upstream in spring to spawn. A Conservation Bulletin story in October 1948 estimated about 5 million to 6 million pounds were caught each year from 1936 through 1942 by commercial and sport fishermen. Then a mysterious pathogen is believed to have caused a disastrous crash and in 1944, the reported catch was a mere 4,344 pounds. In the decades since, populations have fluctuated widely.

But in its heyday, the smelt run was a much-anticipated event and the focus of festivals along the Lake Michigan coast.

"Wisconsin: A guide to the Badger State," published in 1941, describes an annual event in Marinette: "The smelt run in greatest number at night, and from 9 p.m.

until midnight all Marinette is festive. The Interstate Bridge is closed to traffic, every foot is crowded with poles, flashlights, machines for lifting the seines, and baskets full of shining fish. The riverbank is a blaze of light from bonfires. Barkers yell their wares, fireworks light the whole sky, and beer flows freely. The festival reaches a climax with the crowning of the Smelt Queen."

It's not likely that smelt runs in modern times will ever be the cause of celebrations like back in the day, but old-timers or new smelt enthusiasts up for a challenge can find fellow dippers at Jones Island in Milwaukee, or in the Hot Pond on the Ashland side of Chequamegon Bay. You may even get a bucketful, or enough for a meal!

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



STABER W. REESE



DOROTHY FERGUSON

>>> FACTS ABOUT SMELT

- Rainbow smelt — small, silvery, herring-like fish that are not native to the Great Lakes — were introduced by an accidental escape from Crystal Lake near Frankfort, Michigan, in 1912.
- Smelt spend most of the year in the deep waters of lakes Michigan and Superior, moving to shallower water and mouths of tributary streams when water temperature reaches about 40 degrees in the spring.
- The Lake Michigan smelt run is typically between late March and the end of April. For information on the smelt run, go to dnr.wi.gov, keyword "smelt."
- The smelt run begins later on Lake Superior, usually the last two weeks of April and typically peaks just after the ice leaves Chequamegon Bay. Call the Ashland Chamber of Commerce at 800-284-9484 in mid-April to check on the run.
- Visit dnr.wi.gov, keywords "fishing regulations" for information about Wisconsin's spearing, netting and bait harvesting regulations.
- To help keep smelt out of inland waters and from harming native fish communities, please follow these tips:
 - Don't transport or use live smelt for bait.
 - Don't dispose of smelt entrails or clean entrail buckets in Wisconsin waters.
 - Don't seine or collect minnows from waters that contain smelt.
 - Always drain your livewells, bilge water and transom well before leaving the boat access.
 - Never release unused bait fish into any body of water.

Crowds of residents line the streets of Marinette in April 1941 to watch the Smelt Festival parade. Below, women dip for smelt in the Menominee River at Marinette in April 1938.



YELLOWSTONE LAKE STATE PARK

On June 14, 1954 — Flag Day 65 years ago — the gates of a newly constructed dam on the Yellowstone River in southwest Wisconsin were closed. The resulting body of water that formed was the state's 8,677th lake, Yellowstone Lake, and eventually led to the creation of Yellowstone Lake State Park.

The 455-acre lake is the centerpiece of the park, which has an additional 1,000 acres. The lake includes a swimming beach and accommodates all types of boating, from kayaks to ski boats. In summer, concessions and boat rentals can be found at the lake's east end.

Fishing also is popular at Yellowstone Lake, in Lafayette County near Blanchardville. The lake boasts an abundance of walleye, crappies and other game fish, plus bass, muskies, northern pike, bluegill and channel catfish.

Basic fishing equipment provided through the DNR's Tackle Loaner Program is available for free use from the park office. Some species are catch-and-release only at the lake and part of the feeder river; check the park website for regulations and bag limits — dnr.wi.gov, keywords "Yellowstone Lake."

Open year-round, the park has more than 13 miles of hiking trails and 4 miles of off-road biking trails. In winter, 5 miles of trails are groomed for cross-country skiing when conditions allow and 7 miles of trails are open when possible for snowmobiling, connecting to other trails in Lafayette County.

In past years, Yellowstone Lake State Park has been known for little brown bats roosting in more than 30 bat houses, though white-nose syndrome has taken a toll on population numbers.

From April through November, the park is a scenic spot for camping, with 128 individual sites and five group sites plus an accessible shelter. Campsite and shelter reservations may be made through the Camis system now being used by DNR — 1-888-947-2757 or wisconsin.goingtocamp.com.

Enhancing the area is the 220-acre Yellowstone Savanna State Natural Area within the park along the lake's northeast shoreline. An additional 4,000 acres adjacent to the park comprises the Yellowstone Wildlife Area, which has hiking, birding, horse trails, wildlife viewing, hunting and a DNR-owned shooting range.

— Andrea Zani

