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Time to renew or buy Conservation Patron licenses

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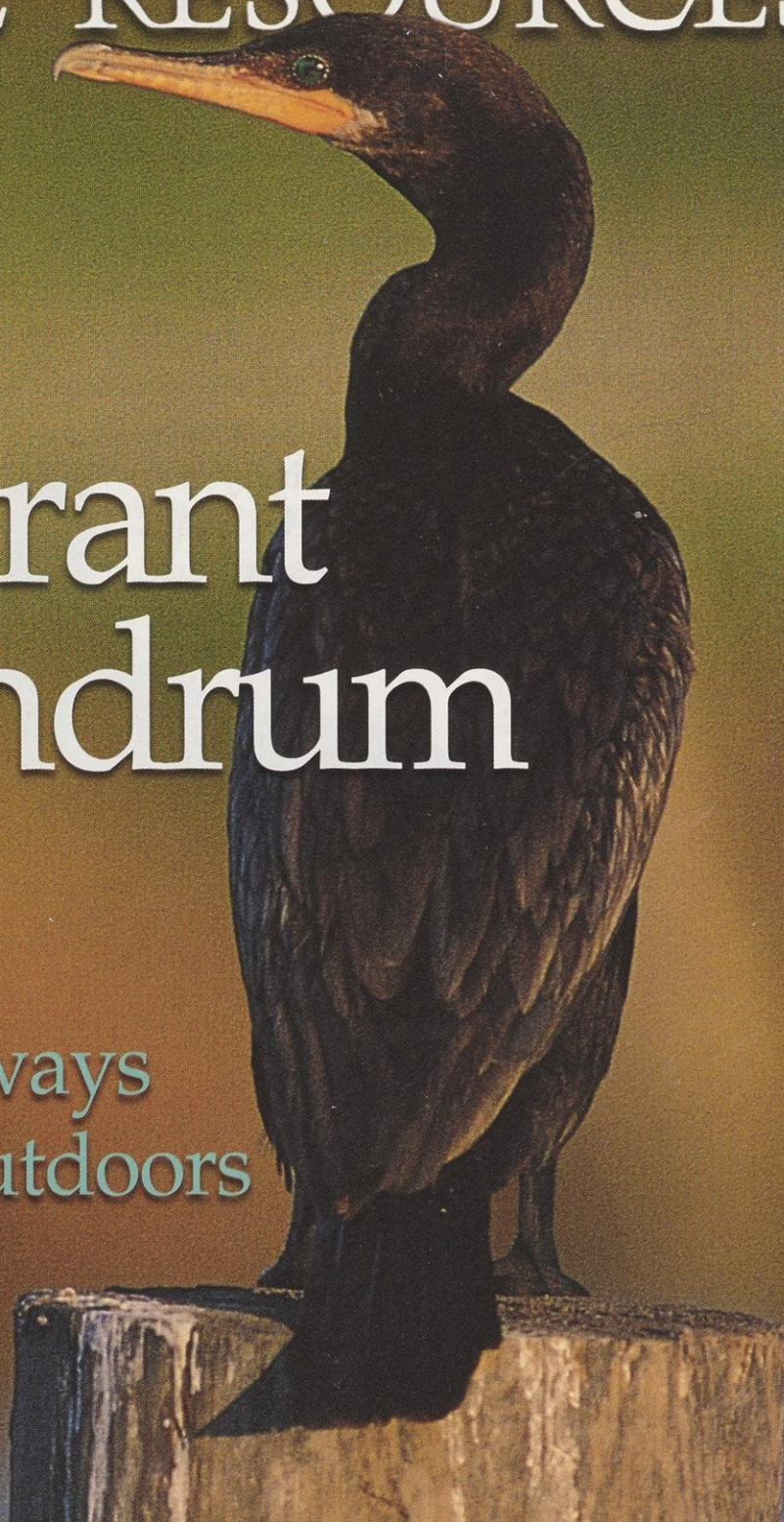
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Cormorant conundrum

A legacy in pine

Quicker, easier ways
to enjoy the outdoors

Ten good reads



Sociable encounters

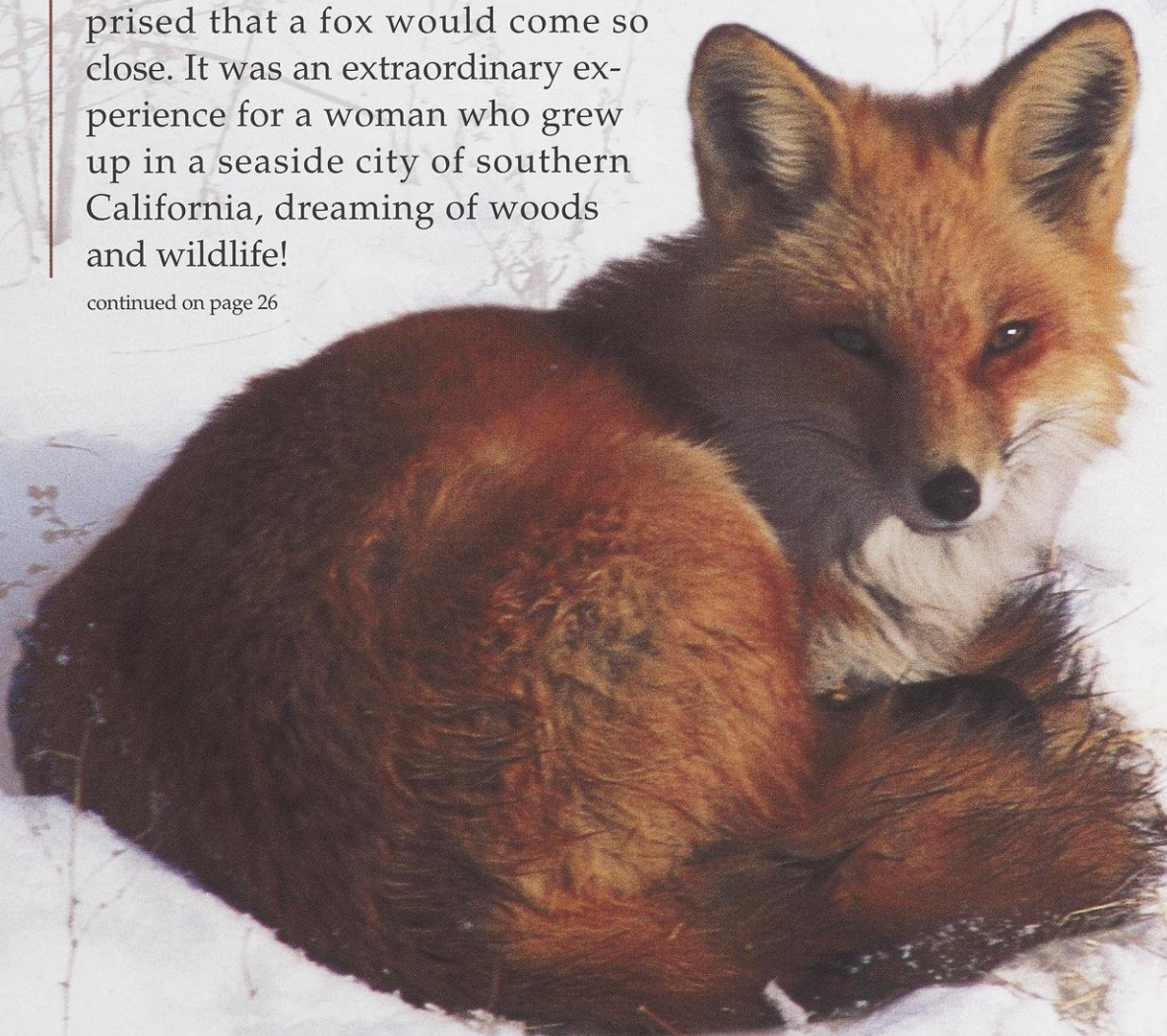
Foxes have things to tell us that we can't quite understand.

Andrea LeClair

When I first saw the red fox, it was still sporting its luxurious winter coat. My husband and I live in the country about an hour south of Lake Superior and we've enjoyed some remarkable encounters with wildlife over the years, but none pleased me as much as our meetings with red foxes that started when late winter stubbornly refused to give way to spring. The fox trotted across our property and onto a stump only six yards from me. It looked at me, then upwards at some chickadees passing by. Then it turned and disappeared into the woods. I was surprised that a fox would come so close. It was an extraordinary experience for a woman who grew up in a seaside city of southern California, dreaming of woods and wildlife!

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Thick winter coats and bushy tails keep red foxes warm in winter even out in the open. The vixens (females) scout out den sites in early February. Nocturnal barking this time of year helps males and females find each other as prelude to the mid-February mating season.

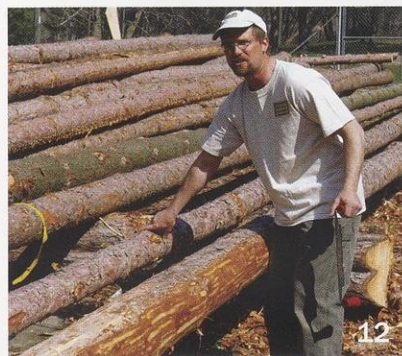


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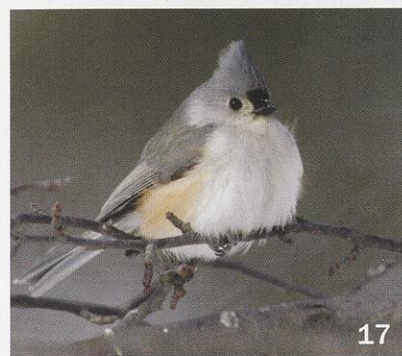
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Traveler cooks up dinners, pageants, music and shows to beat the winter blues.

FRONT COVER: Management plans seek a balance between sustaining strong populations of the double-crested cormorant in Green Bay and discouraging the spread of new colonies to other islands in the bay area.

RON TOEL, Canton, GA

BACK COVER: Mt. Pisgah Hemlock-Hardwoods State Natural Area in Vernon County. For more information, contact the State Natural Areas Program, Bureau of Endangered Resources, DNR, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707 or visit dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna.

INSET: Sullivant's coolwort (*Sullivantia sullivantii*).

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Cormorant

Island habitats feel the pressure as populations of these once-endangered waterbirds grow.

Jeff Pritzl and Paul Peeters

For double-crested cormorants, the good old days in Wisconsin spanned the 1920s through the 1950s.

During that time the birds slowly gained a foothold on larger bodies of water in the north, along major rivers and on the Great Lakes. Yet cormorant populations plummeted from the 1950s through the '70s, beset by pesticides, habitat loss and human intervention at nest sites. By the mid-'70s, only 66 nests were counted in three colonies statewide.

The embattled waterbirds got a little help. First, DDT and its byproducts were banned. Then, from 1973-97 some 1,269 artificial nesting platforms were erected on protected islands and on flowages across northern and north central Wisconsin and near deeper waters in east-central, eastern and south-western Wisconsin. Double-crested cormorants were protected nationwide under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and placed on the state endangered species list in 1972.

With their adaptable natures, cormorants made a speedy recovery. These birds are not picky: They use habitat as varied as cobble beaches, rocky shores, trees and ledges, and feed on all kinds of fish and other aquatic life. The birds readily accepted the artificial platforms and their numbers grew at better than 16 percent a year.

Now more than 13,700 active nests have been documented in Wisconsin, and it seems happy days are here again for the resilient waterbirds. Except that growth — whether it comes in the form of an expanding subdivision or an expanding bird population — comes at a cost.

Feasting on an aquatic smorgasbord

Only the double-crested cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*), the most numerous and widespread of six cormorant species in North America, inhabits the Midwest, the Great Lakes and inland waters. The bird has small turquoise eyes and a distinctive, hooked mottled-orange bill that gives it a bemused "grin." This efficient swimmer and diver has webbed feet and water-resistant, but not waterproof, plumage. The wettable feathers are a tradeoff; the cormorant sits low in the water and actually sinks slightly, which cuts its buoyancy, making it easier for the bird to dive and pursue fish, guided by a rudder-like tail.

Cormorants commonly forage five to 25 feet deep, occasionally plunging as deep as 75 feet in pursuit of a meal. They grab fish with their bills and return to the surface to swallow their prey.

After feeding, the birds come ashore or find posts on water where they can stand and hold out their wings horizontally to dry. Only moderately efficient flyers, cormorants prefer to nest, loaf and perch on shores adjoining their feeding areas.

Cormorants are opportunistic feeders and seek schooling fish to improve their odds of catching a meal. They readily eat minnows, alewives, smelt, yellow perch, salamanders, crustaceans and mollusks. Uncovered aquaculture ponds filled with captive fish provide easy pickings for cormorants. Netting and runway designs that exclude birds can dissuade cormorant predation.

Several researchers have studied cormorant feeding habits to better answer questions from commercial fishers and sport anglers who con-

conundrum

tend that cormorants mainly feed on yellow perch, other panfish and game fish. The research shows that while perch consumption can be substantial, the birds maintain broader eating habits.

A 1985 study of a cormorant colony's feeding habits in the Apostle Islands suggested that cormorants feed much more heavily on shallow forage fish like sticklebacks, sculpin and burbot than on commercially-prized fish like whitefish and lake trout.

A three-year study of cormorant feeding habits on Green Bay from 2004-6

The cormorant's plumage is not completely waterproof, allowing it to dive and pursue food more easily. The tradeoff is the bird spends time drying out its wings after the chase.

examined the stomach contents of 1,429 birds. The researchers determined perch were an important food source for cormorants in mid-June, but perch predation largely dropped off as schooling yellow perch moved from shallow to deeper waters a little later in the summer. By mid-July, other fish, including gizzard shad and the invasive round goby, made up a much more substantial part of the cormorant diet.

No one can accurately assess how cormorant predation fits into perch population dynamics because many factors contribute to fluctuations in yellow perch populations, including fishing pressure, the influx of invasive species in the Great Lakes, mercury levels, runoff and other man-

made contaminants. Researching the relationship between cormorants and fish populations is very expensive and has limited value given the fact that fish populations fluctuate based on a lot of variables. Short-term fish studies just are not applicable very far into the future and there are other factors to consider.

A hazard to habitat

Potential losses of panfish and game fish are important, but wildlife managers are more concerned about the hazards that spreading cormorant populations might pose to island vegetation; breeding habitat for herons, egrets and colonial waterbirds; and stop-over habitats for migrating songbirds.

Currently, nearly 90 percent of the state cormorant breeding population inhabits the Lake Michigan shores along Green Bay. Isolated islands off the Door Peninsula have about 10,000 pairs nesting in four distinct



© RICH PHALIN

From 1973-97 more than 1,200 artificial nesting platforms enticed cormorants to establish small colonies on many waters and today more than 13,700 nesting cormorants are found statewide. It's only in the Green Bay and Door County area that wildlife biologists plan to manage cormorant concentrations.

colonies. Green Bay's Cat Island, just offshore of where the Fox River empties into the bay, has another 2,400 pairs. On Lake Superior, nesting colonies are on the Apostle Islands (fewer than 500 nests). There are fewer than 20 cormorant pairs along the Mississippi River. On our inland waters, researchers have counted about 1,100 cormorant nests, half of them concentrated in the Millers Bay area off Oshkosh on the west central shore of Lake Winnebago. One management goal is to ensure there is room on islands with existing cormorant populations to accommodate the birds without creating sufficient disturbance so populations would spread to additional islands.

As cormorants perch in trees drying their wings, roosting and scoping out potential breeding territories, it's only natural that they defecate. Given their diet, cormorant feces are highly acidic. The concentrated nutrients can kill off roosting trees, nest sites and the understory. At the Green Bay colonies, the cormorants are staying put, nesting on the ground where trees used to be. Over time, island, cliff and shoreland vegetation is destroyed, and recovery can take a long time.

A team of wildlife managers, fisheries biologists and endangered resources staff has been meeting periodically since 2002 to track the cormorant conundrum. Populations in the Apostle Islands, Mississippi River and on inland waters are small, and managers don't believe they need to intercede in those areas. But the growing numbers of cormorants in Green Bay and along the northern Door County islands are another matter. To protect habitat for other nesting birds on or near Cat Island, the



PAUL PEETERS

management team hopes to reduce the number of pairs from 2,400 to 1,000 and maintain a smaller population. The four largest cormorant colonies on northern Door County islands (Hat Island west of Egg Harbor, Jack Island west of Peninsula State Park, Spider Island east of Newport State Park and Pilot Island east of the Northport Ferry docks) contain more than 10,000 pairs; managers recommend these populations be reduced by half to sustain at least 500 nests in each colony, with a total of about 5,000 nests at the four colony sites. Reducing the cormorant population gradually aims to take the populations back to a level when the conflicts (real or perceived) were not so evident. Reducing these populations by about 50 percent will still leave viable, active colonies. We can restore more of a biological balance as we continue to study if management is effective or if human intervention is even needed to keep natural systems in balance.

In April 2006, Governor Doyle signed legislation directing the Department of Natural Resources to develop and direct a program to control cormorant populations where it appears habitat loss and predation may become significant issues. The team's draft recommendations were reviewed at public meetings around the state last October; the comments gathered will help shape a plan to be presented to the Natural Resources Board early in 2008.

DNR PHOTO



One control strategy includes selectively oiling cormorant eggs to reduce hatching success slowly over a long period of time.

Capping the population explosion

Techniques to decrease cormorant populations must be applied gradually and with care. Immediate, drastic controls might merely lead cormorants to disperse more widely to other locations. Previous control techniques include shooting adult birds with guns equipped with silencers, and oiling cormorant eggs in the nest. Oiling eggs once during incubation seals off the pores and prevents development. It's an effective method for reducing hatching success, and the adult cormorants do not immediately restart another nesting cycle. Over time, the population can slowly dwindle until population goals are reached. Thereafter, the populations can be monitored and maintained at lower levels.

Some people don't believe cormorant controls are needed. Critics point out that perch populations have started to rebound at the same time cormorant numbers are growing quickly. They note that cormorants feed on a range of fish and aquatic life.

An aim of the environmental assessment process will be to investigate the concerns raised at public meetings on proposed cormorant management and to develop a range of options for controlling cormorant build-up. The manage-

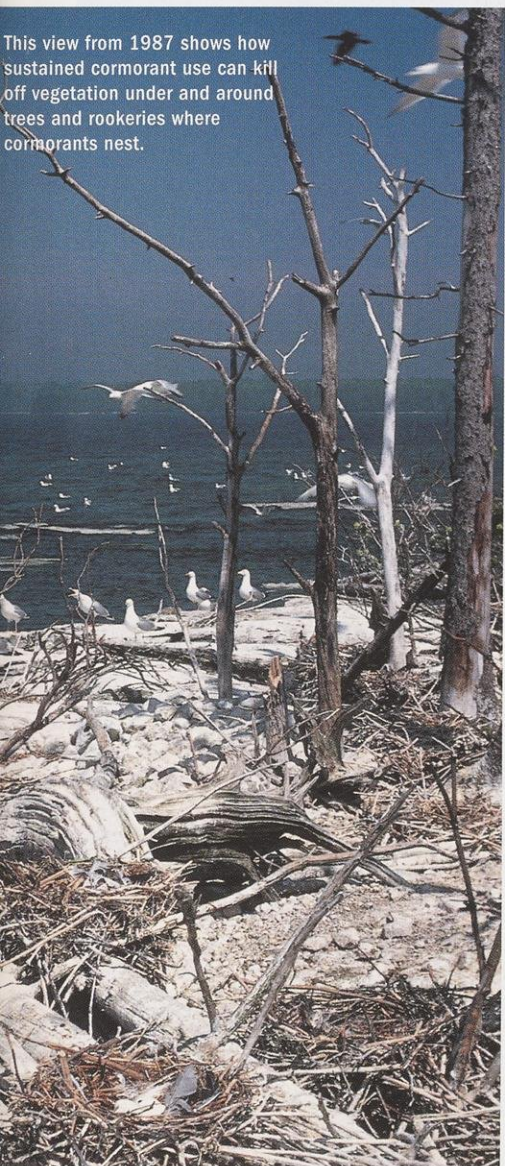
ment team will also estimate costs for effective cormorant management. Some experiments with egg oiling were supported by fisheries funds, but the bulk of the research and experimental control work was paid for with settlements from paper mills on the Lower Fox River for the improper disposal of recycled paper pulp residues containing PCBs.

"If cormorant management will be successful, it's going to take time and money," DNR Regional Wildlife Biologist Jeff Pritzl told the *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. "We want to make sure there will be a return on this investment and that there are not unintended impacts to other bird life."

Tackling the cormorant conundrum presents many challenges for wildlife and fisheries managers, but two in particular stand out. The first is to conduct cormorant control work without harming non-target species like egrets, herons, pelicans, terns and gulls. The second is to monitor and fine-tune cormorant concentrations to keep these waterbirds in balance with available habitat and food supplies while sustaining fishing and other forms of outdoor recreation.

Jeff Pritzl leads the wildlife team for DNR's Northeast Region based in Green Bay. Paul Peeters leads the fisheries team for the Northeast Region.

This view from 1987 shows how sustained cormorant use can kill off vegetation under and around trees and rookeries where cormorants nest.



SUMNER W. MATTESON



PAUL PEETERS

The vegetation likely will not recover on small islands where cormorants and other shorebirds concentrate. Management strategies aim to ensure cormorants will maintain their current colonies without expanding onto new islands to accommodate a growing population.

LICENSE TO THRILL

With DNR's improved licensing system and expanded Call Center at 1 (888) 936-7463, it's easier than ever to get the documents and answers you need to enjoy Wisconsin's outdoors.

David L. Sperling



"Our customers told us they wanted to buy their licenses, apply for recreational permits, register vehicles or sign-up for outdoor safety classes in one place at one time. That's what we aim to provide with our new systems," says Diane Brookbank, director of DNR Customer Service and Licensing bureau.

Not long ago hunting and fishing licenses and recreational vehicle registrations were mainly available at DNR offices and county clerks' offices during business hours, Monday through Friday. With the jam-packed work and family schedules most of us struggle with today, procuring the necessary paperwork required time and effort we just couldn't spare.

DAVID L. SPERLING



One aim of service consolidation is to provide quick answers to many questions conservation wardens used to attend to by phone so the wardens can spend more time on field patrols, enforcement checks and educational contacts with outdoor users.

Last summer, DNR began to roll out improvements to the licensing system to make it easier, faster and more convenient to get outdoor licenses and answers. "Our customers are going to love this system because it allows them to do business with us much more quickly," said Diane Brookbank, director of DNR's Bureau of Customer Service and Licensing. "Customers told us that whether they were buying licenses, seeking permits for special hunts, registering their recreational vehicles, or signing up for outdoor safety classes, they wanted to sign up in one place, one time."

With more than 1,400 license outlets and the ability to access the licensing system at home, on the phone, or online, people can now conduct their business with DNR in a snap.

"People can reach us from early in the morning until late at night, seven days a week and most holidays," Brookbank says. "And we're prepared to do business in the three languages most commonly used by our customers — English, Spanish and Hmong."

Quicker transactions at licensing agents

Hunters and anglers who buy their licenses at sporting goods stores, bait shops and resorts should notice that purchases go faster. If they come to the counter with their license from last year, the clerk should be able to scan the bar code from their expiring license and use the new touch screen to sell licenses fast. Wildlife permits for such popular hunts as Canada goose, bear, sharp-tailed grouse and the harvest of upriver sturgeon, bobcat, otter and fisher can be applied for on the touch screen, and agents can even show maps of the management units for each hunt to prospective hunters from the terminals in their stores.

Wildlife permit applications automatically will be entered into the drawings to receive permits. Our improved Internet system is more reliable.

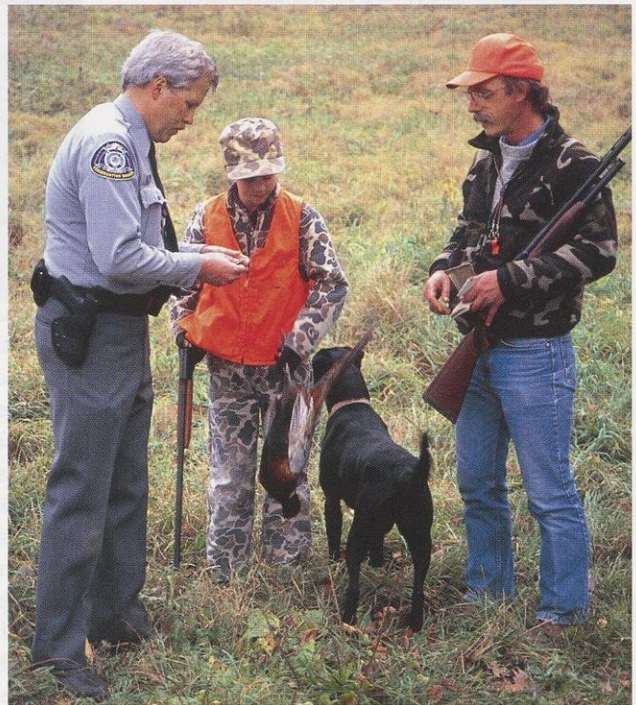
The technological enhancements, the new Call Center, longer service hours and the opportunity for customers to increasingly help themselves online came about when several factors converged.

"Manually processing outdoor licenses, registrations and permit drawings was one of the most labor-intensive tasks we faced every year," Brookbank said. "We knew that customers wanted those transactions to happen more quickly and with less work for them." When the contract for the existing automated license sales network came up for bid, Customer Service and Licensing began to examine how to speed up and ease the transaction process.

At the same time, DNR's 24-hour call-in tipline to report outdoor violations was being evaluated.

"While we were reviewing how we wanted to staff the tiplines, we were also considering what steps we might take that would provide better service to our customers and free up the field wardens' time to spend more of their work days in the field on patrol, public contacts and education instead of so many hours on the phone," says Chief Warden Randy Stark. "We started working with Customer Service and Licensing to rethink our staffing at the same time that they were rebidding their sales network contracts."

By combining forces and reallocating staff, the two programs found they could provide better service to customers for many more hours each day, and operate



ROBERT QUEEN

seven days a week — a boon for busy customers, and especially handy for the elderly or disabled who may lack easy transport to licensing outlets or DNR Service Centers.

"This is one of those everybody wins stories," Stark said. "Our customers are getting prompt service when they need it. Our wardens are able to spend more time in the field responding to complaints, enforcing the law and working with local communities on conservation, environmental and public safety needs, and this does not cost the people who support our programs through license and registration fees any more money," Stark said.

Registrations streamlined and automated

Wisconsinites enjoy motorized sports and, consequently, DNR currently registers about half a million boats, a quarter million ATVs (all-terrain vehicles) and almost 139,000 snowmobiles. "That doesn't include older vehicles

with expired registrations or vehicles that are considered in flux because people have sold or are still in the process of registering a vehicle," says Penny Kanable, who manages the recreational vehicle registration program for DNR's Customer Service and Licensing.

"In the past, the owners registered their recreational vehicle by mail, at DNR offices, at one of the 60 places statewide where 'validation agents' are set up to handle the transaction or at dealerships if owners were buying new vehicles," Kanable says. "The forms are a bit complicated to complete. Due to the sheer volume of those transactions and the fact that each application has to be opened, reviewed and checked manually, it can take as long as four to six weeks to send back updated registrations to our customers." If the forms were not completed correctly or if the customer's handwriting was difficult to read, staff had to return the forms to customers with an explanation, causing additional delays. Often, when an incomplete form was returned, people would set it aside and might not attend to it promptly.

"Since late December the same registration forms have been available online for those who are renewing their registrations, transferring a vehicle, replacing a

lost registration, or just need to make a simple amendment like a change of address or a new phone number," Kanable says. "Online registration offers a much faster option for our customers." The forms take customers through the process step-by-step. At the end of the transaction, customers who have filled out forms correctly can pay their fees online and immediately print out a Temporary Operating Receipt. "They are good to go immediately," she says. Transactions are completed the same night they are entered and customers receive hard copies of revisions and registrations within a week.

Kanable fired up her computer and deftly showed me some of the enhancements of the online system. Customers who have sold a boat, snowmobile or ATV just enter the registration number, purchase price and the location; the computer program automatically calculates and displays a tally of the registration fees, state and local taxes, and directions to complete the transaction. If the application is incomplete, the online screens highlight what information is missing.

As of our press time, online ATV and snowmobile registrations are available; online boat registration will be up and running within a few months, well ahead of the summer boating season.

We got a preview of the boat-registration system. The online program asks a series of questions so the customer can quickly transfer, renew or register a vessel. Small boats (less than 16 feet long) can be registered or transferred through the online system; programs for big-

ger boats will be added to the system in the near future. For someone buying a used boat who is seeking a title transfer in addition to registering the vehicle, the computer program also generates a handy item-by-item checklist.

"Now we can offer a much faster option online that customers complete at their convenience, any time of the day or night," says Kanable. Those transactions will be updated daily at the close of business.

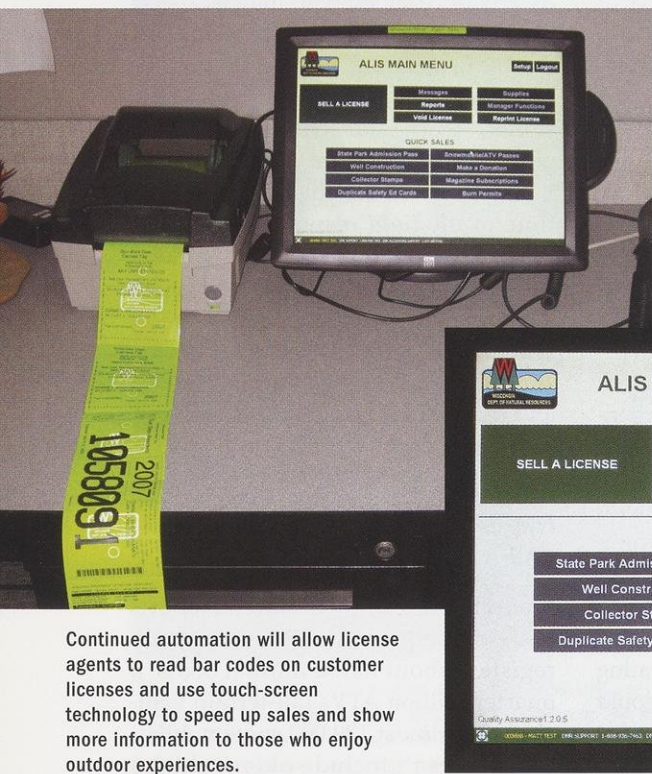
For individuals who own several recreational vehicles or businesses like resorts that own a fleet of vehicles, the online system is especially handy: After the person logging on has entered their address and identification information, the program displays a complete list showing each vehicle, the make, model, hull or serial numbers, expiration date for the registrations and a "status" column indicating if registrations are current, pending or have expired.

"This system will be especially useful for snowbirds, out-of-state residents and others who want to get ready for the recreation season and renew their registrations before the current season," Kanable says. She notes that snowmobile renewals are sent out to customers each spring, but many people don't get around to renewing their registrations until the snow starts to fall. It's also useful for people who have sold vehicles and want to check whether those vehicles have been removed from their inventory and are now the responsibility of the new owners. Past owners can check whether vehicles are still on their files by entering the serial number, registration number or decal number of those vehicles.

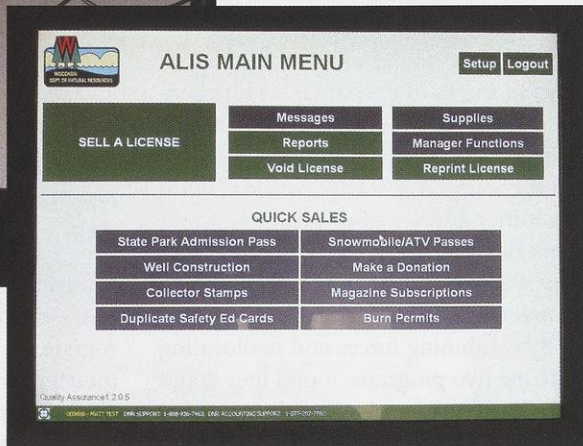
Help in filling out these online forms is no farther than a phone call away from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week, excluding the Christmas and New Year's holidays. Just dial the Call Center number and push the option for snowmobile, ATV and boat registration to reach customer service staff.

Convenient service in three languages

Like a library's ready reference desk, staff at DNR's Call Center can quickly lay



Continued automation will allow license agents to read bar codes on customer licenses and use touch-screen technology to speed up sales and show more information to those who enjoy outdoor experiences.



DAVID L. SPERLING



DAVID L. SPERLING

Call Center staff are available to answer questions from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily in three languages. When calls slack a bit, the staff process permits, registrations and update harvest data following the hunting seasons.

"I sure never expected a response on a Sunday," said an ATV registrant trying to unravel dual renewal applications for vehicle stickers.

"Wow. You're amazing. Thanks for answering me," said a caller with a boating registration question. "Thanks so much for the quick reply, especially on the weekend."

"Wow. I am very impressed with the service! How late do you people work?" asked an e-mail correspondent who sent in a question at 11:08 at night and had a reply before 7:30 the next morning.

"Your state is the easiest by far of any that I have tried. Thank you for such easy access to your license."

"I'm impressed that an actual person from the DNR took the time to e-mail me back. Lately I've been working with financial companies and other companies that NEVER NEVER respond with a courteous e-mail. I appreciate you and the DNR," said a caller.

One caller sent an e-mail after 8 p.m. on a Thursday asking staff to identify a snake from a photo she attached to her message; her son had brought the snake into the house and it had gotten loose. The next morning, a staff herpetologist identified the snake as a juvenile western fox snake and told the customer not to worry: The snake was a harmless constrictor relatively common in Wisconsin.

"Some people want to understand rules and get a local interpretation," Leighton says. "Others want to talk with a local who knows the roads, towns and properties in an area. Whatever it is, when we can provide that customer with the answer or contact they want, that's really satisfying."

David L. Sperling edits Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine.

their hands on materials to provide fast, accurate answers to your questions. But that's not all they do.

Since last summer Call Center staff have been on the other end of the line, helping customers understand hunting and fishing rules, explaining how to sign up for outdoor safety education courses, connecting callers to DNR experts in resource and environmental matters, offering assistance in filling out forms, taking reports of outdoor violations and handling emergency calls.

Customers can reach the Call Center by phone toll-free or through live online chats 15 hours a day from 7 a.m. until 10 p.m. at 1 (888) 936-7463 or 1 (888) WDNR INFO). The extended hours offer customer service into the evenings, early mornings and on weekends — convenient for people on shift schedules and for those who want to reach DNR during their leisure time.

The center's 15 staff members are trained to take calls and summon emergency help when spills and hotline tips are phoned in. Some staff are fluent in Spanish, Hmong and Portuguese to serve an ever-wider customer base.

During times when calls drop off, Call Center staff work with their Customer Service and Licensing colleagues to process wildlife harvest data; handle ATV and boat registrations; send out hunting permits; perform background checks for law enforcement; assist the warden help line; and communicate with other DNR Service Centers and offices.

By combining the jobs of people who staffed the law enforcement hotlines with

some duties that used to be performed by outside contractors, the Call Center is able to supplement the friendly help customers receive at DNR Service Centers and relieve many of the routine calls local wardens got at their homes for general information about DNR.

Some center staff specialize in handling hotline, tipline and spill calls; others are trained to quickly help the field wardens who call in for information. "Our aim is to cross-train our staff so everybody will be able to take on any call or inquiry coming into the center," says Donna Leighton, a Call Center lead worker. Besides having access to a central repository of regulation pamphlets, directories, fact sheets and contact lists, each staffer builds a personal reference manual to consult.

"As we all become more familiar with the typical questions that our customers ask, we get better and faster at finding them answers," says Leighton, who notes that many questions are dictated by the seasons — how to get rid of a certain nuisance plant or animal, when trails open, how to find parks, fishing seasons and limits, interpreting hunting regulations. "People also want to know who can talk about current topics like VHS (viral hemorrhagic septicemia), chronic wasting disease or emerald ash borer," she says. "We'll find a local contact near the caller's home when they want information about a local area, lake, recreation spot or business."

Opened in June 2007, the Call Center continues to receive rave reviews:



A legacy in pine

From plantation to pillar and post, pines with an environmental heritage have been transformed into one of the greenest buildings on earth.

Kathryn A. Kahler

Pines, like other blessings, come to him who waits. When the labor of planting is done, you wait for a rain. When the plantation is safely rooted, you wait three years for real growth to begin. Then, for a decade or two, you wait all year for May to come, for buds to burst, for waxy “candles” to reach skyward, each year a little farther: first a foot a year, then two feet a year, finally sometimes three feet a year. If, during the pyramiding period, your own clock shows signs of running down, you may gain from your trees a curious transfusion of courage. Pitch, like blood, is thicker than water.

— Aldo Leopold, from “Pines above the Snow,”
For the Health of the Land.



Professor Aldo Leopold planting pines by the gate to the driveway leading to “the Shack” visible on the right.



JILL METCOFF

Seventy years later, some trees from the same plantation were harvested and used to build the Aldo Leopold Legacy Center.

Perhaps Aldo Leopold foresaw the dilemma his children would someday face when he wrote this essay in the early 1940s. They had, after all, worked and played among the pines during their “pyramiding” process and watched over the plantings during the seven decades since. The Leopold pines were in their blood when in 2003 the family was asked to approve a plan to selectively cut some of them. The plan was to use the thinnings to build the Aldo Leopold Legacy Center a mile from the Leopold Shack, northeast of Baraboo near the Wisconsin River.

But approve the plan they did and construction of the center, named for one of the country’s most influential conservationists, was completed in April 2007. It soon received an award from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). More than three-quarters of the wood used to construct the building was FSC-certified, 92 percent of which was harvested on-site and locally processed.

Last November, the center was certified by the U.S. Green Building Council as the “greenest” building in the world. The council’s LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) program gave the center the highest rating of all buildings ever assessed for its energy efficiency and use of locally harvested products.

Leopold bought as a family hunting camp for \$8 an acre. Worn-out and abandoned, the farm was destined to become a place of respite for Leopold, his wife Estella and their five children, and inspiration for his most famous book, *A Sand County Almanac*. Leopold’s budding land ethic, accompanied by persistence and much trial and error, transformed the barren land into a haven for wildlife and humans alike.

Between 1936 and 1948, the family planted, watered and cared for 40,000 pines obtained from state nurseries. Although 95 percent died in the early years due to the Dust Bowl, by the turn of the millennium thousands of white and red pines towered above the farm.

By 2003, it was apparent that the pines needed further care. As pine plantations mature, it’s common for managers and landowners to thin out the smaller, weaker trees to provide better growing conditions for the more stalwart of the stand. Dan Pubanz, a consulting forester for Clark Forestry in Baraboo, was hired by the Aldo Leopold Foundation to

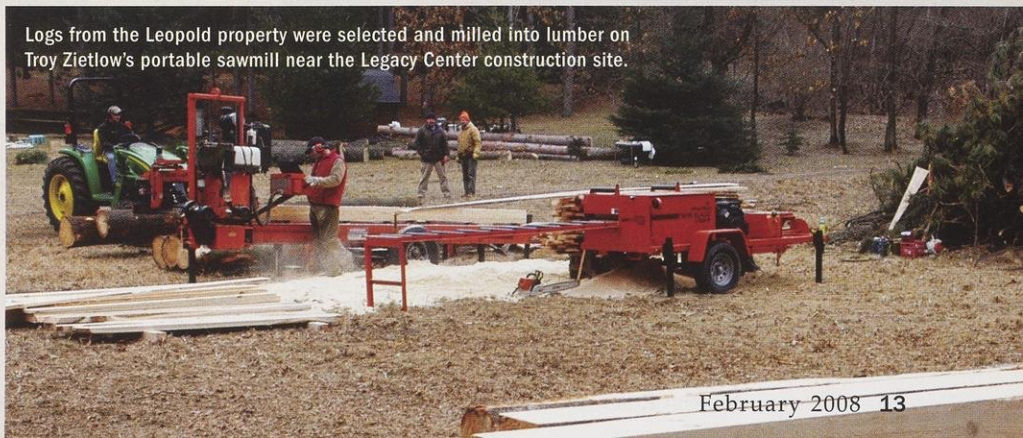
make an assessment of the pines.

Pubanz concluded that many of the red pines were at a critical stage. They were stressed from competition for sunlight, water and soil nutrients to a point that an insect attack or drought could kill a large number of them. The Leopold family and foundation agreed to a careful thinning but, in the vein of their father’s land ethic, sought to find good use for the thinnings.

“As fate would have it, we had been considering the notion of building a new center for a couple of years,” recalled Buddy Huffaker, the Aldo Leopold Foundation’s executive director. “When the evaluation of the health of the pines was done and they were found to be in decline, the two things moved forward in unison from then on.”

A design team headed by Kubala Washatko Architects developed plans for a 13,000 square-foot, three-building complex that would use as much of the wood from the pines as possible and incorporate innovative techniques rarely tried before. In addition, the center was designed

Logs from the Leopold property were selected and milled into lumber on Troy Zietlow’s portable sawmill near the Legacy Center construction site.



ED PEMBLETON

Where it all started

The pines took root in the sands of north-eastern Sauk County on the farm Aldo



ED PEMBLETON

In skilled hands, Fike Forest Products used a timber harvester to hold, cut, limb and gently drop trees in a way that caused minimal soil compaction and disturbance.

ceiling and porch decking; flooring; window and door trim; baseboards; batten strips; counters; cabinets and furniture." Besides the red and white pine, site-harvested species included red, black and white oak; black locust; black cherry; red maple and aspen.

Len Fike, proprietor of Fike Forest Products of New Lisbon, was chosen to harvest the pines. Harvest began December 27, 2005, and

as a model for energy efficiency with a goal of producing 10 percent more energy than the buildings consumed.

Blueprint for harvest

All told, the foundation's ecologist Steve Swenson marked 1,000 trees for harvest, including 450 red and white pines from the Leopold family stands and 50 trees of various other species that would be put to structural and non-structural uses.

"Structurally, we milled columns and beams from our trees that created the majority of the interior skeleton of the building," said Swenson. "We also used our site-harvested wood for non-structural building materials like interior and exterior siding, windows and doors;

after some stops and starts due to variable weather, was concluded in February 2006.

Fike used a low-impact harvester-processor that both held and selectively cut trees from the stand without damaging the remaining trees. The processor used large arm-like clamps to grasp a tree, then a chainsaw swung out from its housing at the bottom and cut the tree at the base. The arm then swiveled with the tree in its grasp and dropped the massive trunk in the desired direction. Once the pine was on the ground, large rollers slid the tree along and a chainsaw automatically limbed and cut the logs to a desired length. The harvester moved on wider, tank-like tracks that greatly reduced soil disturbance in the forest.

Foundation staff learned new respect for professional loggers. Huffaker recalls that when weather made it difficult for Fike to get his equipment into the woods, staff tried to do some of the cutting by hand-felling and using a light tractor.

"It became apparent to us that we were doing more damage than the bigger equipment," said Huffaker. "It showed us the value of using a good logger and how good they are at what they do."

The largest logs were trucked just one mile down the road to the construction site where local sawmill operator Troy Zietlow milled them into structural posts and beams.

"The butt log, which is the lowest log of a standing tree, and obviously the largest, was cut at 17 feet long and hauled to the building site," Swenson recalled. "The posts and beams milled on-site were mostly 8 x 8 and 8 x 10 inches wide, but also 8 x 12 and 8 x 14.

"Some trees were large enough in diameter to make two 17-foot logs for structural use, but typically after the butt log was cut at 17 feet off the ground, the next logs were cut to 8 feet 6 inches in length down to a diameter of 6 inches and hauled away for milling."

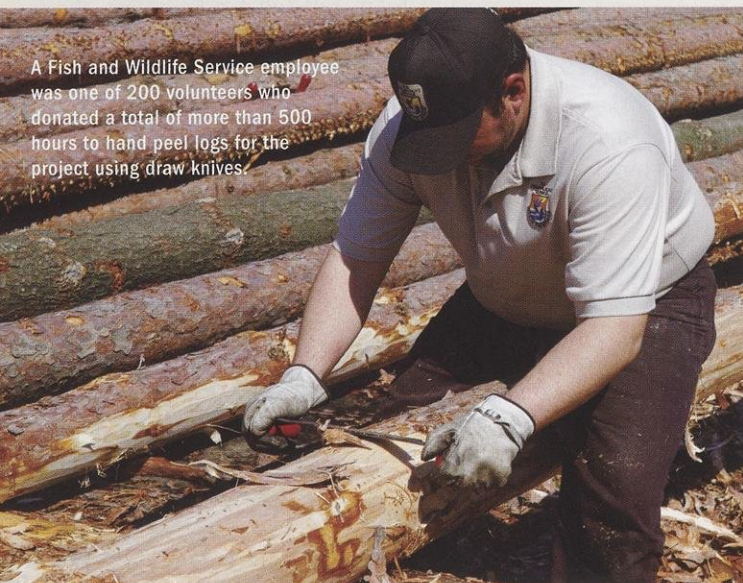
Eleven truckloads of these smaller diameter logs, or 115 cords, were shipped an hour's drive to Samsel Limited, a family-owned sawmill near Hancock. Samsel handled milling, kiln drying and finishing of more than 70,000 board feet of wood, including pine paneling, red maple ceiling decking and oak siding.

About 70 skinny and tall red pine logs, ranging in diameter from six to eight inches, also became an integral part of the center's structure. Too small to be milled into structural beams, such logs are usually considered "substandard" for most construction and are more typically ground for pulpwood or other uses. In this project, designers employed an innovative technique — leaving the logs in the round — for use as trusses, purlins and rafters. By keeping the logs in the round the strongest part of the wood, the sapwood, remains intact. The round-log trusses are so strong they can span the roof of a 30-foot deep building without any internal support columns. The center's three-season outdoor classroom, made entirely of round logs, is the best example of this technique.

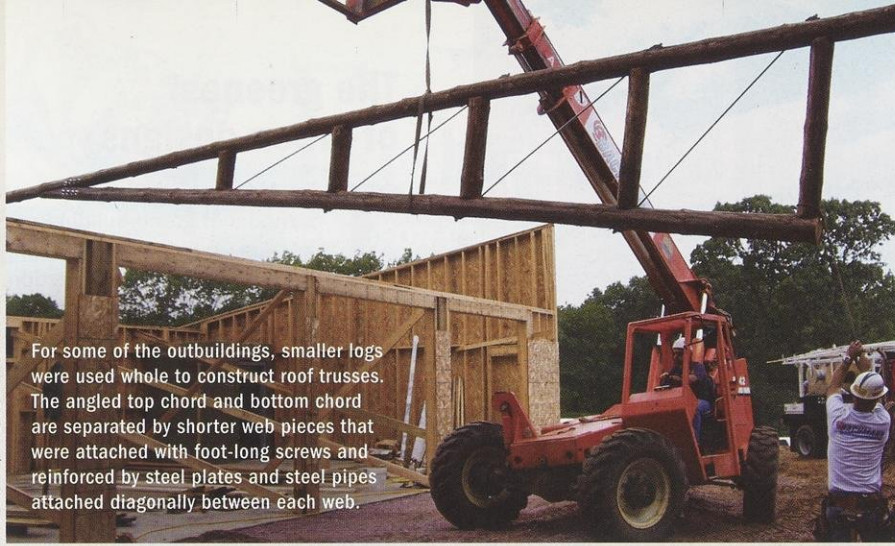
"We didn't want to pass judgment in the field on which part of the tree was the best structurally," Swenson said, "so we decided to get them down to the building site whole and have them looked at by a professional grader." In all, some 70 logs ranging from 37 to 80 feet long were trucked whole to the building site.

In keeping with the other low-impact techniques used in construction, staff

A Fish and Wildlife Service employee was one of 200 volunteers who donated a total of more than 500 hours to hand peel logs for the project using draw knives.



ED PEMBLETON



For some of the outbuildings, smaller logs were used whole to construct roof trusses. The angled top chord and bottom chord are separated by shorter web pieces that were attached with foot-long screws and reinforced by steel plates and steel pipes attached diagonally between each web.

decided to “peel” or remove the bark from each log by hand. More than 200 volunteers were recruited over a period of several weeks and spent about 500 hours peeling the logs.

“The teams used draw knives to peel the logs,” Swenson explained. “The knives are curved and look like bicycle handlebars. The peelers straddle the logs and pull the knives toward themselves, peeling and turning the logs as they move down the trunk.” Volunteers who dedicated at least two hours of their time received special recognition. Their names are engraved in a plaque made from one of the Leopold pines and displayed at the center.

The round logs used for trusses were graded for quality and structural soundness by Mac Garcia of Expedition Log Homes. Once graded, truss construction commenced. Each truss was formed from a bottom chord parallel to the ground, a top chord forming the angled roofline of the building, and shorter web pieces in between. The webs were attached to the chords at all weight-bearing surfaces with foot-long steel screws.

Compression from the weight of the roof helps stabilize the trusses, as do steel plates inserted inside the beams at critical points and threaded steel pipe running diagonally between the webs.

Finally, the tops of the pines that were deemed too small for building materials were ground and made into paper used to print a commemorative edition of *A Sand County Almanac*. Researchers from the Forest Product Laboratory in Madison and students from UW-Stevens Point’s Paper Science Laboratory collaborated to make paper from the 500 pounds of pine pulp, strengthened by pulp from other softwoods and hardwoods.

Lessons learned

Huffaker hopes the Leopold project contributes to a trend toward more intelligent consumption of forest resources, where more forest products now considered unusable will be available to a broader public.

“Using small diameter trees and thinnings is certainly a prime example of finding a

Visitor information and exhibits

The Aldo Leopold Legacy Center is open for guided public tours each Wednesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. from mid-April through Labor Day, shorter schedules in fall and one Saturday afternoon a month from December through March. Self-guided tour materials are available 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., M-F. Contact www.aldoleopold.org/legacycenter/visit.html for hours, tour times and contacts to preplan a visit. The center is located in northeastern Sauk County on the south side of Levee Road (marked as Rustic Road #49), two miles east from the junction of County Highway T and Levee Road and 0.2 mile west from the junction of Schepp Road and Levee Road.

In addition to touring the center, farm and Shack, the public is welcome to sign up for courses scheduled throughout the year at the center, including those that are part of the Woodland School, which offers practical workshops to guide landowners and public land managers in identifying the biotic community, understanding threats to their land and developing stewardship skills. Past Woodland School courses have included: Chainsaw Safety, Financial Planning for the Forest Landowner, Prescribed Fire Series and Timber Stand Improvement. For a current listing of courses and calendar of events, please visit the center’s website at www.aldoleopold.org

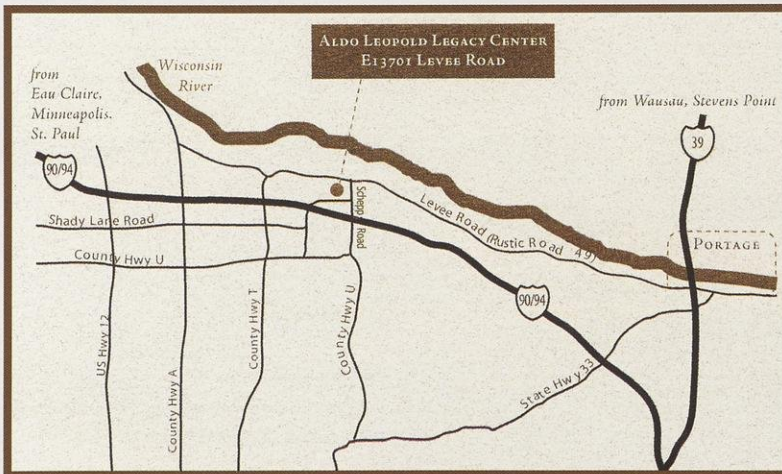
The fundraising campaign that paid for the center’s construction is also being tapped to restore the Shack and farm, and to make the vast Leopold archives — manuscripts, photographs and other materials — available to the public. The center is working with the University of Wisconsin to digitize the materials and plans to make them available free of charge via the Internet.

One current exhibit, “Changes in the Leopold Landscape: Photography Through Time,” features photos by Aldo Leopold’s son, Carl, of his family at work and play. Carl’s gift for photography developed after his father returned from a trip to Germany in 1935 with a Zeiss camera. “The first day we went to the new property, I climbed the hickory tree by Levee Road and took panoramic shots with that marvelous new camera,” Carl recalls. His photographs of the family’s work and play at the Shack in the 1930s and ’40s are now paired with contemporary landscape photographs by

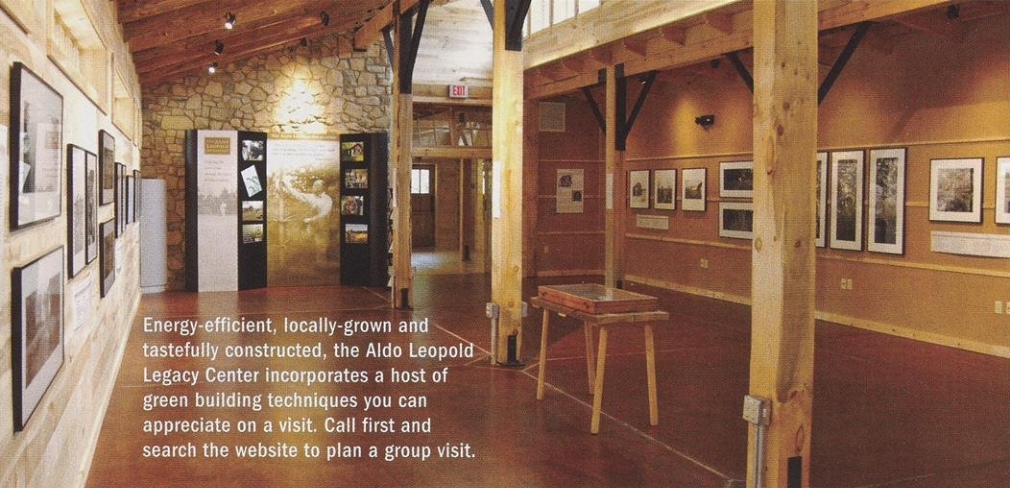
Jill Metcoff, whose cameras have focused on rural southwestern Wisconsin and Illinois

lands for more than thirty years. Metcoff’s work celebrates

“hands-in-the-dirt closeness” to place and illuminates the transformative power of ecological restoration. Visit her website at www.jillmetcoff.com



COURTESY OF THE LEOPOLD LEGACY CENTER



Energy-efficient, locally-grown and tastefully constructed, the Aldo Leopold Legacy Center incorporates a host of green building techniques you can appreciate on a visit. Call first and search the website to plan a group visit.

MARK HEFFRON, KUBALA WASHATKO ARCHITECTS

The greenest of green designs

The Aldo Leopold Legacy Center is a model of green building not only because builders used locally harvested timber in construction. The project also incorporated recycled aluminum, reused wood, rapidly renewable materials and innovative engineering. In addition, the center relies on energy from the sun and earth to sustainably heat, cool and power the building.

Solar energy powers an extensive series of photovoltaic solar panels — one of the best examples in Wisconsin — atop the center's roof to heat the water for the building.

The earth's relatively constant temperature — compared to fluctuating atmospheric temperatures — provides the basis for the building's heating, cooling and ventilation systems. A grid of 24-inch concrete earth tubes, sunken 10 feet beneath the foundation, moderates the temperature of the air before it enters the ventilation system's heating or cooling elements. Fresh air is drawn in through an air intake pipe above ground, then travels through the underground tubes. At the other end in the center's basement, the air is filtered and irradiated to eliminate mold and bacteria before being heated or cooled and circulated throughout the building.

The earth's geothermal capacity also powers the center's radiant floor heating system. Nineteen geothermal wells were dug 220 feet below ground where water stays about 50° F year-round. Heat is transferred to the flooring (during the winter) and from the building (during the summer) through a glycol and water solution that is piped through 8,400 linear feet of plastic tubing enmeshed in the concrete floors. The concrete takes on the temperature of the circulating solution underfoot and radiates it into the rooms.

A fireplace in the foyer constructed from reclaimed stone and an aqueduct directing the water flow from the roof to a rain garden are two more of the center's green features. For more information, visit the center's website at www.aldoleopold.org

market for something that's currently undervalued," said Huffaker. "The Leopold center reinforces that goal in other ways. The ceiling decking, for example, is red maple which economically and ecologically is creating challenges for landowners. This species shades out oak woodlands that are converting to red maple. Using red maple for finishing projects creates a market for it.

"Another example is our oak flooring. When the builders came in to do the flooring, they asked where the materials were. We pointed to the pile of wood and they said, 'You're kidding, that's terrible!' By the time they were done it was beautiful. Small-diameter wood can't be purchased [at most commercial lumber yards], because its imperfections don't meet many consumers' expectations. People these days expect the flawless finishes they see in artificial flooring made with composites. We hope that by showing the general public its beauty, they will want it in their homes. That would further eliminate waste in the wood products industry."

Clyde Samsel, owner of the company that milled some of the hardwoods and small pine not used for structural components agreed. "I knew the job would be very difficult for our sawyer, but we would never reject low-grade logs or discourage people from marketing low-grade woods. It can be successfully mar-

keted as 'character wood,'" noted Samsel. "If you have a floor made out of wood with lots of defects, it's very interesting to look at."

Steve Swenson believes the Leopold center can also serve as an example of a trend away from overbuilt designs that use more wood than necessary. "Ironically, it's in environmental learning centers where we often see these nostalgic 'lodge aesthetic' designs," Swenson explained. "In our case, we feel fortunate that our commitment to site-harvested wood forced the design process to draw a tighter connection to sustainability in ways we were not considering."

In Leopold's words, it also appears there was a "curious transfusion of courage" involved in the process. All along the way, partners put old methods aside and looked at the project as a way to use innovative, ground-breaking techniques as examples for us all. As Leopold observed, the decision about which tree to cut, spare, or plant is not just made in the woods by a forester, but in part by architect, engineer, and each one of us selecting a home, furniture or flooring. "The long and short of the matter is that forest conservation depends in part on intelligent consumption, as well as intelligent production of lumber."

Kathryn A. Kahler writes from Madison.



The center incorporates solar panels, efficient design, geothermal heat and roof runoff draining to this rain garden.

MARK HEFFRON, KUBALA WASHATKO ARCHITECTS



For Our Patrons

NEWS FOR CONSERVATION PATRON LICENSE HOLDERS AND POTENTIAL PATRONS

Patron Licenses: Now EASIER than ever!

Thanks for
your interest
in renewing
or buying a
hunting, fishing
or Conservation
Patron license.
These licenses
expire each
year on
March 31.

Mark your
calendar: 2008
licenses go on
sale March 10!

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is excited to announce that its license agents throughout the state will be using a new, updated license issuance system this year to make your purchase easier and more convenient.

What's New?

- A bar code scanner can be used on last year's (2007) license that will retrieve your customer information immediately, so be sure to take last year's license with you. You will still have an opportunity to make any corrections to the information, such as a change of address, change in weight, etc.
- When you buy your license, you will have an opportunity to apply for bobcat, otter, fisher, bear and upriver sturgeon permits. The spring and fall turkey permit applications will still need to be submitted using a paper application that will be sent to you with your fall hunting packet or by applying online.
- Licenses will have a new look — new paper, new color.

What hasn't changed is the price of the license. We know that our patrons are avid outdoors enthusiasts. The patron license covers a wide variety of hunting and fishing activities

with the purchase of just one license for a reasonable price.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources offers three convenient ways to quickly buy recreational licenses:

1. VISIT ANY LICENSE SALES LOCATION
2. BUY ONLINE
3. CALL US

We hope you will find that purchasing a Patron License is easier and more convenient than ever. Recreational licenses can be purchased at nearly 1,500 sporting goods stores, merchants and resorts as well as at DNR offices. For the locations and phone numbers of all DNR Service Centers visit dnr.wi.gov under the heading "About." Click on the words "Service Centers" listed under "Contacts."

Of course, if you prefer, you can still purchase your new license online at dnr.wi.gov / (click on "Hunting and Fishing Licenses and Permits") or over the phone by calling 1-877-945-4236; an additional \$3.00 handling fee will be charged.

FEES: Resident Patron	\$165
Resident Junior Patron	\$ 75
Nonresident Patron	\$600
Nonresident Junior Patron	\$ 77

Other resident hunting, fishing and license fees are available at dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cs/

RESERVE A BACKTAG NUMBER?

Conservation Patron and Sports License holders have the option of reserving a four-digit backtag number for a \$5 annual fee on a first-come, first-served basis. Reserve your backtag number before buying or renewing a license. That backtag number will continue to be reserved for your use until you request otherwise or do not purchase a Conservation Patron or Sports License for two consecutive years. To reserve or relinquish your backtag number, call Patron/Sports License Coordinator Sue Meyer at (608) 266-7030 or e-mail her at sue.meyer@wisconsin.gov



dnr.wi.gov
Patron Coordinator: (608) 266-7030

WE'RE HERE FOR YOU.

"¿Cómo
puedo
ayudarle?"

"How may
I help you?"

"Kuv pab koj
tau licas?"

CALL CENTER STAFF available 7 days a week, 7am–10pm

Toll-free **1-888-WDNRINFO** (1-888-936-7463)

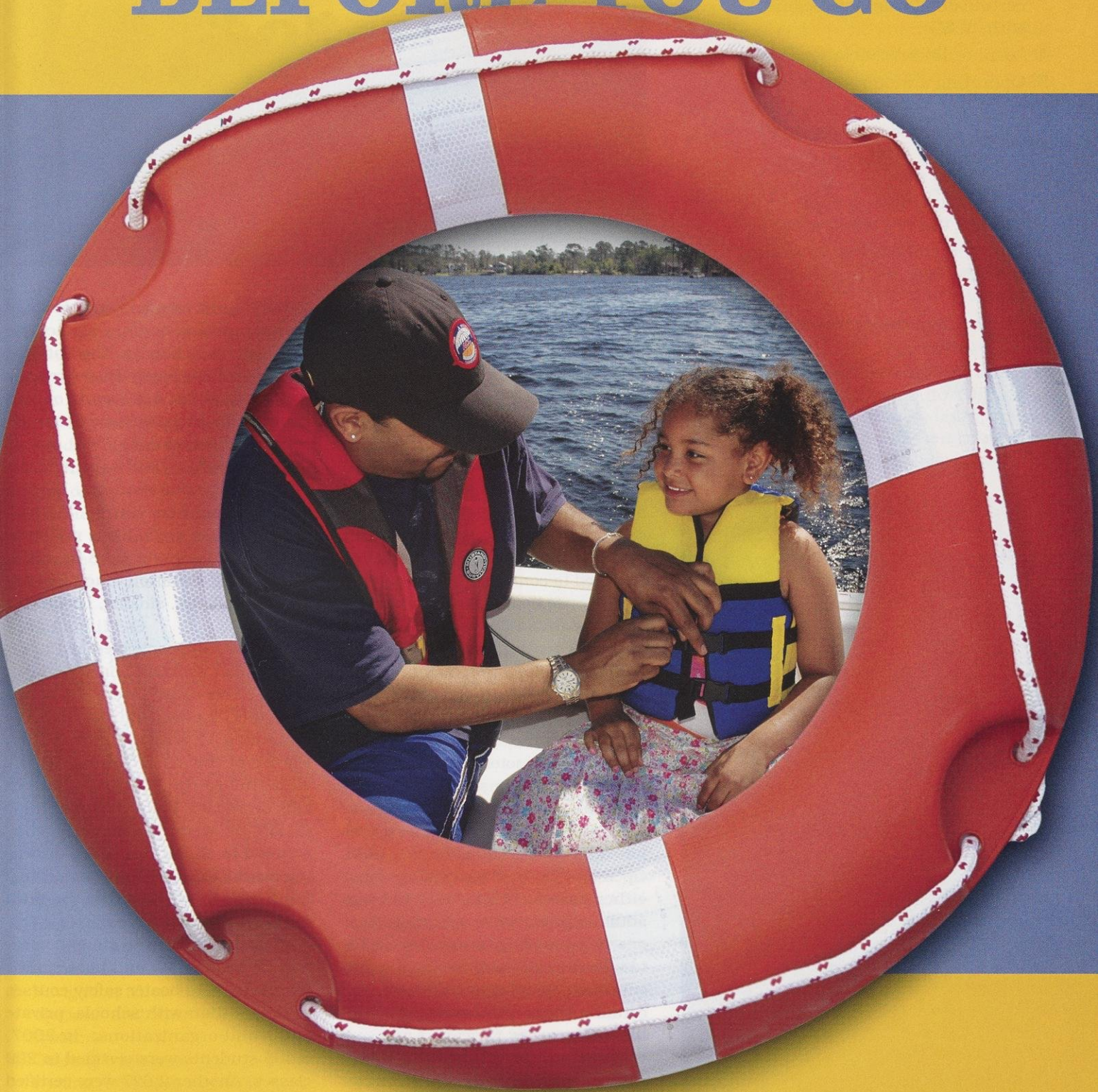
ONLINE CHAT at dnr.wi.gov/contact/

Customer Service

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO



Prepare for safe boating in Wisconsin.

10 MOST COMMON BOATING VIOLATIONS

1. Failure to provide an adequate number of life jackets
2. Personal watercraft violations
3. Operating a boat without a valid certificate of number (begins with "WS")
4. Local ordinance violations
5. Operating a motorboat while under the influence
6. Operating a boat in excess of the speed limit or in a prohibited area
7. Operating a boat at night without the required lights
8. Operating a boat that is towing a water-skier without a required observer
9. Failure to display proper registration
10. Failure to have certificate of number on board (plastic card titled "Wisconsin Boat Registration Certificate")

— Source: Wisconsin DNR

WHEN TO CALL

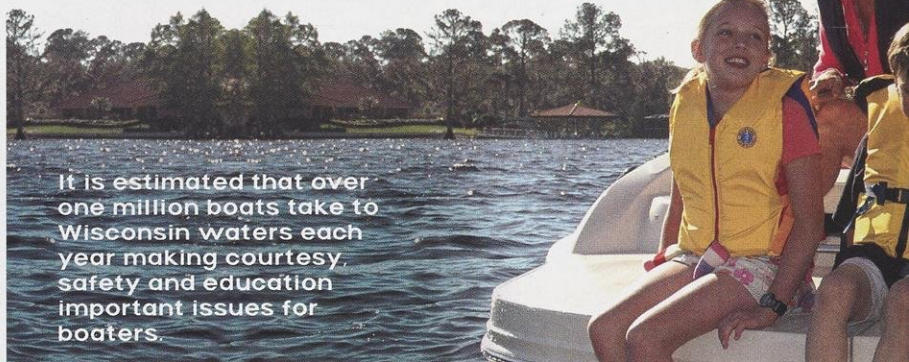
Boat accidents must be reported immediately to a conservation warden or other law enforcement officer if the accident (regardless of the number of boats involved) results in loss of life, injury that requires medical treatment beyond first aid, boat or property damage in excess of \$2,000 or complete loss of a boat.

To report a boating accident or other violation, call 1-800-TIP-WDNR (1-800-847-9367).

In addition, within 10 days of the accident, the operator must submit a written report on Form 4100-20 (Operator Boating Incident Report Form) to the Department of Natural Resources. If you are unable to download the form from the DNR website (dnr.wi.gov/org/es/enforcement/docs/4100020.pdf), forms are also available from DNR offices, sheriffs' departments and many local police departments. Mail completed forms to:

**WI Department of Natural Resources
Boating Program - LE/5**
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921

Boater education is mandatory in Wisconsin



It is estimated that over one million boats take to Wisconsin waters each year making courtesy, safety and education important issues for boaters.

Boating is a major Wisconsin recreational activity as well as a significant part of the state's economy and tourism industry. In Wisconsin, the number of motorboat registrations has increased by over 15 percent since 1996. Department of Natural Resources surveys indicate that an average of 36 percent of Wisconsin citizens participate in boating each year and this level of participation is expected to continue.

"But safe boating is a critical part of a pleasant on-the-water experience and safe boating starts before you launch," explains Roy Zellmer, DNR Boating Law Administrator. In fact, as a result of 2007 legislation, boating education is now mandatory in Wisconsin for motorboat operators.

The law: Wisconsin boating safety certification or an out-of-state equivalent certification is required for operators born on or after January 1, 1989. Operators 12 to 15 years of age must either have a certificate or have an adult on board while operating. Anyone 10 years of age or older is eligible to take the class and receive a safety education completion certificate. The certificate does not become valid until the child reaches 12 years of age.

Statistics bear out what logic suggests — boater education prevents accidents and saves lives. Of the approximately 7,700 accidents reported each year, the U.S. Coast Guard found that nearly 70 percent are caused by operator error as opposed

to boating and environmental factors.

Incompetent boaters also cause more severe accidents. The National Transportation Safety Board reports boating fatalities are second only to highway fatalities and more than 80 percent of recreational boat operators involved in fatal boating accidents have not taken any type of boater education course. An untrained boater would likely not know the proper steps to take in a life-threatening situation, such as capsizing, a fall, fire, sinking, flooding or collision.

In 2007, 18 people died in 122 reported boat accidents on Wisconsin waters. Five deaths were the result of impact/trauma/injuries with the remaining 13 a result of drowning. Eleven of the 13 drowning deaths were due to the boat capsizing or falls overboard. Failure to wear a life jacket or wear it correctly contributed to all but one of the drowning deaths. Alcohol was a contributing factor in one third of the fatal boating incidents.

Zellmer asks you to start the season on a safe note and boat smart. The DNR offers boater safety courses in cooperation with schools, private clubs and organizations. In 2007, 5,405 students were certified in 299 classes. Another 2,627 were certified by completing an Internet boat safety course.

The new boating education rule in Wisconsin also allows boat rental businesses to provide the minimum



NATIONAL SAFE BOATING COUNCIL

5. Boat accidents, emergency measures, aquatic safety, alcohol usage, visual distress signals, fire on board and first aid.

An online boating safety course is also available. To register visit www.boat-ed.com/wi/index.htm. This online instruction is not recommended for children under 14 years of age.

Be boat ready

It's also time to conduct your annual boat maintenance and make certain your registration is up to date and that the current year sticker is displayed. Here are a few other items to add to your boat check-up:

Do trailer maintenance. Clean and check for rust. Tighten bolts. Check trailer hitches, safety chains, rollers and pads. Check tire pressure and tire tread. Keep the tires and your spare inflated to the pressure indicated on the sidewall and inspect the tires for signs of wear. Check the safety chains from the car to the trailer and from the winch to the boat.

For both trailer and boat, check electrical systems to make sure all lights are in working order. Charge up those batteries.

Inspect the boat. Check the hull, pulleys, carpeting and fittings. Grease pulleys and check them for signs of wear. Check and lubricate steering cables. Move on to the electrical conduits, live well, compartments, chairs, benches, transom and the motor. Get your motor tuned-up for the season.

Check all your lines including the anchor ropes. Replace if frayed.

Inspect the fuel lines for wear and cracks. Install a fresh fuel filter. Inspect your fuel tanks and cap vents.

Check your safety equipment including the number of life jackets on board, and make sure the fire extinguisher, flare kit, flashlights and first aid kit are up to snuff.

Check the vehicle you will be using to tow the trailer and boat. Inspect the ball and hitch assembly and make sure the brakes on your vehicle are in good shape.

Do your part to stop the spread.

Clean boats mean clean waters. The DNR reminds you to take these steps to prevent the spread of invasive species every time you leave a launch:

- Inspect your boat, trailer and equipment and remove visible aquatic plants, animals and mud.
- Drain water from your boat, motor, bilge, live wells and bait containers.
- Dispose of leftover bait in the trash, not in the water or on land.
- Wash your boat and equipment with high pressure or hot water, or let it dry for five days before heading to another waterbody.

Visit dnr.wi.gov/invasives/ to learn more about what you can do to keep Wisconsin waterways clean and prevent the spread of invasive species.



ROBERT QUEEN

basic training required for people who will be operating a motorboat which they have rented or leased. The minimum age to be eligible for a temporary boater education training and certificate is 16 years of age, and the certification only applies to the operation of boats that are rented or leased by the holder of the certificate. Motorboat rental businesses will be required to collect a \$10 fee for the temporary boating education course and issuance of the certificate.

On course

There is at least one boater education course held per county per year. Boating safety classes are mostly offered in March, April, May and June. Visit dnr.wi.gov/org/es/enforcement/safety/upcoming.htm to check latest availability. Course cost is \$10 and content includes instruction in:

1. Boats, classification of boats, hull designs and motors.
2. Legal requirements, including registration and equipment requirements.
3. Navigation rules, basic safety regulations and waterway marking systems.
4. Getting underway, preparation, loading, boarding, cruising, docking, anchoring, knots, trailering, courtesy and maintenance.

For state boating law information, call Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, at 1-888-936-7463, or visit dnr.wi.gov

SAFETY TIPS FOR BEGINNERS AND SEASONED BOATERS

Even if you have taken a boater education course it helps to brush up on these important boating safety tips before your season on the water begins.

1. Carry one wearable U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) approved life jacket of the proper size and type for each boat occupant. Serviceable jackets and vests have no tears, rips, broken straps or snaps. Squeeze kapok life jackets to check that they are pliable and are free of punctures in the inner plastic liner. And remember: all life jackets must be ready at hand and not enclosed in plastic bags or locked compartments. Better yet, just wear one every time you go boating.
2. Boats 16 feet and over must also carry one USCG-approved throwable life jacket (Type IV).
3. If your boat has enclosed compartments or a false floor, you must carry a USCG-approved fire extinguisher. Make sure that it is charged and accessible.
4. Test your boat lights before the boat leaves the dock. If you use battery-operated lights, always carry extra batteries. Keep in mind that even if you plan to be back before dark, an equipment malfunction or bad weather may change your plans.
5. Be weather wise. Sudden wind shifts, lightning flashes and choppy water all can mean a storm is brewing. Bring along a radio and keep a close eye on the weather.
6. Bring emergency supplies: maps, flares and a first aid kit. Keep them in a floatable pouch.
7. Tell someone where you are going and when you will return. Bring a cell phone.
8. Check the boat landing for local regulations.
9. If boating on the Great Lakes or Mississippi River, review the federal regulations for additional requirements.
10. Ventilate tank after refueling. Open all hatches and run the blower. Sniff for fumes before starting the engine and do not start the engine until the air smells clean.
11. Learn proper anchoring procedures. Improper anchoring causes many fatal accidents.
12. Never consume alcohol or drugs before or during boat operation. Wisconsin law states that a person is considered to be operating a vessel under the influence of alcohol or drugs if he or she:
 - Has a blood or breath alcohol concentration of 0.08 percent or greater or...
 - Is under the influence of any controlled substance or any other unprescribed drug, or any combination of alcohol, controlled substance or drugs that renders that person incapable of operating safely.
13. If you loan your boat or personal watercraft to someone, teach them how to operate it. If you share the boat — share the knowledge!
14. Never allow passengers to ride on gunwales or seatbacks or outside of protective railings, including the front of a pontoon boat. A sudden turn, stop or start could cause a fall overboard.
15. Make certain your registration is up to date and that the current year's sticker is displayed. Carry your registration card on board with you.
16. Practice good boat launch etiquette.
17. Practice loading and unloading on a day that isn't too busy at the ramp.
18. Remove boat covers and straps before you get in line to launch.
19. Load equipment into the boat before you reach the ramp. Make sure all equipment is working and that the drain/boat plug is in.
20. Once in line to launch, have a person available to hold the bow line and assist in boat handling at the pier.
21. Have one person drive the boat off the trailer and out of the way of other boaters while another person is parking the tow vehicle.
22. When leaving a boat launch, maintain slow-no-wake speed for a safe and legal distance from the boat launch.
23. If bad weather is approaching, get off the water early to avoid a long waiting line.
24. Drop one person off at the pier to get the tow vehicle and then get in line.
25. Once loaded, pull well away from the launch area before securing the boat for travelling purposes.

Boating safety programs benefit

An increase in registration fees helps fund the programs.

Fees charged by the Department of Natural Resources for original boat registration and renewal increased effective October 30, 2007. The fee increase is expected to generate approximately \$330,000 in 2007-2008 and \$870,000 in 2008-2009. Boat registration fees are used to administer boat registration and titling, and operate the boating safety and enforcement programs. The costs of the title fee, transfer fee and replacement of titles, expiration decals and certificate of number cards have not changed.

"For example, original registration of a motorized boat 16 to 26 feet in length has increased from \$29 to \$33 and renewal of that size boat increased from \$24 to \$28," said Diane Brookbank, director of DNR's Customer Service and Licensing bureau.

The registration instruction form and application form can be found at dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cs/registrations/boatingregis.htm.

Boat owners can also renew their registration online 24 hours a day, seven days a week using their credit card. Boat owners can then print the validation receipt that will allow them to operate their boats while they wait for their new registration certificate and decals.

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2008 Wisconsin Hunting & Trapping Seasons



PUB-WM-153 2008

Get your regulations faster!

Visit dnr.wi.gov to view and print regulations up to one month before they are available in print.

Some seasons may be subject to change. Consult the hunting regulations pamphlet(s) before going hunting or check DNR's website at dnr.wi.gov.

Some 2008 seasons extend into 2009.

Ruffed Grouse

Zone A
Zone B

Sept. 13 - Jan. 31, 2009
Oct. 18 - Dec. 8



Hungarian Partridge

Statewide* Oct. 18 (noon) - Dec. 31
* Closed in Clark, Marathon,
and Taylor counties



Bobwhite Quail

Statewide Oct. 18 (noon) - Dec. 10



Crow

Sept. 13 - Nov. 20
and Jan. 25 - March 20, 2009

Sharp-tailed Grouse

Oct. 18 - Nov. 9



Pheasant

Statewide Oct. 18 (noon) - Dec. 31

White-tailed Deer (non-CWD units**)

Due to pending rules, these deer seasons may be modified.

Bow Sept. 13 - Nov. 20 and Dec. 1 - Jan. 4, 2009

Gun Nov. 22 - Nov. 30

Muzzleloader Dec. 1 - Dec. 10

Youth Deer Hunt Oct. 11 - 12

Statewide Antlerless Only Dec. 11 - Dec. 14



Woodcock

Sept. 20 - Nov. 3



**See the 2008 Deer Hunting Regulations for October antlerless only gun hunting opportunities likely to be in place on October 16-19; list of Herd Control and Earn-a-Buck units; and for CWD hunt dates.

Wild Turkey

Youth Turkey Hunt

April 12 - 13

Open Zones

Spring

Period A

April 16 - 20

Period B

April 23 - 27

Period C

April 30 - May 4

Period D

May 7 - 11

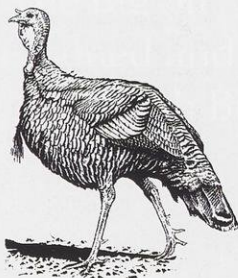
Period E

May 14 - 18

Period F

May 21 - 25

Fall Sept. 13 - Nov. 20



Cottontail Rabbit

Northern Zone Sept. 13 - Feb. 28, 2009

Southern Zone Oct. 18 (noon) - Feb. 28, 2009



Gray and Fox Squirrels

Statewide Sept. 13 - Jan. 31, 2009



Mourning Dove

Statewide Sept. 1 - Oct. 30

Raccoon

Resident Gun/Trapping Oct. 18 - Jan. 31, 2009

Non-Resident Furbearer Hunting and Trapping Nov. 1 - Jan. 31, 2009



Black Bear

Zone C where dogs **are not** permitted:

Sept. 3 - Oct. 7

All other zones where dogs are permitted:

Sept. 3 - Sept. 9

- with aid of bait
- with other methods **not** utilizing dogs

Sept. 10 - Sept. 30

- with aid of dogs
- with aid of bait
- with all other methods

Oct. 1 - Oct. 7

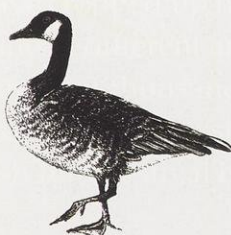
- with aid of dogs only

Waterfowl

Season dates for waterfowl vary annually. Duck and regular season goose regulations will not be available until August.

Canada Goose

Early Goose Season Sept. 1 - 15



Pick up litter, including spent shotgun shells, and keep your hunting grounds healthy and looking natural!

Coyote



Hunting

Continuous open season except closed in the northern Wisconsin wolf management zone during the regular gun deer, December antlerless only and muzzleloader seasons.

Trapping

Northern Zone Oct. 18 - Feb. 15, 2009
Southern Zone Oct. 25 - Feb. 15, 2009

Fox (all species)

Northern Zone Oct. 18 - Feb. 15, 2009
Southern Zone Oct. 25 - Feb. 15, 2009



Beaver



Trapping only

Zone A (Northwest) Nov. 1 - April 30, 2009
Zone B (Northeast) Nov. 1 - April 30, 2009
Zone C (South) Nov. 1 - Mar. 31, 2009
Zone D (Mississippi River) Day after duck season closes to March 15, 2009.

Mink

North Zone Oct. 18 - Feb. 28, 2009
South Zone Oct. 25 - Feb. 28, 2009
Winnebago Oct. 25 - March 15, 2009
Mississippi River Begins the day after duck season closes or the second Monday in November, whichever occurs first, and ends on February 28, 2009.



Muskrat

North Zone Oct. 18 - Feb. 28, 2009
South Zone Oct. 25 - Feb. 28, 2009
Winnebago Oct. 25 - March 15, 2009
Mississippi River Begins the day after duck season closes or the second Monday in November, whichever occurs first and ends February 28, 2009.



Bobcat, Otter and Fisher

Permits required

Bobcat Hunting/Trapping North of Hwy 64 Oct. 18 - Dec. 31
Fisher Trapping only Various Zones Oct. 18 - Dec. 31
Otter Trapping only North Zone Nov. 1 - April 30, 2009
Central Zone Nov. 1 - Mar. 31, 2009
South Zone Nov. 1 - Mar. 31, 2009



Opossum, Skunk, Weasel and Snowshoe Hare

No season limits, bag limits, size limits or possession limits.

Protected Species

Hunting protected species such as badger, woodchuck, wolf, elk, jackrabbit and flying squirrel is prohibited. See *2008 Small Game Regulations* for more details.

DNR Service Centers

Office hours vary by location.

You may also call the DNR Call Center toll-free at:
1-888-WDNR INFO (1-888-936-7463)

Staff are available 7 days a week from 7:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m.

Txhais lus Hmoob thoj hu tus xovtooj 1-888-936-7463. Muaj txhais lus Hmoob txhua hnub, Monday txog Sunday, 7:00 sawv ntxov 10:00 tsaus ntuj.

Permit Application Deadlines

Horicon & Collins Zones Goose Seasons August 1
Fall Turkey August 1
Sharp-tailed Grouse August 1
Bobcat August 1
Otter August 1
Fisher August 1
Spring Turkey December 10
Bear December 10

Drawing Dates

Horicon & Collins Zones Goose Season Late August
Fall Turkey Late August
Sharp-tailed Grouse Mid-September
Bobcat Mid-September
Otter Mid-September
Fisher Mid-September
Spring Turkey Late January
Bear Early February

To check your drawing status go to:
dnr.wi.gov

El personal también está disponible para asistir a clientes de habla hispana en nuestro número gratuito. El personal que habla español está disponible 7 días a la semana a partir de la 7:00 de mañana hasta 10:00 p.m.

South Central Region (Fitchburg)	608-275-3266
Dodgeville	608-935-3368
Horicon	920-387-7860
Janesville	608-743-4800
Poynette	608-635-8110
Madison (Central Office)	608-266-2621
Southeast Region (Milwaukee)	414-263-8500
Plymouth	920-892-8756
Sturtevant	262-884-2300
Waukesha	262-574-2100
Northeast Region (Green Bay)	920-662-5100
Oshkosh	920-424-3050
Peshtigo	715-582-5000
Sturgeon Bay	920-746-2860
Wautoma	920-787-4686
West Central Region (Eau Claire)	715-839-3700
Baldwin	715-684-2914
Black River Falls	715-284-1400
La Crosse	608-785-9000
Wausau	715-359-4522
Wisconsin Rapids	715-421-7800
Northern Region (Spooner)	715-635-2101
Antigo	715-627-4317
Ashland	715-685-2900
Cumberland	715-822-3590
Hayward	715-634-2688
Ladysmith	715-532-3911
Park Falls	715-762-3204
Rhineland	715-365-8900
Superior	715-392-7988
Woodruff	715-356-5211



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When birders flock together



Day hikes, night walks, "The Big Sit" and boat rides should draw seasoned and novice birdwatchers to the Horicon Marsh Bird Festival.

William K. Volkert

On an early spring morning, as the sun is just rising on the Horicon Marsh, hundreds of people have flocked here in Dodge County to experience peak bird migration. On the second weekend of May, the last of the migrant waterfowl are still present on the marsh and great waves of songbirds have arrived on southerly winds. Birders, families and those with a curious interest in nature have come to join in the Horicon Marsh Bird Festival. Over the past ten years, this event has become a premier opportunity to see, enjoy and learn about birds, with the help of experts, at one of the top birding sites in the upper Midwest.

Over the years, bird festivals have cropped up nationwide offering a wide range of opportunities for people to experience the bird life in different areas of the country. Nebraska conducts an annual Festival of the Crane when hundreds of thousands of sandhill cranes congregate along the Platte River. Texas, Florida, Arizona, and nearly every state has its events, and each year additional festivals are added. The Horicon Marsh Bird Festival has expanded and improved each year to provide something for everyone.

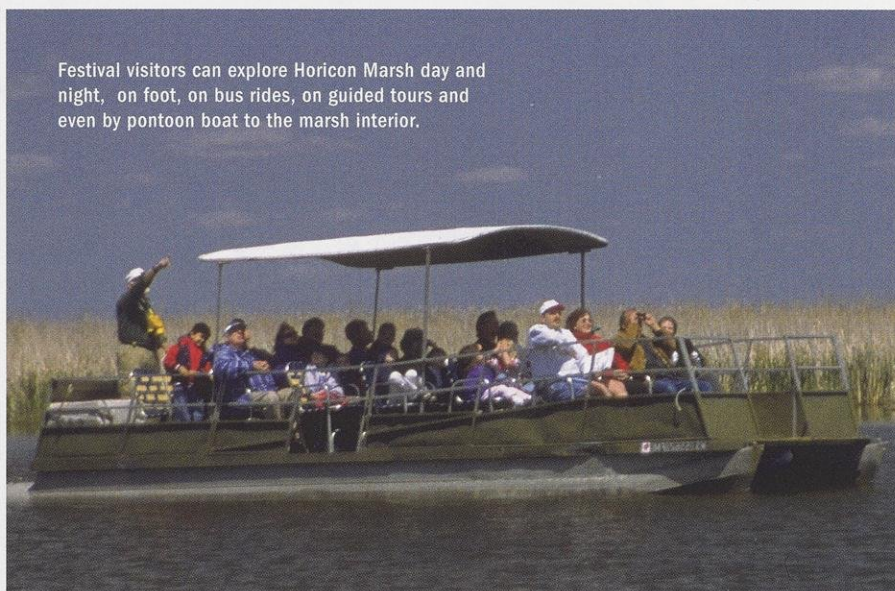
In 1998, Larry Michael, founder of the Horicon Marsh Bird Club, came to me and noted the lack of a major bird festival at a fabulous venue like Horicon Marsh; the sights and atmosphere simply deserved to be highlighted. Since then the festival has grown to attract birders from more than 15 states and both coasts.

At first I found it hard to believe that birdwatchers would travel to spend a weekend at Horicon Marsh and enjoy our birds, but wildlife on this wide open space is renowned, and I sometimes forget just how unique a wildlife experience is available right here in our backyard.

Horicon Marsh is the largest wetland in the upper Midwest and is a restored marsh. Ditched and drained for agricultural purposes in the early part of the 20th century, recovery by the State of Wisconsin began in 1927. When state funds ran out, the federal government stepped in to complete the project, establishing the national wildlife refuge north of the state property. As a result, it is again one vast wetland, divided into two separate units — a state wildlife area and a federal refuge. Of course, the birds don't know the difference, and the bird festival takes advantage of many access points from roads, land and water where visitors can seek out the rich variety of birds found here.

Horicon Marsh is also recognized as a Globally Important Bird Area and a Wetland of International Importance, under the Ramsar Convention of the United Nations. It is one of only 22 wetlands in the U.S. with this distinguished title. In spite of the damage inflicted on this marsh nearly 100 years ago, it has recovered to support a wide array of wildlife. Marsh management aims to maintain a diverse range of habitat and wetland conditions that benefit the abundant wildlife. The fact that 296 species of birds have been recorded on this marsh over the years is a good measure of the rich habitat that provides the base for a successful bird festival.

While Horicon Marsh has long been known for its spectacular fall flight of Canada geese, this marsh was not originally established to protect geese. The State Wildlife Area was designated as a



Festival visitors can explore Horicon Marsh day and night, on foot, on bus rides, on guided tours and even by pontoon boat to the marsh interior.

HORICON MARSH BOAT TOURS

migratory rest stop and breeding ground for ducks and the National Wildlife Refuge was established as a nesting ground for the redhead duck. It's still the largest nesting area for redheads east of the Mississippi River.

When Canada goose populations were in serious trouble by the 1940s and '50s, the region's goals were expanded to manage them. The pioneering work undertaken by the biologists of the time was overwhelmingly successful. By the mid-1970s, Horicon Marsh was hosting a quarter million Canada geese during the fall migration. Long before wildlife watching became a national pastime, Horicon Marsh was a destination for thousands of people who came to experience the largest migratory flock of Canada geese in the world.

As a result, the name "Horicon" had become almost synonymous with geese. In fact, many visitors still believe that the marsh was established for geese and our primary job in the region is managing geese. One year, I was even asked by a visitor what we, as wildlife biologists, do when the geese leave, as if this was our sole purpose for being here! My answer was that we didn't do anything different when the geese were here. The real goal for managing this marsh today is to support a great diversity of wildlife that is lured to Horicon and best exemplified by its birds.

Notoriety for its geese is both an asset and disadvantage for Horicon Marsh. It

is surely a claim to fame, but as the resident giant Canada goose population began to explode across the country during the 1980s and '90s, geese were viewed as a nuisance in some urban and suburban areas. These birds seemed to wear out their welcome and lose some of the intrigue they once held.

Birdwatchers have long known Horicon as more than a place to see Canadas. In a book from the late 1970s, titled *A Dozen Birding Hotspots East of the Mississippi*, Horicon Marsh is included among these top destinations for ardent birders. The festival attempts to share this wealth of wildlife with a much broader audience, as well as encourage visitors to seek out this marsh during spring in addition to the traditional fall migration season.

The bird festival is always held on the weekend of the second Saturday of May, when Mother's Day and International Migratory Bird Day are celebrated across the U.S. to bring attention to our migrant birds and their conservation. Numerous families tell us they come to the festival to fulfill mom's wish to spend their day close to nature and enjoying birds.

The event's growing success extends beyond active birdwatchers. Experts and casual observers, including kids, families and seniors, will find activities to enjoy.

The long weekend offers many field trips and other activities conducted by

some of Wisconsin's most knowledgeable, enjoyable and approachable bird experts who are talented speakers willing to share their experiences and love for birds. The fact that we are able to attract so many talented field trip leaders at a time of year when birders would otherwise want to be out in the woods watching birds on their own has been a real testament to the event.

Others take visitors through the marsh by bus, pontoon boat, or simply sit on the observation deck to see what can be sighted from this single place.

While birders know that the best bird-watching is early in the morning, festival activities are held throughout the day, as migrant birds are often active later in the afternoon following their long flights to Wisconsin. While warm days can slow down songbird observations by late morning, the ducks and shorebirds are active throughout the day, providing plenty to see and hear.

Early risers reap some special rewards. First light bus tours held at sunrise on Saturday and Sunday transport ardent birders along the east and north sides of the marsh to see many kinds of birds. This tour runs until noon and over the years most trips tallied more than 100 species! Imagine the chance to see 100 species on a single marsh, on a single morning before noon! It's a unique op-

portunity to share the journey with experienced hands who will help you hear, find, see and clearly identify many birds. This event is very popular and bus space is limited, so sign up early to save some seats on this adventure.

Other trips take a more relaxing pace and at a more popular time of day, like the leisurely pontoon boat tours of the marshland interior conducted by Blue Heron Tours. Relax, sit on the boat deck and enjoy a quiet ride to see birds and their environs from a different point of view. Visitors on these trips often find birds that are more difficult to see from the edge of the marsh.

In recent years, the Horicon Marsh Bird Club has also taken a wait-and-see approach. In "The Big Sit," club members started a new tradition. They sit in a 17-foot diameter circle on the observation deck near the DNR Field Office and wait to see what birds will come to them over a 24-hour period. They set up their round-the-clock vigil and post their results. Visitors who don't have the patience or the stamina to stay put from midnight to midnight can wander over to this stop and periodically check on their progress or place some side bets on which birders will nod off before the end of their shifts! Past Big Sits have recorded more than 80 bird species.

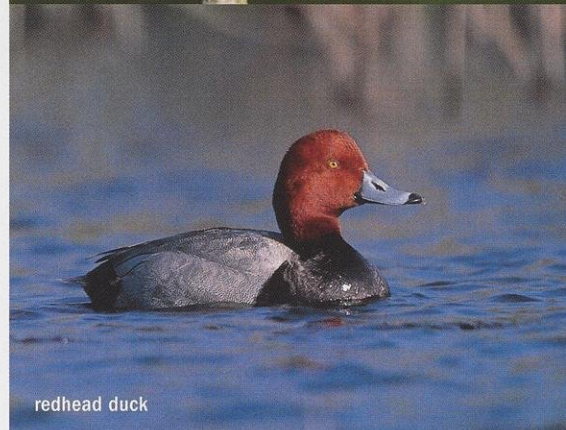
Night time offers a different experi-



Whether you want to do your birding with a small group or just tread the boardwalks at your own pace, here are some of the species you might just see during the festival:



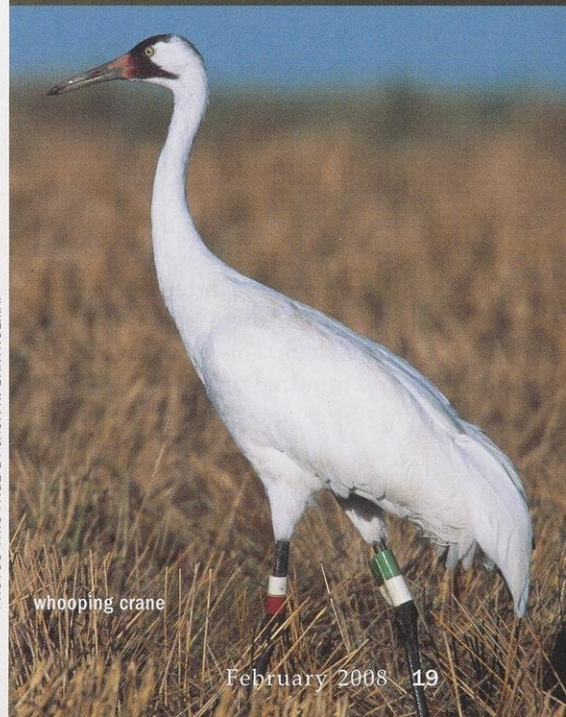
great-crowned
flycatcher



redhead duck

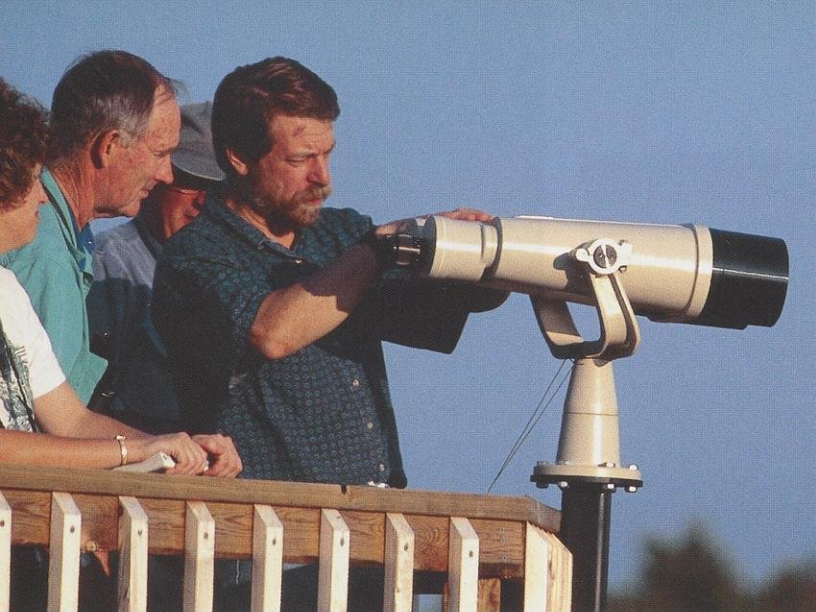


American redstart



whooping crane

PHOTOS THIS PAGE BY JACK R. BARTHOLOMAI



Bill Volkert shows binoculars at the observation area at the state end of the marsh to visitors. Volkert, a seasoned DNR naturalist, gives talks and programs year-round about Horicon Marsh history, development and wildlife. He is joined for the festival by experienced bird watchers who are enthusiastic about leading trips and sharing their expertise.

JACK R. BARTHOLMAI

ence on the marsh and an opportunity to detect birds that are more active after dark. The "Night Sounds" hike provides a great opportunity to listen to the music of the marsh, when frogs are singing and the owls come out. It is also a time when some birds, mammals and insects are most active. At 32,000 acres, Horicon is so vast and the cattails so dense that it provides a great place to safely hide and raise a family — but how do these birds ever find each other for mating? They call at night when the winds are calm and their voices carry over the marsh. This is a time for listening for marsh wrens, bitterns, sora and Virginia rails, and the occasional king rail. This hike also provides a unique experience to walk the trails after the sun has gone down and other senses take over.

Among the most popular activities over the years has been a bird banding demonstration. Beginning at 6 a.m., a team sets up a series of really fine-meshed mist nets to capture migrant songbirds for banding. This activity has attracted so many people over the years that the City of Horicon brings two sets of bleachers to the edge of the woods where visitors can relax while the experienced banders unravel the birds and bring them over to the crowd for a close look. This event is conducted several hundred yards from the DNR Field Office and parking area. Those

who have difficulty walking can catch a cart shuttle that delivers them right to the banding area. Watching birds has never been easier!

For these demonstrations, we set up six to ten 40-foot mist nets to capture songbirds. Part of the fun is you never know what you will catch or how many. Visitors really enjoy this up-close look at birds in the hand before the feathered flyers are banded and released into the wild. In many years, more than 30 or 40 different kinds of birds are captured and at times more than 100 birds per day are caught in the nets. For those hard-to-identify warblers, here is a chance for birders to see the rich colors and amazing variety of this family of birds.

Festival volunteers also host a variety of kids' activities like beginning birding, and a presentation on hawks and owls with live birds. Other programs on "birdscaping" (landscaping for birds) focus on wood warblers, waterfowl and grassland birds. Whether you can just come for an afternoon or plan to attend the full four-day festival, you can count on seeing a wide variety of our native wildlife and wild places. Photographers can pick up advice from seasoned veterans who are adapting to new technology and hooking their digital cameras up to spotting scopes ("digiscoping") to get some really stunning images.

From its humble beginnings 10 years ago, the Horicon Marsh Birding Festival has grown to attract more than 1,000 visitors who come armed with binoculars and cameras to discover the joys of birding in Wisconsin. With so many activities in so many parts of the vast marsh, you'll never feel crowded. There are plenty of opportunities to enjoy a quiet corner all by yourself.

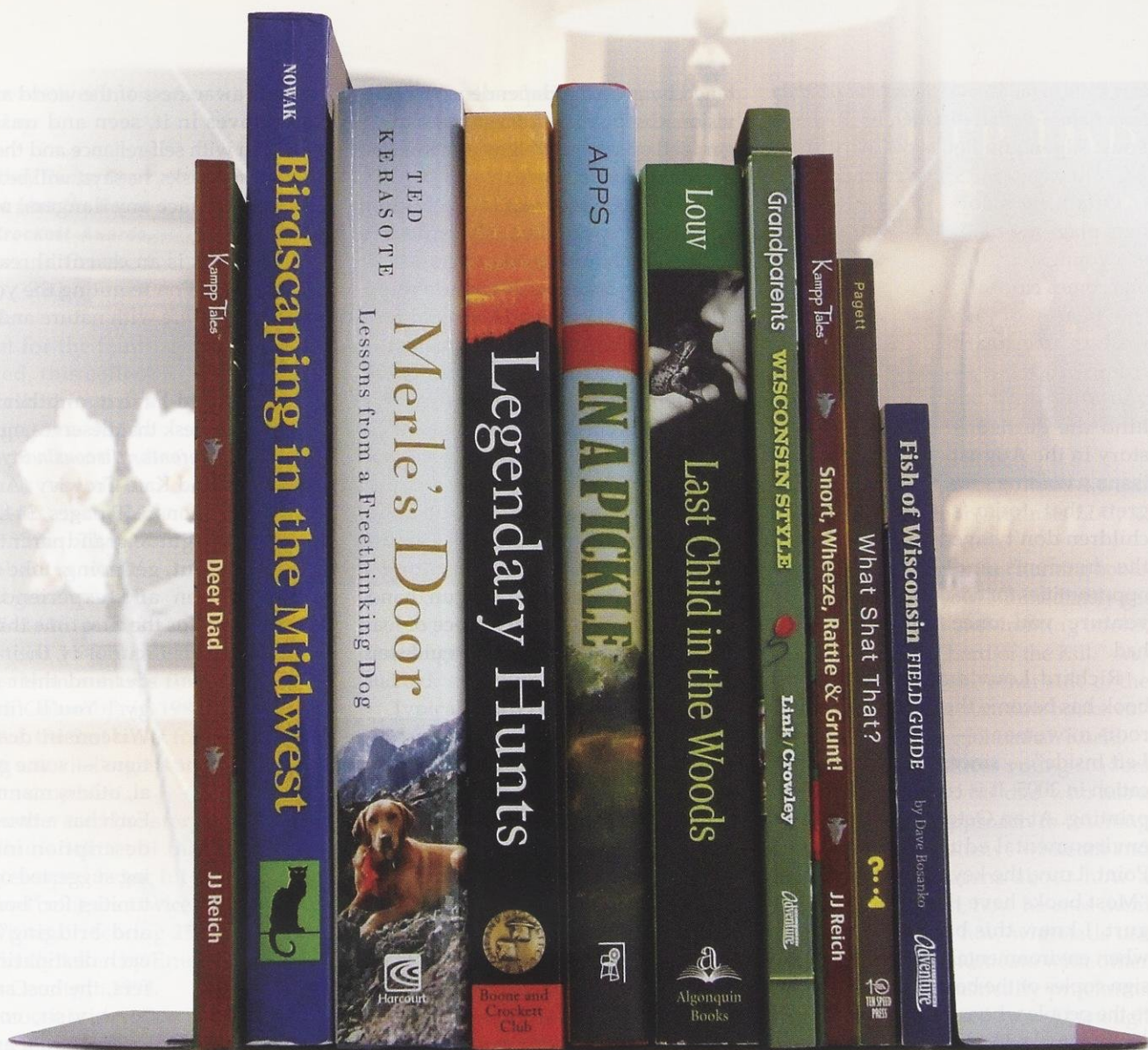
Over the years, the total number of birds sighted during the four-day festival has ranged from 119 to 161 species. Altogether, nearly 300 different species have been counted over the 10-year run, hinting at the great variety of birds that move through during festival time. **This spring, the Horicon Marsh Bird Festival will be held from May 9th through 12th. For a complete schedule of activities and registration forms for field trips, visit www.horiconmarshbirdclub.com.** Click on Horicon Marsh Bird Festival and go to "Events." Once you've done that, get out your calendar and make a note to come to Horicon Marsh this spring and join the fun. The combination of a world-renowned marsh, abundant wildlife, music and a community steak fry make the festival a premier outdoor event at a special time of the year. ❧

William K. Volkert is a natural resources educator who has developed many talks and programs about the human and natural history of Horicon Marsh.



short-eared owl

JACK R. BARTHOLMAI



10 TITLES THAT ENLIGHTEN

Good books and a great time to enrich your reading list.

Kathryn A. Kahler

A wintry evening with no better prospect for entertainment than TV reruns or shoveling the driveway for the umpteenth time is a perfect time to expand your horizons with a good book or two. Here's a list of 10 that should help warm up these long February nights.

Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder, by Richard Louv, Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, NC, 310 pages, \$13.95 (paperback).

Of all the disorders plaguing modern youngsters, this one comes closest to the hearts of our readers. We heard from a number of you after our "Behind the Pattison" story in the August issue, voicing regrets that today's children don't have the freedoms and opportunities for adventure you once had.

Richard Louv's ground-breaking book has become the basis for a grass-roots movement — called "No Child Left Inside" — since its original publication in 2005. It is currently in its 16th printing. At an October conference of environmental educators in Stevens Point, Louv, the keynote speaker, said "Most books have the shelf life of yogurt. I knew this book had a chance when environmental educators had me sign copies of the book for them to give to the people who were trying to kill environmental education."

According to Louv, "Nature-deficit disorder describes the human costs of alienation from nature, among them: diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties, and higher rates of physical and emotional illnesses." He believes nature-based education and recreation can help with such problems as depression, dyslexia and obesity, to name a few.

Early in the book, Louv recalls the lessons he learned from building a tree house as a boy. Tree-house building taught young builders practical lessons about common sizes of lumber; the advantages of bracing corners, using hinges, ladders and pulleys; how to slope the roof to shed rain; how to use a handsaw; measurement and three-dimensional geometry. But across the nation today, one sees only the skeletons of tree houses past, their demise has-

tened by growing dependence on television, computers, video games and organized sports as well as our increasingly litigious society.

No longer do children spontaneously build tree houses, take off on their bikes with friends to explore woods or build forts in vacant lots. A host of factors are to blame for creating this divide between children and nature. A view by David Sobel is that "ecophobia" is one source. Louv says, "David Sobel tells this story: A century ago, a boy ran along a beach with his gun, hand-

made from a piece of lead pipe. From time to time, he would stop, aim, and shoot at a gull. Today, such activity would be cause for time spent in juvenile hall, but for young John Muir, it was just another way to connect with nature...."

Early chapters in the book describe the causes and effects of nature-deficit disorder, but the positive news starts in Part IV, "The Nature-Child Reunion." Louv challenges parents, grandparents, teachers, nature-program leaders and community planners to find and implement ways to use "nature as antidote."

Some of the steps Louv promotes aren't earth-shaking, but common sense approaches — things like taking kids on nature hikes, turning off the TV, gardening, cutting back on social engagements and organized sports and spending more time with your children. He promotes other ideas, however, that might be more difficult for parents to accept. For example, to reverse the fears of perceived dangers facing children in nature or from strangers on the street, Louv offers several steps, including this: "To increase your child's safety, encourage more time outdoors, in nature. Natural play strengthens children's self-confidence and arouses their senses

— their awareness of the world and all that moves in it, seen and unseen." Children with self-reliance and the ability to assess risks, he says, will be better prepared to face any dangers, real or assumed.

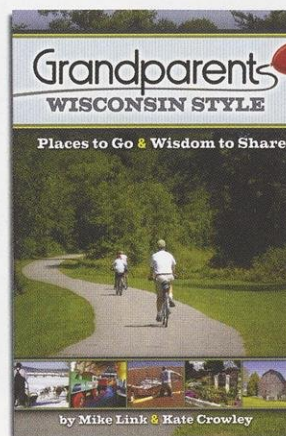
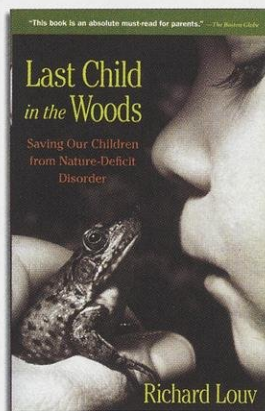
This book is an essential read for anyone intent on reuniting the youngsters in their life with nature and all it has to offer.

As fate would have it, another book crossed our desk that deserves mention here. **Grandparents, Wisconsin Style**, by Mike Link and Kate Crowley (Adventure Publications, 159 pages, \$14.95) is an excellent guide grandparents can use to "get out, get going, take those grandchildren and experience the world again for the first time through their smiles, their curiosity, their wonder and their energy."

You'll find 74 Wisconsin destinations — some natural, others manmade. Each has a two-page description including suggested opportunities for "bonding and bridging" that each destination offers, the best season for a visit, contact information, and "a word to the wise" to help prepare for the trip or avoid disap-

pointments. Each entry also comes with a recommendation for how old your grandchild should be to get the maximum benefit from the trip.

The authors are a husband and wife team who speak from experience, with four young grandchildren of their own. They challenge grandparents to pass on their wealth of life experiences, just as elders across the generations have passed on traditions of their own. The simplest of experiences — like baking cookies or flying a kite — will be the ones your grandchildren will treasure most. Season them with field trips to pick cherries in Door County, ride a train through the Baraboo Hills, or experience the thrill of a dog sled race, and your grandchildren will have their



own wealth of memories to pass on someday.

Legendary Hunts: Short Stories from the Boone and Crockett Awards, Boone and Crockett Club, 350 pages, \$19.95.

Not for the faint-hearted, this collection tells the stories of big game hunts that won Boone and Crockett Awards for the hunters who wrote them. There's one about a world-record grizzly awarded 27 2/16 points, that stood 13 feet tall and had claws longer than a man's fingers, shot in British Columbia in 1982. He was so massive, the first bullet fractured before hitting any vital organs and it took four shots to drop him.

Another told the story of "Lucky," an Illinois whitetail that over three years escaped being hit by a car, and survived being shot twice. The non-typical whitetail, scoring 258 6/8 points, was finally taken by Ernest R. Hires in Edgar County in 1994.

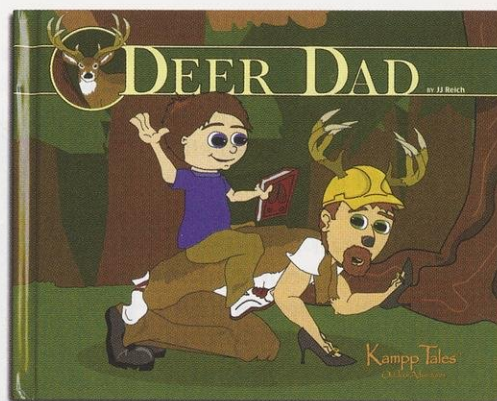
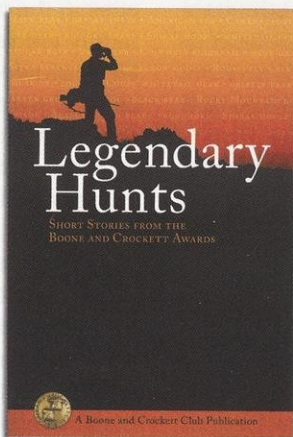
A moose with palms measuring 20 inches wide and a spread of over 63

inches was described by the hunter who harvested him as looking like he had a "sheet of plywood" for antlers. He was taken near Red Earth Creek, Alberta, in 2000.

Other stories cover hunts for black, grizzly, brown and polar bears; cougar; elk, mule deer, blacktail and whitetail deer; moose and caribou; and pronghorns, bison, mountain goats, musk ox and bighorn sheep. The hunts cover 10 states and four Canadian provinces, from Arizona to Alaska, and Illinois to the Northwest Territories. The hunters

also ranged from male to female, young and old.

Typically this magazine focuses on the whole hunting experience rather than trophy hunting, though this book is full of special hunt stories we thought would interest our readers. In addition to serving as an organization that maintains standards for hunting record-keeping, the Boone and Crockett Clubs promote fair chase and sportsmanship, and all the stories are true to that purpose. These hunters planned their hunts, hunted their plans and were respectful of their quarries.



Deer Dad and Snort, Wheeze, Rattle & Grunt! by JJ Reich, Outdoor Originals LLC, 32 and 64 pages, \$7.83 each.

Search the Internet for "hunting books for children" and you'll immediately get a partial list of 25 anti-hunting books, from "Bambi" to "Lord of the Kill." Author JJ Reich tells the other side of the hunting story in his fresh new books, colorfully illustrated by Johnathan Kuehl.

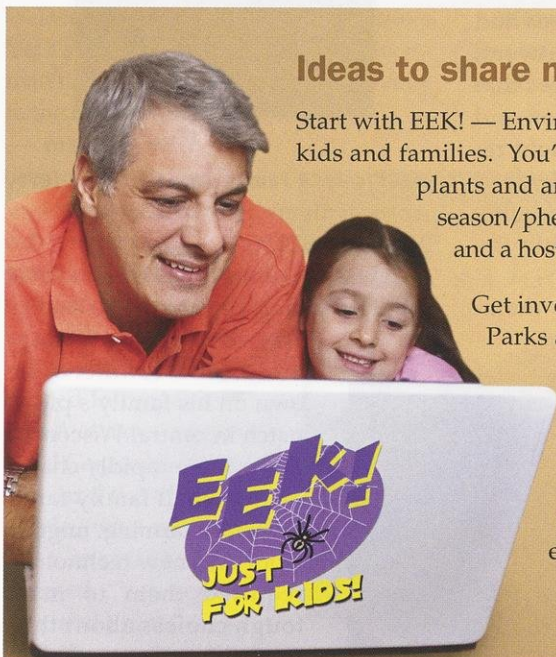
Deer Dad introduces young readers to Jack Kampp and his dad who has a very interesting approach to teaching Jack all about the elusive whitetail and its habits. Jack learns about how a buck's antlers form, how he uses them to mark trees, and how whitetails use their tails to communicate with other deer. Jack enthusiastically proclaims that he can't wait until he's old enough to go hunting with his dad!

Ideas to share nature with youngsters from DNR's websites

Start with EEK! — Environmental Education for Kids (dnr.wi.gov/eeek) an online magazine for kids and families. You'll find seasonal "scavenger hunts," information to help you identify plants and animals, seasonal changes to watch for (dnr.wi.gov/org/eeek/nature/season/pheno.asp), when and where to go fish watching, favorite campfire recipes, and a host of other activities to do with kids (dnr.wi.gov/eeek/cool/index.htm).

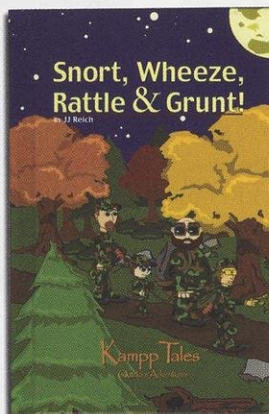
Get involved! Attend outdoor events and activities for kids at Wisconsin State Parks and Forests (dnr.wi.gov/eeek/nature/season/events.htm), visit a fish hatchery, wildlife area, or nature center (see "Places to Go and Learn" at dnr.wi.gov/education), or volunteer at Wisconsin State Parks (see dnr.wi.gov/org/land/parks/voljobs).

Teach outdoors! DNR educators help teachers and youth leaders get kids outdoors by providing several resources. See dnr.wi.gov/education for a listing.



In **Snort, Wheeze, Rattle & Grunt!** Jack hits the woods for his first hunt with his dad, Uncle Carl, cousin and grandpa. As he and his dad sit in their tree stand, Jack gets to use his buck grunt call and rattle bag to help call a buck within range of his dad's arrow.

The books are available from a Tennessee firm (Do-All Outdoors, www.doalltraps.com) but the author, editor and illustrator are all Wisconsin natives. "Most of our inspiration for the books comes from our experience hunting Wisconsin woods, fields and waterways," says Reich. "I'm excited to share my books with your readers."



novice and expert gardeners on city lots or in rural settings.

Nowak's "gallery of bird habitat gardens" takes readers on an eight-state pictorial garden tour, ending in Franklin, Wisconsin, at the home of Pat and Carl Brust. The Brusts have turned their one-acre property into a bird haven with a "shrub border, a dense shrub bed as a backdrop to their bird feeders, a shade garden with woodland species, a large prairie planting, a woodland edge with shrubs and small

trees, an open wooded area with little understory and a wet prairie area."

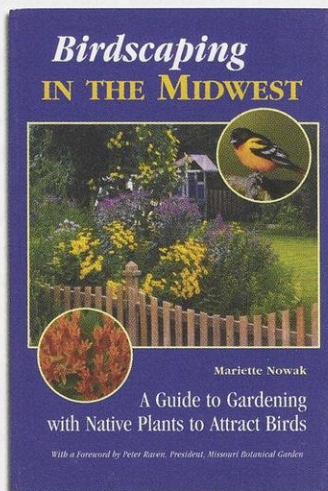
For gardeners interested in attracting specific birds, nine chapters are devoted to how to design plantings for hummingbirds; bluebird savanna; prairie, woodland, wetland, migratory, shrubland and winter birds; and bird baths and water gardens. For example, in the woodland chapter, readers will find lists of which kinds of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants provide fruit, seeds, nuts, nesting cavities, shelter, groundcover, insects, sap or nectar. The chapters are full of suggested layouts with keys for designing gardens, and color photos of birds and plants. Other valuable resources include tables of conifers, deciduous trees and shrubs, woody vines, wildflowers, ferns, grasses, rushes and sedges that attract birds. They list common and Latin names; value to birds; light requirements; height; width; fruit/seed type and peak production; soil requirements; and native range within the Midwest.

Final chapters on garden maintenance, potential problems, nest boxes and bird feeders round out this valuable and well-written book.

Fish of Wisconsin Field Guide, by Dave Bosanko, Adventure Publications, Cambridge, MN, 170 pages, \$12.95.

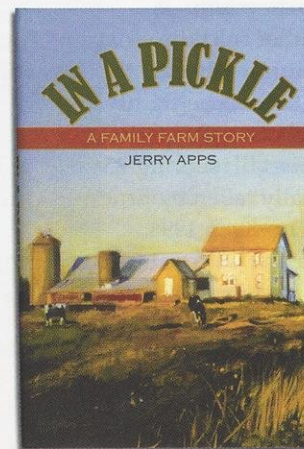
Anglers will love this

waterproof guide to 76 Wisconsin fish. The book fits easily in a jacket pocket or tacklebox. To identify a catch, start by matching it to one of the family silhouettes in the table of contents. From the family entries, pick the species from a series of two-page spreads that include color illustrations, keys to distinguish your fish from similar species, other common names and natural history information like habitat, range, food, reproduction, average size and state records. There's a nice glossary and the index is cross-referenced so if you know your fish by another name, you can easily find its scientific name. The author prefaces the book with illustrations of fish anatomy, photos of fish diseases, frequently asked questions and interesting fish facts like how to estimate your fish's weight if you know its length and girth. Looking for a unique Valentine gift for your favorite angler? This is it!



Birdscaping in the Midwest: A Guide to Gardening with Native Plants to Attract Birds, by Mariette Nowak, Itchy Cat Press, 331 pages, \$27.

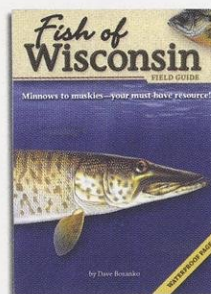
The collaboration between birds and plants and what Midwest gardeners can do to enhance and enjoy the results of those relationships is the subject of this beautiful guide. Author Mariette Nowak, retired director of Milwaukee's Wehr Nature Center, offers expert advice for native landscaping that will provide backyard birds with the food, cover, nesting sites, space and water they require. Her advice will benefit



In a Pickle: A Family Farm Story, by Jerry Apps, University of Wisconsin Press, 245 pages, \$24.95.

It was the summer of 1955 and Andy Meyer, a young veteran of the Korean

War, found himself in the middle of a conflict of his own on his family's pickle patch in central Wisconsin. Times were rapidly changing for small family farms as factory farming, migrant labor and new technology required them to make tough choices about their futures.



On one side was Andy's father, Isaac, who had farmed 160 acres his whole life, milked 14 cows and subsidized his income with the proceeds from a half-acre "pickle patch." Isaac had close ties to the land and no interest in modernizing or expanding. On the other side was Jake Stewart, Isaac's friend since boyhood and father of Andy's childhood sweetheart, Amy. Jake had started on a similar life path but in recent years had acquired 1,000 acres of farmland and was now growing 30 acres of cucumbers under contract with the H. H. Harlow Company. Though they had been friends for years, neither could see eye-to-eye of late on much of anything. Andy and Amy felt themselves square in the middle of their fathers' differing philosophies.

This heart-warming novel is one of 21 books by author Jerry Apps, professor emeritus at the UW-Madison. Apps draws from his own rural upbringing to paint a touching picture of farm life and pickle-making in the sands of central Wisconsin. Some of his nonfiction books include *Every Farm Tells a Story*, *Humor from the Country*, *Cheese, Breweries of Wisconsin*, *Country Wisdom* and *One-Room Country Schools*, and an award-winning historical novel, *The Travels of Increase Joseph*.

Merle's Door: Lessons from a Freethinking Dog, by Ted Kerasote, Harcourt, 416 pages, \$25.

Destiny seemed in the stars above Utah's San Juan River when an outdoorsman on a river trip — and coincidentally in the market for a dog — met up with an abandoned retriever mix looking for a home. The outdoorsman was Ted Kerasote — award-winning author of five other books whose writing has appeared in magazines like *Audubon* and *National Geographic Traveler* — and the dog was Merle, who at their first meeting proclaimed, "You need a dog, and I'm it."

So began their life

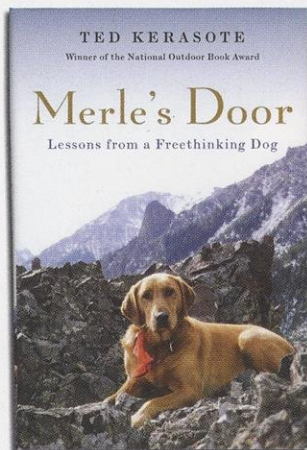
together in Kelly, a small town in northwestern Wyoming, bounded by Grand Teton National Park, the National Elk Refuge and the Gros Ventre Wilderness. Merle soon began teaching his lessons to Kerasote and the two eventually developed a mutually respectful relationship best described by this excerpt:

Merle always acted politely ...no pushy greetings, no jumping, licking, or barking. If some people were uncomfortable with having even this well-behaved dog close to them, I would only have to give a small flick of my index finger, indicating that he should leave, and he'd pad off and lie down. His refined social skills led more than one person to comment, "He doesn't act like a dog. He...he's almost like a person." What they really wanted to say was that he was like a diplomat from a strange land, one who displayed some odd foreign manners but who nonetheless spoke the lingua franca well. Groping for words, one individual said, "I mean, when I'm around you two, I sometimes wonder who's the person and who's the dog." Then she backpedaled, adding, "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to offend you."

"Not at all," I told her. "In fact, that's one of the nicest compliments I've ever been paid."

Kerasote's warm and witty style offers readers an intimate window into the relationship. From his conversations

with Merle — right down to the quotation marks around Merle's comments — to his descriptions of their adventures, Kerasote makes a convincing case that dogs are not only masters of sensory analysis, but capable of emotions, decision-making, telling time, music appreciation (the "Hallelujah Chorus" was Merle's favorite sing-along), diplomacy, and of course, free-thinking.



The book is more than just a pet story, however. Kerasote's extensive research into canine behavior provides the basis for his theories about why Merle loved to hunt elk but refused all invitations to go bird-hunting, for example, or how Merle's reactions to his reflection in a mirror proved dogs "have the ultimate hallmark of consciousness — self awareness," or why Merle looked with disdain on all Kerasote's efforts to make him fetch.

Kerasote's ultimate concession to Merle's independence was Merle's door — a swinging door that allowed him freedom to come and go at will. Merle quickly earned the title of "Mayor of Kelly," as he made his daily rounds visiting the town's residents, both human and canine. Urban dog-owners restricted by leash laws might find fault with the author's assertion that independence promotes better mannered pets, but it certainly worked in Merle's favor.

Readers will need more than one tissue to see the book through to the end, but it's worth it. You will never look at Buddy or Lady the same way again!

What Shat That? A Pocket Guide to Poop Identity, by Matt Pagett, Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, CA, 109 pages, \$12.95.

Rounding out our listing with a fitting conclusion, this tongue-in-cheek field guide can be an essential component to any nature-lover's fanny-pack. Like animal tracks and calls, recognizing animal scat provides another clue to the curious of what animals have crossed the same path. Graphically illustrated and grossly detailed descriptions of 50 species of mammals, birds, lizards and fish will help the reader "match feces with their species!" Enough said!



Kathryn A. Kahler writes from Madison and formerly served as circulation, production and promotions manager for Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine.

Sociable encounters

continued from page 2

A week later, I happened to walk out to our breezeway, which has a hard dirt floor covered with crushed granite. Lying next to the house foundation was a small, gray animal with a white-tipped tail. Only its head was covered with the loose granite. Brushing aside the stone, I realized I was looking at the body of a fox pup, a little less than a foot long, with a fresh wound at the back of its neck. I was puzzled by the partial burial. Would a predator leave its prey in such a manner so close to my house? Could the perpetrator have been a badger or a bobcat? I have heard that male foxes sometimes kill male pups, but this pup was a female. I sought answers from several wildlife biologists, all of whom were puzzled. It remained a mystery.

Some weeks later walking down a nearby country road, I thought I saw something moving in the woods. There were three fox pups playing with an adult on top of a mound. The adult watched as the pups tumbled down the

side of the mound, then chased and grabbed at each other as they scrambled back to the top. Considering how close the mound is to our home, I believe it's likely the adult was my visiting fox and the parent of the deceased pup.

Later that month, I saw a fox sitting by the roadside, gazing intently toward the mound and making a series of "wow" barking sounds. It only ceased vocalizing to pace to and fro along the roadside. The fox repeated this behavior for at least a half hour. I could not see any movement at the mound and got concerned that whatever had killed the fox pup might now be threatening the remaining pups. I cautiously walked toward the mound, passing close to the fox that barely seemed to notice me. I then realized the mound was a den, and I backed off and returned to the roadside. I had noticed earlier that the fox had been carrying a dead shrew that it would place in the middle of the road for a time, pace, bark, then pick it up again. When I re-

turned from the woods to the roadside, the fox started walking toward me, which I found quite startling. I realized I was standing next to its shrew. The fox came within four feet of me, picked up the shrew, walked away and went about its business. Here was another mystery. Why had the fox barked and paced? Was it fearful that a predator was trying to get at more of its pups? Were the pups getting a hunting lesson? Maybe this was ordinary fox family behavior.

One day in mid-July, I had just stepped outside when a fox trotted by with its mouth full of small, lifeless creatures. It then turned around, came back and stopped briefly a few feet from where I stood, momentarily looking at me before turning and going back into the woods. I had time to identify a thirteen-lined ground squirrel, the fanned out tail of a bird and possibly a third animal in its mouth. Why it filled its mouth and came by me was yet another mystery. On a cloudy day, later in



The curious red fox was often spotted near the roadside or woods' edge keeping an eye on people and steering them away from the den site.

ANDREA LeCLAIR

The mock "battle" was likely litter mates or other family members showing "socializing" behaviors.

the summer a fox appeared to be relaxing on our boat dock, which I considered an unusual hangout.

Recently, I saw two foxes take an interest in a particular spot at the base of a tree. They suddenly stood on their hind legs and, with mouths opened wide, placed their forepaws on each other's fore shoulders and uttered a repetitive, squeaky throaty sound. Despite the threatening posturing and emphatic language, neither fox bit the other. The display continued for about 20 seconds, then one of the foxes disappeared into the woods while the other sat a while, simply watching.

I forwarded a note and some photos to this magazine, and the editor put me in contact with northern Wisconsin Furbearer Specialist John Olson, who tried to provide some answers to my observations. He said the partial burial might have been a sick or weak pup dispatched by an adult female, then removed from the den site. John explained this behavior is more common in the canine world with wolves, or perhaps had been done by a predator. Martens, owls and foxes all remove dead young from dens as basic sanitation to avoid attractive odors. Predators like skunks love decaying flesh.

The barking calls could have been many things. Olson said foxes have a wide-ranging vocabulary of squeaks, barks, whines and screams, just to mention a few.



ANDREA LeCLAIR

About the den visits, he encourages all readers to do their wildlife watching from a distance for their safety and the animal's safety. Laying down a scent trail directly to a den site only increases the risks of alerting dogs, coyotes and raccoons to the site.

The squeaky paw play may have been litter mates or an adult and its

growing pup. The behavior is common among members of the same family group and may be part of their socialization. "We really don't know or totally understand most wildlife behavior and forms of communication," Olson said. He noted that some species such as red fox, turkey, opossum and striped skunks have adapted to humans' continued expansion into the natural world. Other species, such as wolves, bobcats and river otters, continue to avoid us by keeping their distance or adopting patterns like nocturnal lifestyles to find their peace.



Andrea LeClair writes from Park Falls.



A fox dockside in summer. It's hard to say what it was doing or why it took that vigil. "We really don't know or totally understand most wildlife behavior," said John Olson.

ANDREA LeCLAIR

Comforts

Honey bunnies and puppy love



DAVID L. SPERLING

The American Pet Product Manufacturers Association (APPMA) anticipates more than nine million pet owners will purchase a Valentine's gift for their pet this year, spending an average of \$17. How does one pamper their furry companion on Valentine's Day? Treats. Toys. Some quality time with you.

FEBRUARY MONTHLY OBSERVANCES

- **Bird Feeding Month** (Wild Bird Feeding Month). Sponsored by the National Bird Feeding Society www.birdfeeding.org
- **Cat Health Month**. Sponsored by the American Veterinary Medical Association
- **Pet Oral Health Care Month**. Sponsored by Pet Dental www.petdental.com
- **Responsible Pet Owner Month**. Sponsored by the ASPCA www.asPCA.org
- **National Prevent A Litter Month**. Contact the Humane Society of the United States at www.hsus.org or the Doris Day Animal Foundation at www.ddaf.org for information on promoting the importance of spaying and neutering pets.

And the dogs have it...

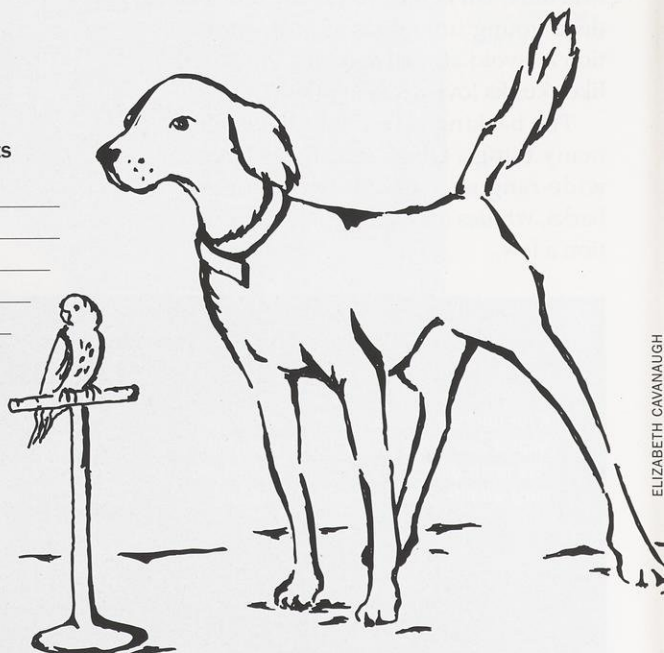
According to the 2007-2008 National Pet Owners Survey, 63 percent of U.S. households own a pet, which equates to 71.1 million homes.

Breakdown of pet ownership in the U.S.:

	Number of U.S. Households that Own a Pet (millions)	Total Number of Pets Owned in the U.S. (millions)
Bird	6.4	16.0
Cat	38.4	88.3
Dog	44.8	74.8
Equine	4.3	13.8
Freshwater Fish	14.2	142.0
Saltwater Fish	0.8	9.6
Reptile	4.8	13.4
Small Animal	6.0	24.3

Total U.S. Pet Industry Expenditures

Year	Billion
2007	\$40.8 Est.



ELIZABETH CAVANAUGH

Just what the doctor ordered

Pets can be pricey. But, as if you needed any reason to have a pet — beyond those eyes, that nose, that face — here are some of the health benefits of pet ownership:

Pets help lower blood pressure. A recent study at the State University of New York at Buffalo found that people with hypertension who adopted a cat or dog had lower blood pressure readings in stressful situations than did those who did not own a pet. (Dr. Karen Allen, SUNY- Buffalo)

Pets help reduce stress. Walking with a pet helps soothe nerves and offers instant relaxation. Studies conducted worldwide have shown that the impact of a stressful situation is lesser on pet owners, especially males, than on those who do not own a pet. (Josephine M. Wills, Waltham Centre for Pet Nutrition, United Kingdom)

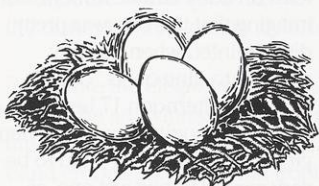
Pets help prevent heart disease. Because pets provide people with faithful companionship, research shows they may also provide their owners with greater psychological stability, thus a measure of protection from heart disease. (National Institute of Health Technology Assessment Workshop: Health Benefits of Pets)

Pets help lower health care costs. People with pets actually make fewer doctor visits, especially for non-serious medical conditions. (National Institute of Health Technology Assessment Workshop: Health Benefits of Pets)



MARY KULTGEN

Pets help fight depression. Pets help fight depression and loneliness, promoting an interest in life. When seniors face adversity or trauma, affection from pets takes on great meaning. Their bonding behavior can foster a sense of security. (*Between Pets and People: The Importance of Animal Companionship*)



Incredible Eggs

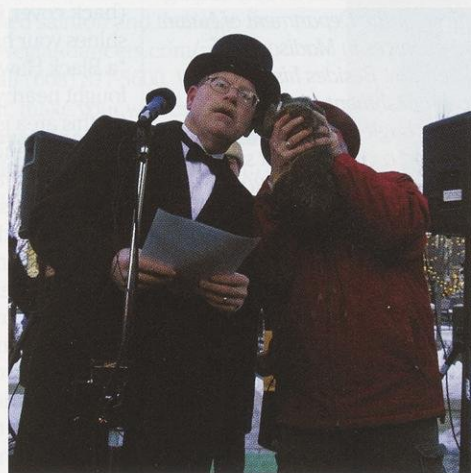
Lots of animal babies hatch out of eggs. Spend the morning discovering which animals lay eggs, and you'll get a chance to dissect a real egg! "Incredible Eggs" is Saturday, March 1 from 10:30 a.m. to noon. The event is free but donations are appreciated. Meet at the Havenwoods State Forest — Environmental Awareness Center, 6141 N. Hopkins St, Milwaukee. Call (414) 527-0232.

Groundhog's Day

Wisconsin's celebrity groundhog, Jimmy, steps into the spotlight on Feb. 2 in Sun Prairie. His prognostication occurs at sunrise. While groundhogs are fun to watch, just a reminder that they are wild animals. To be a caregiver to a wild animal such as Jimmy, families have to be certified by the state.

The groundhog is also known as a woodchuck or whistle pig. They are mammals of the squirrel family and weigh between four and 14 pounds. Groundhogs are excellent diggers, constructing a burrow with a main entrance and an escape tunnel. Groundhogs hibernate and generally live alone.

Here's a guide to reading Jimmy's prognostication: If it is a sunny day, the groundhog will see his shadow. Frightened, he will go back into his burrow, and there he will nestle for more sleep. Winter will last six more weeks. If it is a cloudy day, the groundhog will not see his shadow. Hungry after a long winter's sleep, the groundhog will scamper off in search of food. Spring will come early. To learn more about Jimmy visit Groundhog Central at www.groundhogcentral.com



KATIE GROGAN HOEPPNER

Readers Write

COMMENT ON A STORY?

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

CREHORE ADMIRER

I just read another amazing article by Dave Crehore ("The century run," October 2007), and looked up several previous stories by him on your website that I've read in the past in the magazine. He is a superb writer with a special gift for telling a story, a meaningful one with a message. Is there an anthology of his work available? I would love to know more about him and be able to refer to his work. He really is one of the truly great nature writers, like Sigurd Olson and others, with a keen insight into history and the human psyche as well.

Paul Bolton
Riverwoods, Ill.

Dave has been working to interest a publisher in a story anthology and we have hopes he will hit pay dirt soon. Like you, we really enjoy his works. Dave's career includes almost 30 years as an information officer for the Department of Natural Resources in Madison and Green Bay. Besides his writing accomplishments, he's an avid hunter, angler, photographer, musician and a crack shot at skeet. He's written more than 30 stories for us including 13 reminiscences of growing up in the Manitowoc area. Dave still writes regularly and we have more pieces on tap.

MORE PATTISON PRAISE

How pleasant! I had a good cup of coffee this morning with an old friend. As the first employee to arrive at work to brew the coffee, I waited while it slowly perked and picked up the *Wisconsin Natural Resources* magazine lying on a break room table, expecting to flip the pages and look for pretty pictures. My flipping stopped when "Behind the Pattison" (August 2007) grabbed my atten-

tion. I tend to get caught up in history of areas I live in.

On the next page the beautiful layout and illustrations begged me to sit down and read the article. Three paragraphs in, I found myself thinking about the talent of the writer, so I had to flip back a page and to my surprise I knew the author. As a co-worker at Wausau Insurance, Drayna's publicity pieces and articles always demanded attention. I'm glad he continues to use his talents to expose the beauty of Wisconsin.

Superior holds wonders unknown to people who have not had the opportunity to live here year round. Many areas continue to be available for young people to use as their own private spaces for imagination and growth.

Oh, by the way, I kept reading and got insight into other wonders I look for every year: the "hummingbird moth" and the dragonfly. I won't consider your magazine just a pretty picture book anymore.

Josie Rice
Superior

BATTLE BLUFF FACT CHECK

Your photograph of the Battle Bluff Prairie State Natural Area (back cover, October 2007) outshines your historical reference to "a Black Hawk War skirmish fought nearby." Such a reference for this area is misleading. The author [Brenda] Haugen, Black Hawk's biographical notes and other records, including military survey records, describe the Native American band's plight in the Bad Axe River Valley, approximately four miles north of Battle Hollow, as a massacre of starving, emaciated women and children (hardly warriors) being killed by gunfire from the Wisconsin shoreline and from military boats on the Mississippi River as the Black Hawk group tried to cross the river to get to Iowa. . . hardly a "skirmish." The military called it "war," but it was "genocide." Check your history.

Dennis L. Buckett
Gleason

GREAT LAKES BALLAST EXCHANGE

I have been thinking of our Great Lakes' water levels — could it be possible for a foreign ship to exchange their ballast water for some of our Great Lakes water, only take more of it on the way home? Maybe that is also why we have all these different snails, fish and weeds in Lake Michigan?

Mrs. Frank Hoffman
Aniwa

Our concerns about ballast exchange during shipping have to do with the possible introduction and exchange of invasive organisms including plants, small water insects and disease-causing organisms. Proposals to regulate ballast water exchange aim to get oceangoing vessels to exchange their ballast water while at sea and before they enter the territorial waters of another country — in our case, the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Great Lakes. A DNR-funded study recently concluded that a barge pulled alongside a ship to collect, store and treat the ballast water appears to be feasible and cost effective. The water is then treated using filtering screens and ultraviolet light disinfection to kill organisms. We have not seen articles or professional journals that suggest ballast water exchange is a significant contributor to changing Great Lakes water levels.

It is also possible that recreational boaters contribute to this problem by hauling their crafts from lake to lake. We encourage all boaters to be equally careful to avoid transporting plants, water and animals from one lake to another by thoroughly cleaning boats, trailers and emptying bilge and bait containers. That's the thrust of our campaigns at boat launches these days to clean up boats and discard bait rather than take the chance of spreading problems to other waters.

Changing water levels are more likely influenced by changes in weather patterns, water use, evaporation rates and amounts of precipitation. It certainly appears

that longer term climate change is a factor in these transitions, but Great Lakes water levels have always had cyclic fluctuations.

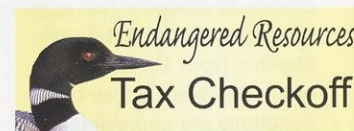
A TOUGH MEAL TO SWALLOW

The December article about eagles ("Bald and beautiful," December 2007) arrived just after I had an unusual encounter with one. I was out hunting in the last week of fall turkey season, and had set out decoys in two groups. The one to my east was all hens, and one to my west had one jake, with a hen twenty feet away.

It was a nice fall day and I had been there a couple of hours without seeing any turkeys. It was about 11:30, and I was just thinking of eating my sack lunch when I looked to the west and saw an eagle just as it finished a power dive, grabbed the lone hen decoy in its talons and flew off with it! I was sure it would realize the mistake and drop the decoy, but for as long as I could see it with my 10 power binoculars, the decoy was still in its talons. My jaw dropped in disbelief as I watched the eagle flying and flying and flying, and not releasing that decoy. It made me realize that eagles must often feast on adult female turkeys, but I imagine that this one was pretty disappointed when it finally stopped to dine on its "catch."

In the afternoon 17 hens came to visit and socialize with the hen group of decoys, and I had to be very careful to bag just one, as they were so close together. REAL turkeys make wonderful eating! By the way, my wife brined the hen for Thanksgiving dinner and it was terrific.

Nick Johansen
Platteville



Please consider a donation to the Endangered Resources Fund at tax time. Talk with your tax preparer or look for the loon symbol on your state tax form.

Cold comfort

What to do when winter has got you down? Dream of your springtime garden-to-come. Bake like your great-grandmother did. Pretend you're 16, it's prom night, and you are the King/Queen. Pretend you're Brad Pitt/Angelina Jolie. Voyage with the Norsemen, march with the Scots. Bring home an alpaca instead of a hamster for your kids.

If all else fails, eat chocolate.

Let's start with that last item. The goodly folk of Appleton invite one and all to experience **Death by Chocolate** on the evening of February 14. Ten downtown coffeehouses and restaurants will prepare delicious, decadent and divine chocolate desserts guaranteed to stop the stoutest of hearts. You'll die ten pounds heavier, but you'll go out with a smile. \$20 per person; \$30 per couple. See www.foxcities.org or call (920) 954-9112.



Learn the nuances of cooking a perfect roast on an open spit. Check out other workshops online at www.wisconsinhistory.org/oww/workshops

WADE HOUSE HISTORIC SITE

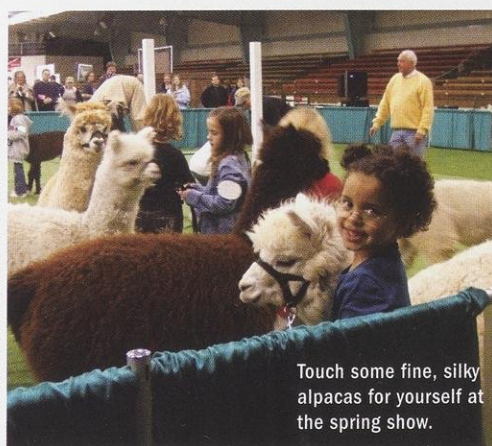
Slaving over a hot stove actually can be a pleasure in chilly February. Warm to the task as you cook 19th-century dishes on a wood-burning stove and over an open hearth during **Hearthside Dinners** from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. on February 16 and March 15 at Wade House in Greenbush. The menu features old-time favorites like squash soup, pork roast, red cabbage with apples, and

mashed turnips. \$45 per person. See www.wisconsinhistory.org/wadehouse or call (920) 526-3271. (By the way, you'll be washing the dishes in 19th-century style, too.)

Recapture the elegance of another era at the **Blue Moon Ball**, a black tie and vintage dress prom for adults on February 9 at the Lakeside Pavilion in Bayfield. The 20-piece Big Woods Big Band croons the tunes, and trophies will go to the best dancers, best vintage apparel, and more. Try not to pull a Carrie when they crown the King and Queen of the Ball. See www.bayfield.org or call (800) 447-4094.

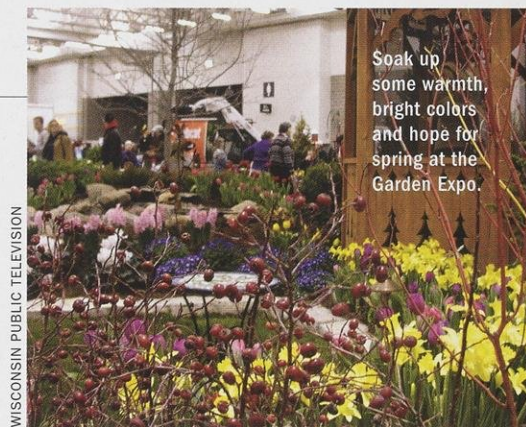
Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and in the hands of the St. Germain Lion's Club, perhaps the most hilarious as well. During the 25th annual **Miss Stump Dump Pageant** on February 9, club members do impersonations of celebrities, all in good fun and for a good cause — to support local charities. Take in the show at the St. Germain Community Center, and enjoy food, raffles and dancing between appearances by Cary Grant and Madonna. (715) 542-2929.

PETER McMASTERS, FOREST ACADEMY ALPACAS



Touch some fine, silky alpacas for yourself at the spring show.

How will your garden grow this spring? Two events can help you answer that question. On February 8-10, visit Madison's Alliant Energy Center for the **WPT Garden Expo**. Ideas are sure to sprout with more than 100 seminars and demonstrations, 200 vendors and many display gardens. Proceeds benefit Wisconsin Public Television. See www.wpt.org/gardenexpo or call (800) 422-9707. The Chippewa Valley Master Gardeners Association and Chippewa County UW-Extension invite you to the **Think Spring Garden Seminar** on February 16, featuring fascinating presentations, knowledgeable speakers, door prizes and the good company of fellow gardeners. For the location, see www.chippewachamber.org or call (715) 726-7950.



WISCONSIN PUBLIC TELEVISION

Soak up some warmth, bright colors and hope for spring at the Garden Expo.

When winter rails, what's a good Viking to do? Have a **Norse Afternoon of Fun** on February 10 at Stoughton High School. While the town's famous Norwegian Dancers kick up their clogs, you can sidle up to the smoked salmon and the lefse. See www.stoughtonnorwegiandancers.com/norse_afternoon.htm or call (608) 877-5600. When the krumkakkas run out, make your way over to Whitewater, where the **Royal Scots Dragoon Guards & Band of the Coldstream Guards** perform on February 11th at the Young Auditorium on the UW-

Whitewater campus. Enjoy the rousing music of Scotland, England, Ireland and Wales with pipes, drums and highland dancers. See www.uw.edu/youngauditorium or call (262) 472-2222.

What do you get when you put 300 alpacas in a room? The **Wisconsin Spring Bling Alpaca Show**, on March 15-16 at the Tri County Ice Arena in Neenah. The furry ungulates come in many colors; soon you'll know your Suris from your Huacayas. See www.foxcities.org or call (920) 337-0646.



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Kick up your heels with some stirring pipes, drums and dance.



Wisconsin, naturally

MOUNT PISGAH HEMLOCK- HARDWOODS STATE NATURAL AREA



Notable: Weathered sandstone cliffs along and above the meandering Kickapoo River harbor stands of hemlock, yellow birch, sugar maple, white pine and red oak. Liverworts, mosses and small ferns inhabit the cliff faces. In spring, wildflowers are abundant and feature a mixture of both southern and northern species. Look for the rare Sullivant's coolwort (*above*) and the state-threatened moschatel growing in rock crevices.

How to get there:

Within
Wildcat
Mountain
State Park
in Vernon
County.



From the intersection of Highways 131 and 33 in Ontario, go east and south on 33 about 2.5 miles, then southwest on Park Rd. 0.6 mile to a parking area. Follow the Hemlock Trail into the site. A park sticker is required. Visit dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna/sna15.htm for a detailed map and more information.



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