

# Wisconsin Natural Resources

THE WISCONSIN DNR'S GUIDE TO THE OUTDOORS | [WNRMAG.COM](http://WNRMAG.COM)

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## OUTDOORS FOR ALL

- | EXPLORE BIRDING HOT SPOTS
- | UNVEILING A DOOR COUNTY TRADITION
- | GOV. TONY EARL'S LEGACY

SUMMER 2023 | 3.50







JAY WATSON

*Eastern tiger swallowtail butterfly (Papilio glaucus).*

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Governor Tony Evers

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Habitat management is crucial for the sharp-tailed grouse (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*).

## 26 Fighting for firebirds

ANDI SEDLACEK

LARRY DAU

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COVER PHOTO BY DAVID NEVALA



## FROM THE SECRETARY **ADAM N. PAYNE**

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MIKE GORSKI

*"Come to the woods, for here is rest."*  
— John Muir

As a lifelong conservationist, I appreciate some rest, as well as a strong connection and serenity when I spend time in the woods. My family, close friends and I have spent countless hours among the trees and in the fresh air, and those moments have helped provide not just some rest and wonderful memories, but a much-needed reset.

In talking with our many stakeholders and department staff, I'm in good company. We all enjoy spending time in the outdoors to help us relax and recharge. The mental health benefits of spending time in the woods or on the water cannot be overstated.

Research shows repeatedly that one of the most effective and natural

methods to improve mental health is to spend time outside. The sound of a flowing stream, the smell of fresh pine or the view from our favorite trail all help reduce stress and promote relaxation.

We are so fortunate that our state is abundant with diverse natural resources to explore and a multitude of ways to enjoy them. From hunting, fishing, camping and hiking, to birdwatching and kayaking, there are so many ways to reconnect with yourself and nature.

As part of Gov. Tony Evers' Year of Mental Health, I encourage everyone to visit one or more of our state properties to escape the noise and enjoy a mental reset from the hustle and bustle of our daily lives. If you haven't been to a state park in a long time, make it a priority; you won't be disappointed.

When my wife and I were younger, we enjoyed camping as one of our "reset" opportunities. My family visited and made memories at many of our beautiful state park campgrounds, and recently, I have been exploring new ones. Our public lands in Wisconsin are gems. I am grateful Gov. Evers made it a priority to improve the infrastructure at many of these properties to help assure we responsibly maintain them and that everyone has an opportunity to enjoy them for generations to come.

Since moving into this role in January, my No. 1 goal is to help improve

our water quality. Every Wisconsinite surely appreciates the importance of clean water, whether you're drinking it from the tap or it's flowing in our streams, rivers and lakes.

Wisconsin, of course, benefits from the governor's continued commitment to improving water quality, our most important natural resource. With the key leadership and support of the governor and Legislature, I'm committed to working with our department staff and all of you to help assure we keep our water clean, protect all our precious resources and are better prepared to respond to individuals and communities in need.

I understand these investments and preparations will not lead to improvements overnight, and it will require us all to work together. If we do so, I'm optimistic we will be able to protect and enhance our groundwater, lakes, rivers and streams, and further improve our economy. It is essential that we leave our children and grandchildren a safe environment in which they, too, can raise a family and explore nature, while making memories and enjoying rest.

This summer, I encourage you to "reset" and listen to nature through a splash in Wisconsin waters, a walk in the forest, or by soaking in the view from many of our picturesque bluffs. These natural resources are our collective responsibility to share, to protect and to pass on.

On, Wisconsin! 🍷



# NEWS YOU CAN USE



RACHEL HERSHBERGER/TRAVEL WISCONSIN

## JOIN US AT STATE FAIR

Have fun at the fair! The 2023 Wisconsin State Fair runs Aug. 3-13 at State Fair Park in West Allis, and the DNR will be there to educate and celebrate. Join us at the DNR display in the north building at Exploratory Park, across Main Street from the Original Cream Puff Pavilion. For more about the fair, including hours and admission information, check [wistatefair.com](http://wistatefair.com).



RACHEL HERSHBERGER/TRAVEL WISCONSIN

## OUTDOORS FOR MENTAL HEALTH

With Gov. Tony Evers declaring 2023 the Year of Mental Health, the outdoors beckon as a way to refresh, relax and recharge. Wisconsin boasts bountiful public lands throughout the state, and the DNR has the tools to help you find the perfect place to explore. Check the Public Access Lands webpage to learn more — [dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands).

## WILDLIFE STAMP DESIGN CONTESTS ARE NOW OPEN

Wildlife artists are encouraged to submit designs for the DNR's 2024 wild turkey, pheasant and waterfowl stamp design contests. Winning designs will appear on next year's stamps.

Hunters are required to purchase stamps to harvest these game birds, and sales bring in hundreds of thousands of dollars each year for species management. The design contest is open to anyone 18 years or older living in Wisconsin who is a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident.

Contest deadline is July 15, with judging in late August at the Waterfowl Hunters Expo in Oshkosh. For details on contest rules and artwork technical requirements, check [dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1561](http://dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1561).



The 2023 wild turkey stamp was created by Sam Timm of Wautoma, who also won the pheasant and waterfowl stamp design contests.



WISCONSIN DNR

## TAKE ACTION AGAINST INVASIVE SPECIES

June is Invasive Species Action Month, marked by the Wisconsin Invasive Species Council, with reminders that a few simple steps can help prevent the spread of potentially destructive invasive species.

- **Fishing and boating:** Inspect your boat, trailer and all equipment after every outing and remove any attached aquatic animals or plants. Drain water from boats, motors and equipment. Never move live fish away from a waterbody and always discard unwanted extra bait in the trash.

- **Hiking and camping:** Clean mud and dirt from shoes and remove seeds and burs from clothing between visits from place to place. Use local firewood when camping to avoid spreading invasive insects and pathogens.

- **Gardening:** Replace invasive species with native species or traditional gardening plants that are noninvasive.

- **Volunteering:** Join workdays to help remove invasive species. Check the DNR Events Calendar — [dnr.wi.gov/events](http://dnr.wi.gov/events) — or contact individual groups for opportunities.

For more on invasive species in Wisconsin, check [dnr.wi.gov/tiny/946](http://dnr.wi.gov/tiny/946).



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



BILL MCNEE

*Emerald ash borer*

## SOS: SAVE OUR SWAMPS

I read the magazine article by Anna Marie Zorn (Fall 2022), covering the effort to save the hardwood swamps. My swamp was covered with black and green ash. Now, all I have is a couple of oaks, basswood and other assorted shrubs. My land is being taken over by cattails, reed canary grass and invasive buckthorn. My land is part of the Sheboygan Marsh watershed. Every lowland parcel around the marsh has nothing but dead standing trees.

Replacement efforts on my part have been futile. Plantings have been challenged by the reed canary grass, deer, mice, rabbits, squirrels and chipmunks. I am in my 70s, so I will not live long enough to see any of my plantings mature. I applaud the effort being made by these people. I wish them luck.

Art Chevrier  
Sheboygan

## PELICAN ON THE MOVE

My name is Kylie Stevens, and I am submitting my photo — American white pelican — for WNR magazine. It was taken by me in the La Crosse area. Thank you for your consideration!

Kylie Stevens  
La Crosse



## ROADSIDE ATTRACTION

Sandhill crane photo taken from the road at Crex Meadows with 500-millimeter lens so as not to disturb the bird, last October.

Larry Hollar  
Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota





## MORE ON LIGHTNING SAFETY

Hi, I very much enjoy the magazine. A question regarding the lightning article (Spring 2023): Why should we never lie flat on the ground during a lightning storm?

Mike Nesemann  
Lake Mills

*Thanks for the letter, Mike. We asked a meteorologist, and this was their response:*

*"When lightning strikes, the discharge travels along the ground surface. Lying flat on the ground increases the amount of contact your body has with the ground, which in turn increases the likelihood of being impacted by a deadly ground current. Additionally, you are more likely to be in contact with a conductive material, such as metal or water.*

*"During a lightning storm, it is best to immediately seek shelter. A sturdy, fully enclosed structure such as a building or hard-topped car is the best protection from lightning."*

Write in by sending letters to  
DNRmagazine@wisconsin.gov  
or WNR magazine, PO Box 7921,  
Madison, WI 53707.



You asked, our DNR experts answered. Here is a quick roundup of interesting feedback sent to us on Facebook.



### Q: Can I keep driftwood?

A: The legality of harvesting driftwood depends on where the driftwood is located. Driftwood floating in lakes, rivers and flowages has not traditionally been considered "lost" property. Rather, it is unclaimed property, which generally can be kept by the finder.

Driftwood sitting out of the water on private property is owned by that private property owner. Accordingly, driftwood found above the waterline on the shores of natural lakes (for example, a beach) belongs to the public or private owner of that shoreline property. The beds of most natural lakes are owned by the state of Wisconsin; therefore, a person cannot remove driftwood, logs or stumps from lake beds.

Driftwood found on the beds of flowages and rivers belongs to the owners of those beds. Removal of any forest product, including driftwood, without the owner's consent is considered theft and a violation of Wisconsin law.

In conclusion, you can keep floating driftwood, but you cannot collect driftwood you find on land above the waterline or on the bottom of a body of water. If you suspect someone is collecting driftwood illegally and you want to report a DNR violation or complaint, contact the DNR Violation Hotline directly. Call or text 1-800-847-9367 or submit the information online at [dnr.wi.gov/contact/hotline.html](http://dnr.wi.gov/contact/hotline.html).

### Q: Can I stack rocks?

A: It is strongly recommended that visitors do not stack, gather, throw or otherwise purposely disturb rocks in our state parks and other public lands.

Any time a rock is moved, insects, plants and animals can be forced from their hiding places and homes, making them vulnerable to predators and other inadvertent impacts. When you move rocks, you also might remove attached organisms like lichens and algae, which serve important roles such as filtering pollutants from the air.

Moving rocks also can lead to a faster rate of erosion of the surrounding sand, sediment and soils. Plus, people enjoying the outdoors are not always looking for a reminder that other people have already been there.



### Q: Do I need a pass for hiking a state trail?

A: A state trail pass is not required for walking or hiking on any state trails. A pass is required for anyone age 16 or older when bicycling, cross-country skiing, horseback riding or in-line skating on certain trails. Passes can be purchased at properties via drive-up window or self-registration stations and at many local outlets such as bike shops. Scan the QR code or check [dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1556](http://dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1556) to learn more.



## MORE SUSTAINABLE GIFT-GIVING TIPS

I always enjoy reading your magazine. I read through the Winter issue and paused on the "12 Tips for a Sustainable Holiday." Thank you for the tips; however, there are a couple of

tips I think you could add next time:

1. Donate to the gift receiver's favorite local or national charity or nonprofit in the receiver's name.
2. Use reusable fabric gift bags instead of paper, tape and

ribbons. I have made gift bags out of Christmas fabric. They are much quicker to use and can be used again the next year.

Thanks for an excellent magazine.

Jean Hamersky  
Green Bay





*As governor, Tony Earl was known for cultivating relationships and championing inclusivity. Here, he signs a 1983 executive order creating the Wisconsin Women's Council.*

# PAYING TRIBUTE TO TONY EARL

**ANDREA ZANI**

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Personable, kindhearted, articulate, gracious, genuine. Those who knew and worked with Tony Earl, former governor of Wisconsin and one-time DNR secretary, remember him as all those things and more. Earl died on Feb. 23, 2023, at the age of 86.

Anthony Scully Earl clearly loved his state and its residents. He was passionate about protecting the environment, and as DNR secretary, he cared deeply about the department's work and the people who did it.

"Besides his rare graciousness and sense of humor, I was always impressed by Tony's memory for names and faces," recalled Laurel Steffes, who was communications director, among other duties, during a 35-year DNR career.

"While he was DNR secretary, I introduced Tony to my dad. They chatted briefly, and Tony said some nice things about my work. Literally years later, when he was governor, Tony walked up to my dad at an Elk's Club and, without skipping a beat, said, 'Hi, George, how are you?'

"Dad was astounded, and needless to say, dad's lunch mates were pretty impressed. Working for Tony was a privilege."

## **A CHAMPION FOR ALL**

Such stories are common among those who knew and worked with Earl, DNR secretary from 1975-80. Earl's leadership helped spur the state to numerous environmental accomplishments during his DNR tenure, including:

- Passage of important groundwater protection legislation, 1976
- New state law protecting surface



waters from nonpoint source pollution, 1977

- Creation of the Wisconsin Waterways Commission, 1977
- Wisconsin's Hazardous Substance Spills Law enacted, 1978
- Wisconsin's Shoreland Protection Program established, 1980

After leaving the DNR, Earl served as Wisconsin's 41st governor from 1983-87, known for being a champion of LGBTQ rights and fostering an administration built on inclusion. A Democrat, he also was known for cultivating relationships with members of both parties, including an enduring friendship with Republican Tommy Thompson, who defeated Earl in his re-election bid for governor.

In announcing Earl's death following a stroke, Gov. Tony Evers called him "a formidable leader and public servant, trusted colleague and mentor, and a good and loyal friend."

"Tony was well-liked and respected by so many," Evers said. "Tony was always a staunch defender of our state's proud traditions, including conservation."

### IMPORTANT PRIORITIES

Born and raised in Michigan, Earl earned a law degree from the University of Chicago in 1961. He practiced law in the U.S. Navy, was assistant district attorney in Marathon County and city attorney in Wausau before



*Tony Earl, 41st governor of Wisconsin.*

serving in the State Assembly from 1969-74. After that, he was secretary of the Department of Administration for a year before moving to the DNR's top post.

In the January/February 1976 issue of *Wisconsin Natural Resources*, Earl outlined his new job priorities, including many of the same issues the DNR faces today.

"I have tried to immerse myself in a number of serious policy areas that DNR will have to grapple with," he wrote. "Nonpoint source pollution is clearly one. Future land acquisition is another.

"A third is the whole problem of hunting quality. Funding for the department for day-to-day operations, capital needs in pollution control and

the land use question are others in a whole series of very crucial issues."

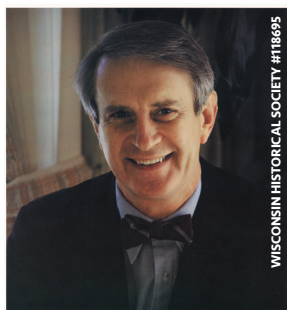
In 1988, Earl left government service behind after an unsuccessful run for U.S. Senate. He worked as an attorney in Madison and promoted good governance and environmental issues with nonpartisan groups such as the Joyce Foundation and Common Cause Wisconsin.

In a 2013 Associated Press interview, Earl reflected happily on his time as governor.

"Somebody told me when I was elected, 'You're about to embark on a mountaintop experience,'" he said. "And it really was in many, many ways." 🌿

*Andrea Zani is managing editor of Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine.*

*Signed portrait of Tony Earl, who died in February at age 86.*



WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY #118695

### EARL'S LEGACY

In 2019, to honor Tony Earl's years of service to Wisconsin, including as DNR secretary, his name was added to the state forest in Marinette and Oconto counties, making it the Governor Earl Peshtigo River State Forest. This long, linear state forest borders some of the most scenic sections of the Peshtigo River, where it is known for excellent fly-fishing; [dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1546](http://dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1546).

Earl's legacy also includes this very magazine. In late 1976, Earl and the Natural Resources Board made the decision to invest in the magazine through a newly imposed subscription fee (then \$4.50 per year), officially transforming it from the old Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin format into the full-color magazine that continues today.



# OUTDOORS

## FOR ALL

**KATIE GRANT**

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Getting outdoors has a profound impact on our mental and physical health. It provides an opportunity to disconnect from the stresses of daily life and connect with something larger than ourselves.

Time spent in nature has been shown to lower blood pressure and improve one's overall well-being. It is a powerful antidote to the hustle and bustle we may feel in our day-to-day lives. But many experience challenges in accessing the outdoors for various reasons.

In Wisconsin, where spending time outside is an integral part of our identity, it is crucial we ensure the outdoors are open for all, no matter their background or where they are in the state. Everyone should be able to find an adventure they can enjoy, whether that's birding, hunting, fishing, simply wandering, or anything else in between.

Read on to learn about a few organizations, people and resources that are helping to make it easier for all to enjoy the outdoors. Know of something else we should feature in a future issue? Let us know at [dnrmagazine@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dnrmagazine@wisconsin.gov). 🌿

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*Katie Grant is communications director for the DNR.*







# REEL JOY: FISHING IN THE CITY

ZACH WOOD

On a sunny April morning, kids excitedly start to form a line at McGovern Park on Milwaukee's north side. It's a popular spot with locals for its playground and basketball courts, but today, the buzz among the crowd is about something different — a free kids' fishing clinic hosted by Midwest Crappie Hunters in partnership with the DNR and the Milwaukee Police Department.

According to a 2016 report from the U.S. Census Bureau, 86% of freshwater anglers are white. Organizations like Midwest Crappie Hunters are hosting free fishing clinics like this one across the country to take one step toward changing that.

"Midwest Crappie Hunters was originally just a fishing club," said Darrian Perry, president of the organization. "It wasn't until we were talking in a parking lot with guys from the Inner City Sportsmen Club that we decided we wanted to do something for the community and share this sport with people who've never gotten to participate."

## TEACHING BASICS, OPENING DOORS

That exclusion, Perry noted, starts with a lack of opportunities to get started.

"You look at some suburban schools — they have fishing, hiking, even archery in their gym classes. You don't see that in the urban schools," he said.

"I was lucky because my grandfather and father loved fishing, so I grew up doing it. Today, a lot of parents are so busy and working so hard to just make ends meet, they don't have time to get their kids into fishing. That lack of exposure is a real barrier."

Midwest Crappie Hunters fishing clinics are a way to help change that and bring fishing opportunities where they're needed.



Events sponsored by Midwest Crappie Hunters help bring angling opportunities to urban areas.

"That's why we started doing our own fishing clinics at McGovern Park," Perry said of the location near Havenwoods State Forest. "Those clinics keep growing, and it's special to see kids learning the basics like how to tie knots, cast, clean fish and just have fun near the waters in their own neighborhood."

## BIG FISH CLOSE TO HOME

Another point Midwest Crappie Hunters emphasizes is that you need not drive to Wisconsin's Northwoods to find fish.

"There are some amazing waters within 30 minutes of downtown (Milwaukee) — Pewaukee Lake, Lake Michigan, the Milwaukee River," he said. "And I know the DNR stocks some ponds in cities, too."

Every year, the DNR works cooperatively with county and municipal governments across Wisconsin to manage local fishing holes. This ensures that no matter if you're in Minocqua

or Milwaukee, outstanding angling is never far away.

Fishing provides time to disconnect from the stressors of everyday life, Perry said. "Everyone deserves access to that." 🐟

*Zach Wood is a public information officer in the DNR's Office of Communications.*



## LEARN MORE

Great fishing might be closer than you think! The DNR stocks and manages several urban

fishing waters across the state to provide quality angling opportunities and encourage more people to go fishing in their communities. To learn more about the urban angling program and the waters near you, scan the QR code or go to [dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1636](https://dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1636).



# SHARING A PASSION FOR PADDLING

KATHRYN A. KAHLER

For Dan Aldrich, sharing time outdoors with his son's scouting troop is a vital part of life. The active lifelong California resident enjoys the variety of troop activities, but one adventure was more challenging than the rest.

During the troop's first annual canoe trip, Aldrich "expended a ton of energy" to keep up; his left arm is totally paralyzed.

Things are a little different now, thanks to a paddling aid developed and manufactured in Wisconsin, the One-Arm Freedom Canoe Paddle.

"The second trip, even with a strong headwind, I had the paddle, and it made the trip significantly more enjoyable," Aldrich said.

The Freedom Canoe Paddle is the brainchild of Cindy Dillenschneider, an outdoor educator passionate about inclusion.

By the early 2000s, advances in adaptive kayak seating had significantly helped people with lower limb impairments. Dillenschneider saw a similar need to aid those with upper limb impairments and decided to put her passions to work.

In 2006, she teamed up with Bending Branches, a renowned paddle manufacturer in Osceola, to develop the paddle.

The lightweight L-shaped paddle attaches to the shoulder of the paddler's personal flotation device and can be adjusted for left or right use. Each order is customized for individual or program needs.

## SAFETY FIRST

The Freedom Canoe Paddle is easy to use, Dillenschneider said, and most people can perform basic strokes within the first few minutes. For safety reasons, the paddle should only be used for flatwater canoeing in unobstructed waters, like ponds and lakes, rather than rivers and streams.



SCOTT STOWELL

*Using the One-Arm Freedom Canoe Paddle helps those with upper limb impairments get out on the water.*

Before getting on the water, it's important to know what types of life jackets are compatible with the paddle. Users also should be careful of obstructions in the water — like rocks, logs or docks — and should practice the paddle's quick-release mechanism in case of capsizing.

Dillenschneider recommends the paddle be used by adults who understand how to use it properly.

"Minors should be closely supervised by an adult who can help them avoid hazardous situations," she said.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The paddle is being used in the U.S., Canada, Singapore, Ireland and the U.K., and it can be found across various venues, including outrigger canoeing, dragon boat racing and wilderness canoeing.

For Dillenschneider, it remains a work in progress.

## LEARN MORE

For details on the One-Arm Freedom Canoe Paddle, visit [dillenschneiderdesigns.com](http://dillenschneiderdesigns.com).

"I continue to work on improving the paddle based on feedback from our customers," she said. "Small changes in equipment design can make a huge difference in access and inclusion."

The paddle has already made a big difference for Aldrich.

"I'm a pretty active athlete and participate in lots of sports," he said. "Getting the paddle was great for our canoe trip, as it let me be a strong paddler without much experience. I love it!" 🍷

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

# TO FEEL THE WIND IN YOUR HAIR

In Portage County, it all started with a simple idea: Tori Jennings wanted to "get people outside to feel the sunshine who may not have a way to do it on their own."

Six years into the ride, the Portage County chapter of Cycling Without Age isn't hitting the brakes. The group is part of an international movement focused on offering the joys of cycling via trishaws, a pilot-powered ride that brings biking to those who may have thought such a thing was left in the dust.

Jennings, the driving force behind the chapter, says you can watch the connections and community develop right before your eyes.

"I always find it fascinating watching the people out walking that we pass," Jennings said. "They don't look at the pilot, they look at the passenger, and they smile and wave."

## RIDE SHARING

In the village of Luck, in northwestern Wisconsin, these trishaws can be seen rolling along the Gandy Dancer State Trail with residents of United Pioneer Home smiling in the front seat.

"The bike design is set up for conversation," said Jay Andress, United Pioneer Home director. "It is the reverse of a typical trishaw, so it's a shared experience."

As the trishaw moves along, passengers can relate their stories and memories. Without the trishaw experience, program volunteers say, some of those memories likely never would have been unlocked.

In the Fox Cities region, which has the largest Cycling Without Age chapter in Wisconsin, the momentum can't seem to slow down.

## LEARN MORE

The Cycling Without Age global nonprofit group lists 20 chapters in Wisconsin. For information and to find a chapter near you, check [cyclingwithoutage.com](http://cyclingwithoutage.com).



*Pilot-powered trishaws help those with limited mobility get out on the road with family and friends.*

"I'm awestruck," said Cheryl Zadrzil, former president of the Fox Cities Greenways trail advocacy group and Cycling Without Age champion. "It's this seed that got picked up and supported and is now flying."

More than 20 trishaws cycle around the region, and it's common to spot one riding side-by-side with families and grandchildren, enjoying the moment together.

## EXPANDING THE RIDE

Cycling Without Age supports more than just nursing homes. In the Fox Cities region, a new Trishaw Transit service has offered more than 300 trips for local errands.

In Portage County, the group is partnering with a school district to offer rides to students of different abilities. Just a five-minute bike ride around a running track can help students stay calmer and more focused.

Though the emphasis is on tearing down the boundaries of age, the mission of Cycling Without Age is spinning across Wisconsin to help everyone with limited mobility have equal access to the joy of feeling the wind in their hair. ♻️

*Dana Fulton Porter is a publications supervisor in the DNR's Office of Communications.*

## RAIL-TRAILS KEEP ON ROLLING

In the mid-1960s, a movement began in the Midwest and rolled across the country: converting abandoned or unused railways into public trails. Since then, the rails-to-trails movement has exploded to include more than 20,000 miles across America.

These multi-use trails promote sustainable transportation and provide diverse outdoor recreation opportunities while also preserving historic transportation corridors.

Most of Wisconsin's state trails are rail-trails, including the "granddaddy of them all," the Elroy-Sparta State Trail. In 1965, it got the green light to become the first rail-trail in the country.

This 32.5-mile trail in western Wisconsin takes visitors through scenic countryside, farmlands and several small towns and is still one of the most popular and beloved multi-use trails in the state.

For more on Wisconsin's state trails, scan the QR code or check [dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/trails](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/trails).





# BIRDING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

LAURIE MERCURIO

Hearing is a big part of enjoying nature, especially when it comes to birding. Identifying birds by their call or song and not by sight is vital to the activity.

"Birding by ear" just got much easier for those with hearing loss, thanks to a growing list of bird identification apps.

Mike Ellery of Waukesha County grew up in a rural area where birds were everywhere. In his late teens, he noticed a decline in his hearing, which continued to worsen during his 47 years as a carpenter.

"I lost interest in birds and many things in nature since I could not hear many of them," Ellery said. "Finally, I gave in to my wife's request to get some hearing aids."

Ellery was able to control the hearing aids from his smartphone.

"They helped greatly, and the joy of birding was back," he said. "Just like that, I could hear yellow warblers, black-capped chickadees and so much more."

There are still many birds Ellery can't hear, but "luckily, I have eyes like an eagle and can see almost anything that moves," he said. And that's where another tool, the Merlin Bird ID

smartphone app, comes in handy.

"Once I see a bird I can't hear well enough to ID, I use the app to verify my findings," he said.

Available free from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the app is one of the most popular among birders. Simply



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MIKE ELLERY

*Thanks to hearing aids and a smartphone, the joys of birding are back for Mike Ellery.*

record the bird song and the app will show real-time suggestions for what's singing. Then compare your recording to the songs and calls in the app to confirm the ID.

The app also allows for identification by color, size and behavior. And to help open the outdoors to all, the app has features for those with vision loss who perhaps can hear the birds but cannot visually identify them.

Snap a photo, or upload one from the phone's camera, and the app's photo ID feature will offer a short list of possible matches.

## EAGER LISTENER

Tom Belzer of Fort Atkinson suffered hearing loss from being exposed to gunfire as a hunter and in the military. He has been using hearing aids for about 30 years and also uses Cornell's Merlin Bird ID app.

Though not perfect, the hearing aids have greatly improved his ability to listen for birds.

"The same day I got my first hearing devices, I heard a bird in my backyard and then spotted it — a tufted

titmouse, at the time an uncommon visitor to our locale," Belzer said. "I likely would have missed it, but for my new hearing aids."

"I hope this may encourage others with a hearing disability to seek out professional help so they might hear the sweet sounds of birds and all of nature." 🐦

*Laurie Mercurio is a former public information officer in the DNR's Office of Communications.*

## LEARN MORE

For more about birding with hearing loss, talk to your audiologist and check out these apps online:

- Merlin Bird ID — [merlin.allaboutbirds.org](http://merlin.allaboutbirds.org)
- BirdNet Sound ID — [birdnet.cornell.edu](http://birdnet.cornell.edu)
- Apps from Sibley Guides — [sibleyguides.com](http://sibleyguides.com)



*Apps such as the Merlin Bird ID help birders of all abilities make the most of their experience.*



# PASSION FOR THE LAND, SUPPORT FOR EACH

## HELPING WISCONSIN WOMEN CONNECT WITH THE LAND

**ANDI SEDLACEK**

More than one-third of farmers in Wisconsin are women, according to the 2017 U.S. census, meaning there are more than 38,000 women farmers in the state.

"It isn't a small number," said Noemy Serrano, southeast regional coordinator for Wisconsin Women in Conservation, or WiWiC. "Yet there

aren't many resources specific to women farmers."

Enter WiWiC, a statewide collaborative led by the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute in partnership with Renewing the Countryside, Marbleseed and the Wisconsin Farmers Union.

The multi-faceted project, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, brings together women farmers and landowners in Wisconsin to learn about conservation practices, resources and funding opportunities.

Through in-person and virtual events, field days and a team of conservation coaches, WiWiC is creating

a space for women to learn, meet each other and, most importantly, care for the land they manage.

### DIVERSE CONNECTIONS

WiWiC works with women from traditional farmers to urban gardeners and backyard growers.

"Statewide, we are seeing a lot of diversity in the women we're connecting with," said Serrano, whose passion has been driven by her grandfathers, both farmers.

"We've connected with young farmers who are just getting started or women who have just retired and have purchased land," she said. "Others come to us by way of being recently widowed, and they're

WISCONSIN WOMEN IN CONSERVATION



Noemy Serrano, WiWiC's southeast regional coordinator, appreciates the opportunity to connect with urban growers and women farmers of color.

Patti Schevers' 100-acre farm in Oneida includes 90 acres she and her partner have restored to native prairie and wildflowers.



# OTHER

managing their family farm for the first time and trying to figure it all out."

Serrano's role focuses on women farmers in Milwaukee, Racine and Walworth counties.

"I'm connecting with a lot of urban growers," she said. "And as a Mexican-American woman, being able to connect with women of color has been really important to me."

## STEWARD AND COACH

The beauty of WiWiC is that it provides conservation resources applicable on any scale — whether a farmer is experienced or a novice, managing a large piece of land they own or a rented plot in a community garden.

A significant part of these resources is WiWiC's team of conservation coaches. Patti Schevers is one of them.

Schevers manages her family's 100-acre farm in Oneida. She's the fourth-generation steward of the land, which was a working farm for over 100 years and has a history of being guided by women, including her mother and great-grandmother.

When her family did not want to remain active farmers, Schevers and her partner worked quickly to restore more than 90 of the acres into native prairie and wildflowers in just one year.

"It was a lot more than we ever thought to get it off the ground," Schevers said.

She studied sustainable agriculture and used guidance from the USDA plus her own determination to complete the restoration project. At the time, WiWiC was not yet established.

"I wasn't sure where the resources would be for a land manager like me," Schevers said. "If WiWiC were around when I was starting, I would have leaned on them a lot."

## AMAZING SUPPORT SYSTEM

These days, Schevers relishes her role as a WiWiC conservation coach.

"It's great to meet other landowners, learn what they're doing and traverse the joys and pains of it all together," she said. "That's the best part about WiWiC — you get to be part of a group of people like you and know you've got some support."

With events all year and around the state, WiWiC offers women farmers and landowners many opportunities to connect and learn from each other, Serrano noted. It's a source of pride for her as a WiWiC coordinator.

"It's always been very important to me to uplift women, push for change and create inclusive spaces," she said. "And to work on a project that does all of that is absolutely amazing." 🌱

*Andi Sedlacek is a public information officer in the DNR's Office of Communications.*

## LEARN MORE

For details on Wisconsin Women in Conservation, a statewide collaborative of women focused on land stewardship, check [wiwic.org](http://wiwic.org).



PATTI SCHEVERS

*Fourth-generation landowner Patti Schevers, with her partner and son, embraces her role as a coach for Wisconsin Women in Conservation.*

B.J. O'CONNOR-SCHEVERS



# SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE

## PARK ANNIVERSARIES MELD PAST, PRESENT

ANDREA ZANI

The year 1948 was a big one for Wisconsin state parks, with three new parks officially established — Governor Dodge, Roche-a-Cri and Wildcat Mountain. This year, those parks are celebrating 75 years, and several other state properties are

marking anniversaries as well. Here's a look at these special places, then and now.

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*Andrea Zani is managing editor of Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine.*

### THRIVING AT 75

#### **Governor Dodge State Park**

In 1948, the Wisconsin Conservation Commission accepted Iowa County's gift of 160 acres, known as Cox Hollow, and created a state park named for Henry Dodge, first governor of Wisconsin. More land was added over time, bringing today's total to

more than 5,300 acres in the state's Driftless Area. Off-road bicycling and horseback riding are two of the park's more distinct draws.

#### **Roche-a-Cri State Park**

A 300-foot rock outcropping creates the most striking feature of this Adams County spot, established on land first acquired by the state as a road-

side rest area. Visitors can see Native American petroglyphs carved before A.D. 900 and pictographs estimated to be 400-500 years old. A stairway leads to observation areas atop the mound, providing stunning views.

#### **Wildcat Mountain State Park**

Beginning with a single 20-acre donation in Vernon County in 1938, Wild-



cat Mountain became a state park 10 years later. It has grown to more than 3,600 acres, featuring scenic views of the Kickapoo River, and is especially popular for equestrian activities.

### NIFTY FIFTIES

#### Bearskin State Trail

Logging brought the railroad to Oneida County in the late 1800s and tourist trains eventually took over, with the Northwoods Hiawatha route operating into the mid-1950s. After train service to the area ended for good, the rail corridor along Bearskin Creek was converted to a 21.5-mile recreational trail in 1973, allowing visitors to explore Minocqua, Hazelhurst, Goodnow and Harshaw.

#### Red Cedar State Trail

Unique rock formations await visitors along this 14.5-mile route through the Red Cedar Valley in Dunn County. Another 50-year-old rail-trail, it's the perfect location for a bike and paddle trip, with access to the Red Cedar River. In winter, it's groomed for cross-country skiing.

### SILVER FOX

#### Fox River State Trail

This stretch along a former rail corridor in Brown and Calumet counties was purchased by the DNR in 1998 and is the quintessential multi-use trail. Beginning in Green Bay, the 25-year-old trail includes an 11-mile paved asphalt segment along the Fox River and 14 miles of crushed gravel surface on the southern portion.

### CENTURY CLUB

#### Peninsula State Park Golf Course

First opened in 1917 with six holes, this historic golf course grew to nine holes 100 years ago, in 1923. Eight years later, it expanded to 18 holes, and in 2015, another six holes were added in a par-3 short course. Golfers will enjoy a scenic forested landscape with spectacular views of Eagle Harbor and the village of Ephraim, plus glimpses of the Niagara Escarpment and its ancient rock formations. 🌲



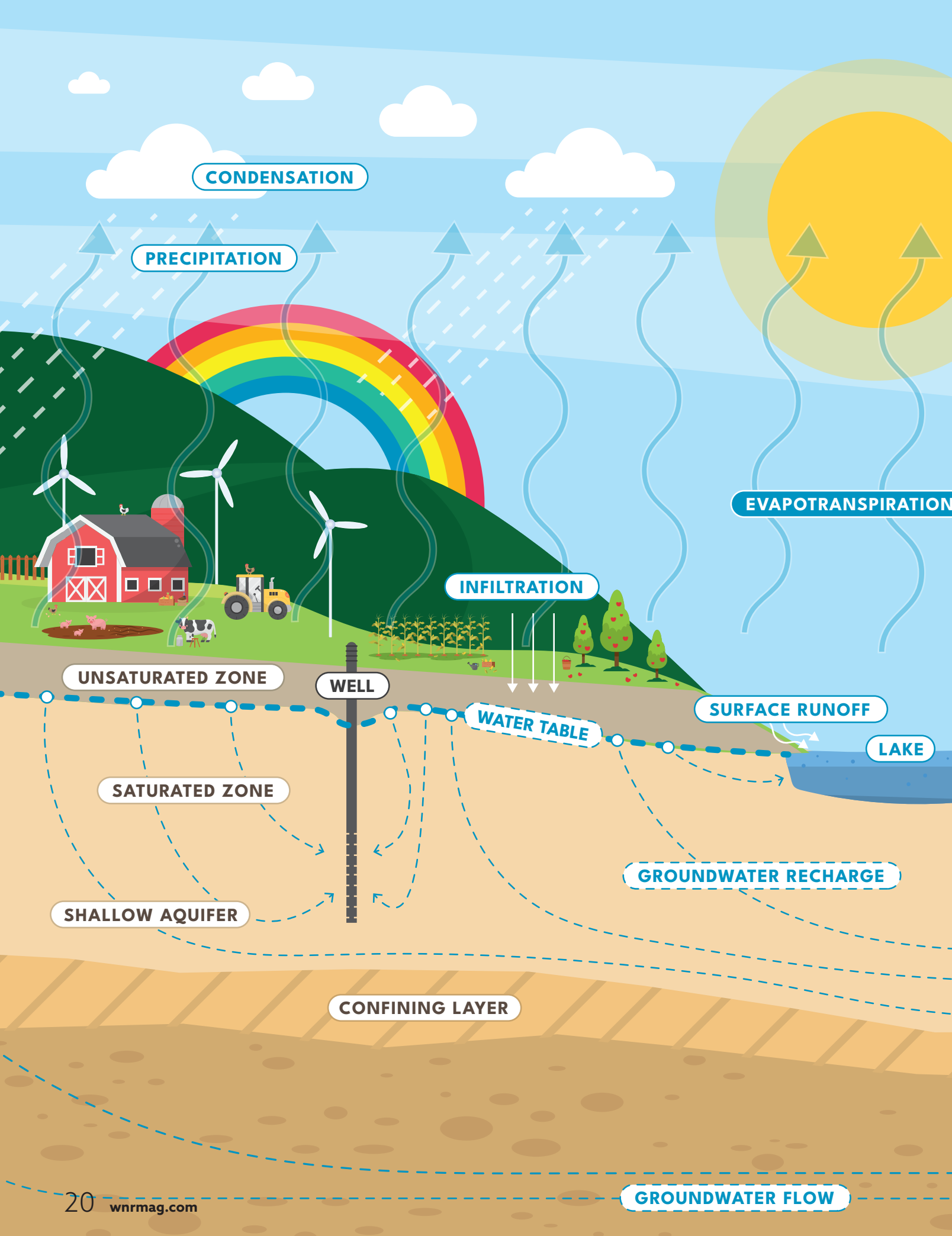
### LEARN MORE

Scan the QR code for all you need to enjoy Wisconsin's state parks or check [dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks).

*Roche-a-Cri State Park's 300-foot rock formation.*



DANIEL ROBINSON





# GROUNDWATER

## THE UNSEEN PART OF THE WATER CYCLE

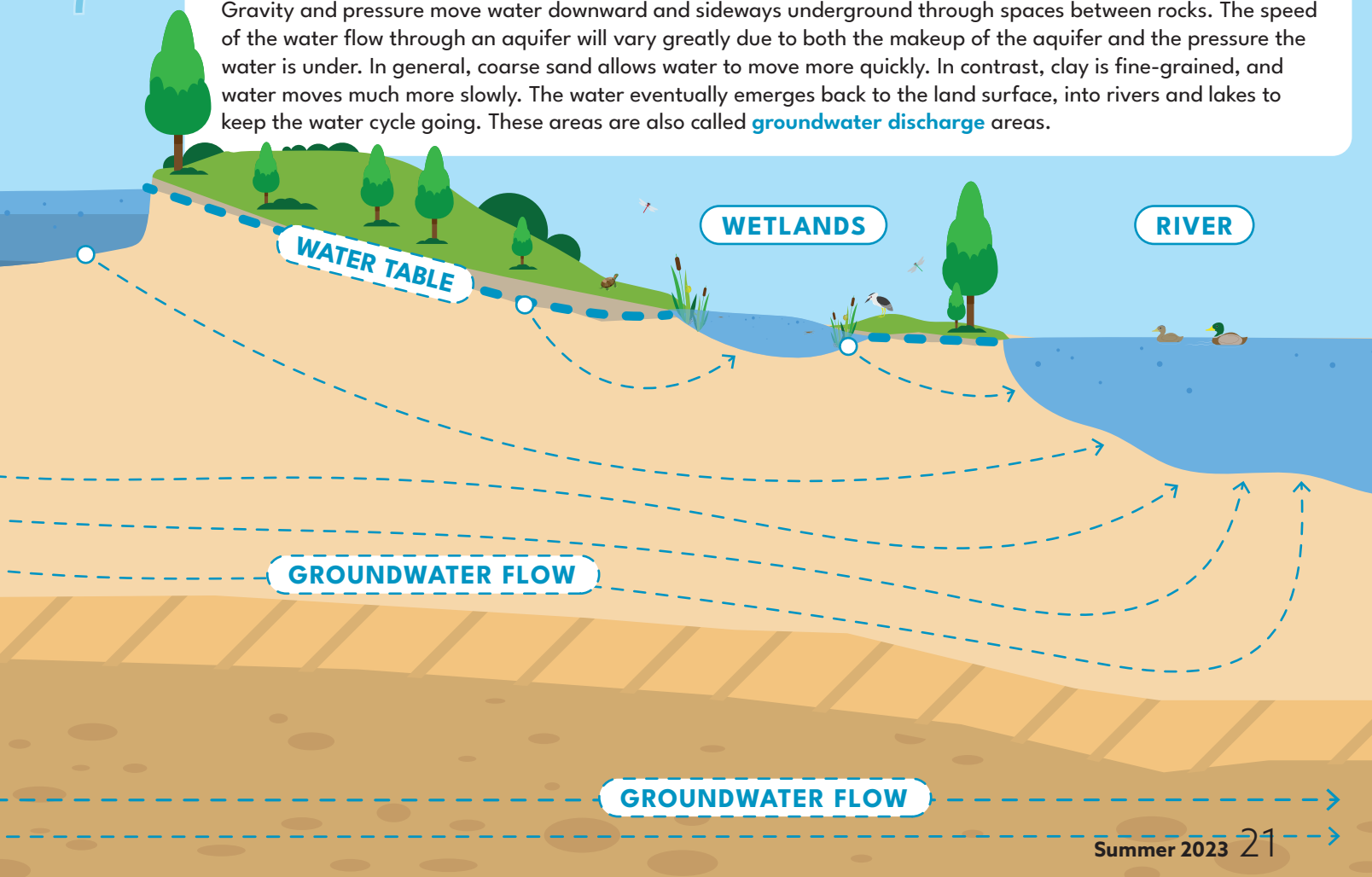
Groundwater is an often-overlooked component of the water cycle, but it plays a critical role in the health of our ecosystems and our communities. In fact, about 70% of Wisconsinites rely on groundwater for drinking water, more than any other state.

Pick a summer shower as the starting point of the water cycle. The **precipitation** falls to earth, with some moving or running downhill as **surface runoff**, some evaporating and some absorbed and transpired by plants. The combination of evaporation and plant usage is called **evapotranspiration**, a process that eventually places the water molecules back in the sky, where new clouds will form from **condensation**.

In Wisconsin, about one-third of the precipitation slowly soaks down through the **unsaturated zone** of the earth; the soil and rock in this zone contain air as well as water in its pores. The amount of water that **infiltrates** the earth varies. In rolling hills, more of the precipitation may become runoff, while in sandy spots, more water can soak into the land. The water that does seep through will eventually reach the top of the **saturated zone** where all the pore spaces are filled with water and no air remains.

The top of the saturated zone is called the **water table**, and all the water contained below the water table is called **groundwater**. The water table can be very shallow, even at the land surface in some cases, or very deep, sometimes hundreds of feet below the land surface. Most **wetlands**, **lakes** and **rivers** in Wisconsin represent the water table. Infiltration is an important step to help the **groundwater recharge** or replenish. The seasonal and yearly changes in precipitation cause the water table to fluctuate, trending higher in the spring when there is often more precipitation combined with snowmelt. Though shorter drought periods do not usually impact the water table, extreme drought can cause the water table to lower.

In the saturated zone, the rock and soil that can be tapped to get water are called **aquifers**. The water in aquifers is moving all the time, **groundwater flow**, but not like rivers flowing below ground. It's more like water in a sponge. Gravity and pressure move water downward and sideways underground through spaces between rocks. The speed of the water flow through an aquifer will vary greatly due to both the makeup of the aquifer and the pressure the water is under. In general, coarse sand allows water to move more quickly. In contrast, clay is fine-grained, and water moves much more slowly. The water eventually emerges back to the land surface, into rivers and lakes to keep the water cycle going. These areas are also called **groundwater discharge** areas.





UP  
YOUR

# grill game

MOLLY MEISTER

**TIPS AND  
TRICKS FROM  
ONE OF THE  
BEST CHEFS  
IN THE  
MIDWEST**

It's a summer ritual that predates the invention of flush toilets, electricity and even sliced bread: grilling food outdoors.

Whether you have a top-of-the-line propane grill, a simple plug-and-chug electric model, a good old-fashioned Weber Smokey Joe or just a couple of burning logs, here

are a few tips and must-have items from award-winning chef Luke Zahm of Viroqua's Driftless Café and host of "Wisconsin Foodie" to take your grill game to the next level.

#### **ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT**

Aside from the standard tongs and spatula, you'll want additional items on hand.



• **Natural materials:** If grilling with charcoal or over a fire, throw on a locally sourced log to enhance the flavors of your grillables. If using an electric or propane grill, set a fire-safe container of water-soaked wood chips — oak or hickory are best — on the grill alongside your food, letting the wood burn for 25-30 minutes. "It's a way of adding flavor without adding fat or calories," Zahm said.

• **Beer, butter, brush:** Use a basting brush or even a simple paintbrush to add layers of butter or your favorite beer to keep food from drying out.

• **Herbs and spices:** Grab a handful of herbs from your garden or visit your local butcher shop for the best locally made rubs.

#### EXPERT ADVICE

Here are Zahm's top three suggestions for your next grilling session.

• **Get perfect grill marks:** Coat proteins with olive oil, salt and black pepper to get the meat off the grate quickly and easily. Lay meat on the grill surface for about 20 seconds until the edges start curling up, then gently and quickly work a spatula underneath and rotate it 90 degrees. Give it another 20-30 seconds for a good sear on the same side before flipping and cooking until the meat is fully cooked.

• **Get creative:** Don't be afraid to try new things, like putting a stock pot of vegetables on the grill. You might be pleasantly surprised!

• **Take it slow:** In general, the longer you cook something, the more flavors emerge. This is especially true with brats; Zahm suggests skipping boiling brats ahead of time. Instead, grill them low and slow to avoid popping the casings.

"My philosophy is that grilling is one of the most primal cooking mechanisms humans have ever known — remember, it's just you and the fire," Zahm said.

"Take your time and be present in the moment as you enjoy the sights, sounds and smells of nature around you." 🍷

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Molly Meister is a public information officer in the DNR's Office of Communications.

## FOR THE ENVIRONMENT: GAS OR CHARCOAL?



According to the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association, 64% of grillers use gas grills, while 44% use charcoal. Generally speaking, propane grills are more environmentally friendly because they burn cleaner and emit half as much carbon dioxide as charcoal grills.

If using charcoal, remember that lighter fluid is not friendly to air quality and the environment. When combined with charcoal, it can release carbon monoxide, particulate matter and volatile organic compounds. Instead of lighter fluid, use an electric or chimney charcoal starter to limit air pollutant emissions.

For more tips on ways to improve air quality in your neighborhood this summer during cookouts and other activities, check the DNR's "Do a Little, Save a Lot!" webpage. Scan the QR code or go to [dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1621](https://dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1621).



# FEATHERED wonders await

## EXPLORE BIRDING HOT SPOTS ACROSS WISCONSIN

**LAURIE MERCURIO**

With a mix of wetlands and forests, it's no surprise that birds love to spend time in Wisconsin. In fact, the Badger State is home to over 300 birding hotspots and almost 70 rare birds.

Keep an eye out for scarce species in your own backyard, or take a daytrip to some top state properties that offer fantastic birding views.



Harlequin duck

PECCY CADIGAN/CREATIVE COMMONS 2.0

### WYALUSING STATE PARK

With both the Mississippi and Wisconsin rivers nearby, Wyalusing State Park is one of the best places along the river for birding and typically attracts nesting species associated with more southern regions. Spring migrants naturally follow the riverbank on their northward journey, making it an excellent place to see warblers and other songbirds.

The 2,628-acre park offers diverse habitats that attract a wide variety of birds. Many rare species breed at Wyalusing, including Kentucky, yellow-throated, prothonotary and cerulean warblers. The latter is a rare, brilliant blue songbird and a long-distance migrant that winters in South America before heading north for the nesting season.

- Located in far southwestern Wisconsin, where the Mississippi and Wisconsin rivers meet; [dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1601](http://dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1601).

### HARRINGTON BEACH STATE PARK

On Lake Michigan, 30 miles north of Milwaukee, Harrington Beach State Park boasts over 250 bird species, making it one of the best places to bird watch in the state. Spring and fall migrations bring spectacular concentrations of waterfowl offshore. In the spring, nearly every species of warbler can be seen. The ducks, shorebirds, gulls and terns of Lake Michigan also add to the park's appeal.

Explore Harrington Beach's mile of shoreline, where rare species can include glaucous gulls, red-throated loons and surf scoters. A rarity such as the harlequin duck, one of the most spectacular species of waterfowl in North America with the male's striking plumage, has been spotted at Harrington Beach.

Annual hawk migration captivates birders at the park each fall. Quarry Lake and Puckett's Pond also provide excellent places to see migrating ducks.

- Located in Ozaukee County on Lake Michigan, halfway between Milwaukee and Sheboygan; [dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1666](http://dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1666).







MARY KAY RUBEY

*Cerulean warbler*



MARY KAY RUBEY

*Marbled godwit*



*Horicon Marsh near Waupun is part state wildlife area and part national wildlife refuge.*

DNR FILES

## HORICON MARSH

Encompassing 33,000 acres, Horicon Marsh is the largest cattail marsh in the U.S. It is perhaps best known for its spring and fall migration of Canada geese — at peak times, the marsh might feature more than 200,000 of these birds.

Part state wildlife area and part national wildlife refuge, Horicon Marsh is primarily managed as a waterfowl area, but it hosts a tremendous variety of other birds. Over the years, more than 300 species have been sighted here, and the marsh regularly attracts some of Wisconsin's rarest birds, including cattle egrets, ibis species, ruffs and godwits.

Public access is limited in the national wildlife refuge to protect habitat, but most of the state area is open to the public. One of the best ways to explore is by canoe or shallow draft boat.

While you're there, don't miss the Horicon Marsh Explorium. Completed in August 2015, the hands-on education area offers a fantastic opportunity to learn about the wildlife and



MARY KAY RUBEY

*Cattle egret*

history of Horicon Marsh from the Ice Age to present day.

For expert birders and novices alike, the Horicon Marsh Bird Club ([horiconmarshbirdclub.com](http://horiconmarshbirdclub.com)) works to develop a better understanding and deeper appreciation of the diversity of birds and important habitats at the site.

- Located in northern Dodge and southern Fond du Lac counties; [dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1591](http://dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1591). ♻️

*Laurie Mercurio is a former public information officer in the DNR's Office of Communications.*



### LEARN MORE

For more on birding and bird conservation in Wisconsin, scan the QR code or check, [dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1286](http://dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1286).



MARY KAY RUBEY

*Yellow-throated warbler*



Spring mating rituals for sharp-tailed grouse include animated and colorful displays by male birds hoping to attract a mate.



# FIGHTING FOR *firebirds*

**BARRENS  
MANAGEMENT  
BENEFITS RARE  
GAME BIRD**

**ANDI SEDLACEK**

There's more to northern Wisconsin than lush green forests, and that's good news for a rare game bird.

In the northwest corner of the state, pine and oak barrens provide important habitat for the sharp-tailed grouse, a non-migratory game bird with a small and sensitive population in Wisconsin. The vital landscapes for

these birds are characterized by scattered jack pine and oak trees, open grassy land with woody shrubs, and sandy soil.

"It's a globally important landscape and ecosystem," said Bob Hanson, habitat biologist for the DNR's Northwest Sands region. "And it's kind of the last stronghold of the sharp-tailed grouse in Wisconsin."

But there's work to be done.

"Historically, these areas burned quite often," Hanson said, referring to

the naturally occurring wildfires that helped maintain the open savannas.

When humans started suppressing wildfires to protect growing communities, it allowed the land to shift to mature forests. And that decimated the populations of many open habitat species, including the sharp-tailed grouse.

"Now, we've realized the fire is needed for many reasons," Hanson said. "And we are working to put some of that landscape back into barrens."





GPS tracking monitors sharp-tailed grouse movement to better understand their habitat preferences.

HANNAH TOUTONGHI

The sharp-tailed grouse (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*) is considered by the DNR to be a species of greatest conservation need and a species of special concern. It's also listed as a regional forester's sensitive species by the U.S. Forest Service. At last count in 2022, only 164 males were found in Wisconsin.

It's not just a rare bird, it's also unique. Weighing in at about 2 pounds, sharp-tailed grouse have round bodies and short legs with short, rounded wings and long tail feathers — hence the “sharp-tail” name.

Both males and females have a patch of small yet striking yellow feathers, known as a head comb,

over each eye. These are not always visible, but males expand them and inflate the purple patches of skin on their necks during spirited courtship dances.

Barrens management is being done through a partnership that includes the DNR; the Bayfield, Douglas and Burnett county forests; the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest; and other groups. The key is to reintroduce fire to the landscape, along with approaches like creating rolling barrens of working forest lands.

And the sharp-tails love it. In fact, they're known as firebirds because of their affinity for lands managed by fire.

## RESEARCH AND HABITAT WORK

A GPS tracking project from the Natural Resources Research Institute at the University of Minnesota-Duluth has shown just how much sharp-tails love the open habitat provided by burning.

“We saw a bird move back in after a prescribed burn the very next morning, while it was still smoking!” Hanson said.

“The project showed us that birds will avoid wooded areas,” said Mike Amman, a Bayfield County forester and vice president of the Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society. “That bird could have gone just across the road to another suitable habitat after the burn, but it came back into the black right away. These are fire-adapted species, after all.”

Along with reintroducing fire, another important part of supporting the barrens and its species is to reconnect the fragmented pieces of what was once a sprawling ecosystem.

The work is guided by the Northwest Sands Habitat Corridor Plan, established in 2013. It follows research guidelines indicating habitat parcels need to be within about 3 miles of each other for the sharp-tails to traverse through the area.

Efforts to support the barrens and the birds have help from the Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society and Friends Groups from Crex Meadows, the Namekagon Barrens and the Douglas County wildlife areas.

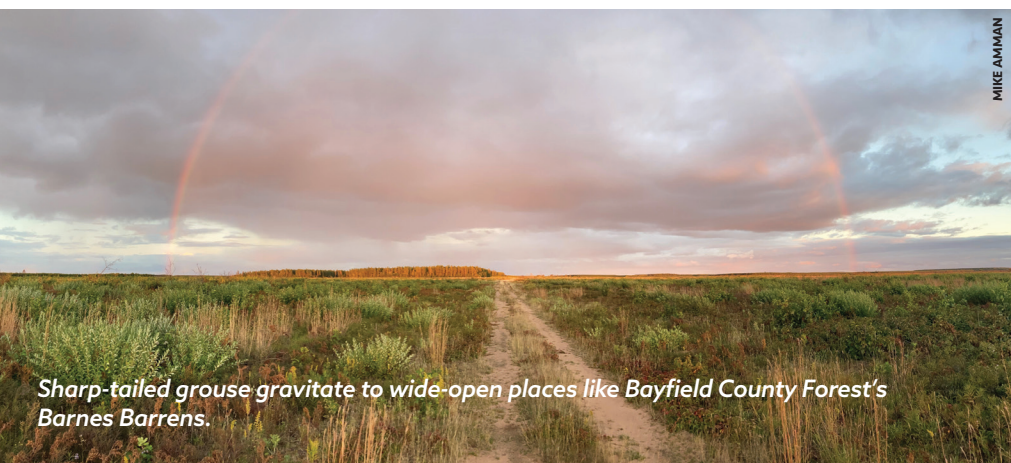
“There's a series of dedicated people who are very much on board with supporting this globally rare landscape and the birds and plants that occupy it,” Amman said. “We're fighting hard for the last of what's left.” 🦅

Andi Sedlacek is a public information officer in the DNR's Office of Communications.



## LEARN MORE

To learn more about sharp-tailed grouse, scan the QR code or go to [dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1626](https://dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1626).



MIKE AMMAN

Sharp-tailed grouse gravitate to wide-open places like Bayfield County Forest's Barnes Barrens.

# Deer butchering

## KATIE GRANT

Hunting and butchering your own deer can be a deeply rewarding experience. Not only does it provide a unique sense of accomplishment and self-sufficiency, but it also allows for greater control over the quality of meat being consumed.

In recent years, the popularity of butchering deer at home has surged. It's not only a practical skill but also a great way to fully immerse yourself in the journey from field to table.

Read on for a quick guide to get started. If you want to go more in-depth and get all of our tips and tricks, check out our playlist on YouTube at [dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1661](https://www.dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1661).

### PREPARE THE RIGHT TOOLS

Before diving into the butchering process, it's crucial to gather the appropriate tools. Essential equipment includes a gambrel for hanging the deer, sharp boning knife (a smaller blade works better), sturdy bone saw, clean rags, butcher paper and freezer-safe storage bags.

Additionally, make sure you have a clean and well-lit workspace, and consider prepping two tubs in addition to a garbage can — one tub for clean meat and one for trim, keeping them separate to make life easier. A blowtorch also may be handy after the deer has been skinned to singe off any hair left behind.

### TAKE YOUR TIME

Butchering a deer requires patience and organization. Begin by skinning the deer — using a clean rag to grab the hide can help make it easier. This is easier to do when the deer is warm. We recommend skinning the full deer before removing any unnecessary parts like the deer's

head to help eliminate points where the hair may touch the meat.

Then, break down the deer into manageable sections, such as the hindquarters, front shoulders and backstraps. The detailed butchering will come later. This is also a great stage to trim away as much sinew and fatty tissue as possible.

### REMEMBER FOOD SAFETY

Wash your hands with soap and water often to keep from transferring bacteria, especially between skinning and breaking down the deer. Make sure to have clean, running water, such as from a garden hose, available for rinsing the inside of the deer to remove forest matter, fecal matter and other debris to help keep the meat from spoiling.

Trim around any bloodshot areas, which is easiest to do when the deer is on the gambrel and stretched out. While you're at it, be sure to trim away any other meat that may be dirty. You're better off throwing away a pound of meat at the beginning stages than having it contaminate many pounds of meat later in the process.

Promptly refrigerate or freeze meat and consider vacuum-sealing to minimize freezer burn if you plan to store for an extended period.

### GET CREATIVE

Doing your own butchering allows you to experiment with different cuts, methods and flavors. While traditional cuts like steaks and roasts are always a hit, don't be afraid to test new recipes and techniques.

Try your hand at making sausages or jerky, or explore the art of dry aging to enhance the meat's flavor. The beauty of butchering your own deer is the opportunity to customize your cuts to suit your culinary tastes. 🍷

*Katie Grant is communications director for the DNR.*

## NECK ○-----

- ▷ Roast
- ▷ Sausage
- ▷ Burger
- ▷ Soup
- ▷ Stew
- ▷ Braise

## SHOULDER ○-----

- ▷ Roast
- ▷ Sausage
- ▷ Burger
- ▷ Soup
- ▷ Stew
- ▷ Braise
- ▷ Jerky

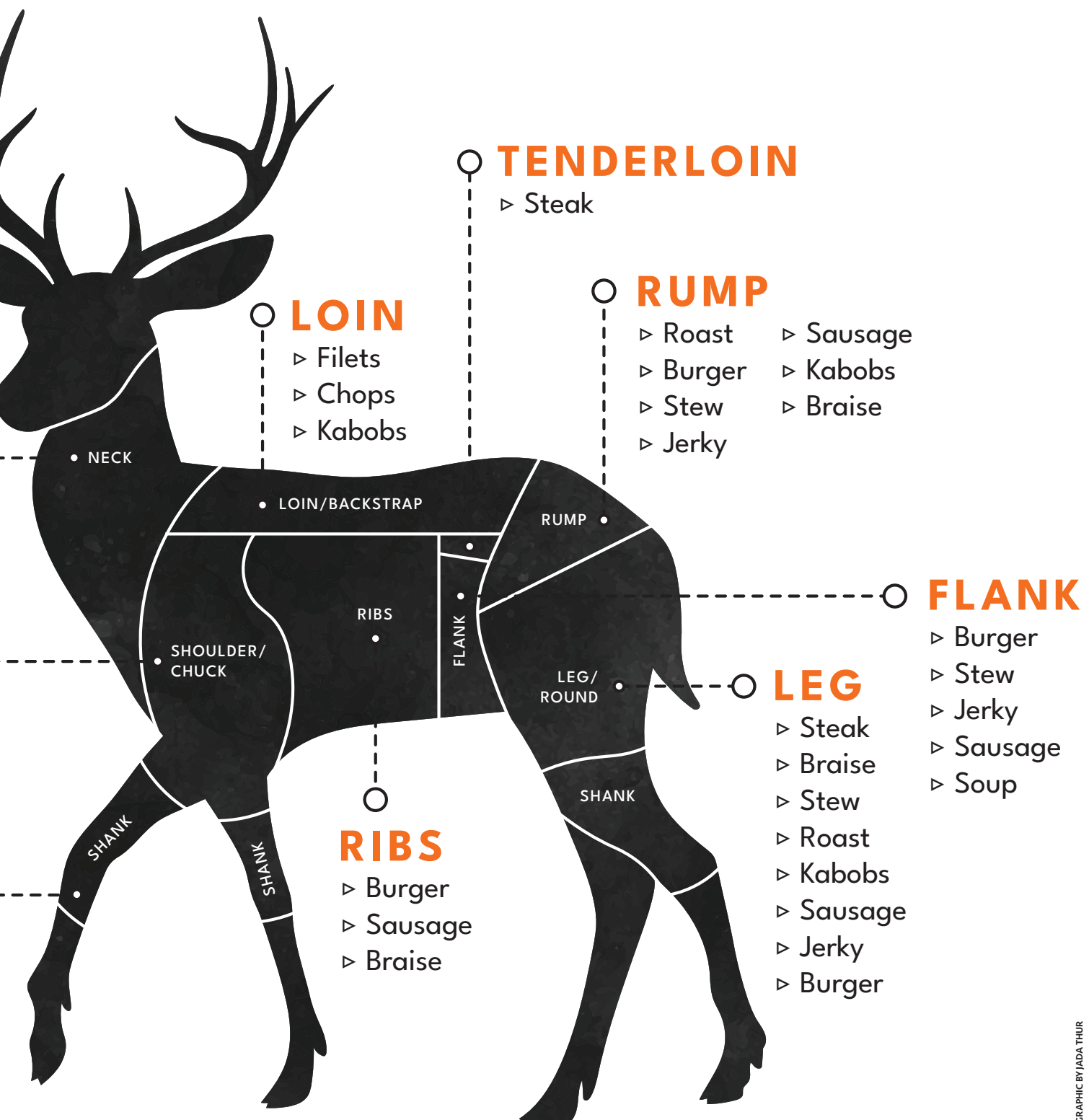
## SHANK ○-----

- ▷ Roast
- ▷ Sausage
- ▷ Burger
- ▷ Soup
- ▷ Stew
- ▷ Braise





# ing tips







# *Behold the* **FISH BOIL** *dinner and a show*

## **KATHRYN A. KAHLER**

For over 60 years, visitors have flocked to Door County restaurants for a unique meal sparked by theatrics: the fish boil. It's a micro-cuisine centered almost exclusively in Wisconsin's thumb region and attracts thousands of visitors each year, many by the busload.

The meal typically consists of caught-that-morning Lake Michigan whitefish, baby red potatoes and onions, all boiled together in a cauldron with salt. Lots of salt. Up to 10 pounds can go into a 20-gallon pot.

The fish is drizzled with lemon juice and drawn butter and served with sides of coleslaw and rye bread, plus a slice of Door County cherry pie for dessert, preferably a la mode.

Preparing the food is pretty simple — check out Page 33 for a recipe to try it yourself, safely, at home. The key to the simplicity is the unboned, unskinned fish. Leaving the skin and bones intact helps keep the fish from flaking and falling apart in the cooking process.

And the drama? That comes at the tail-end of the production, conducted by restaurant staff and led by the restaurant's boil master.

## **FOOD, FLAMES, FUN**

Considered a must-do as part of a Door County visit, fish boils are a significant economic draw for the region. They also make for popular fundraisers, church dinners, wedding receptions and family gatherings.

The process is straightforward yet innovative in its approach.

A wood fire is lit under the kettle that's been filled with water and about half the needed salt. The salt isn't exactly there for flavor. Rather, it's used to raise the specific gravity of the water, causing the fish oils to float to the top.

Once the water is boiling, restaurant staff lower in wire baskets of potatoes,





DEAN TVEDT/DNR FILES

*Fish boil fun, circa 1967.*



WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY #38351

*The sudden flareup of bright orange flames is a big part of the fish boil experience.*



STABER REESE/DNR FILES

*Fish boils have long been a family favorite.*

sometimes onions and lastly the fish, along with the remaining salt. Cooking time is about half an hour.

As everything finishes cooking and the fish oil and other impurities form at the top in a frothy scum, it's time for the real show — the boilover!

After ensuring everyone is far enough back, the boil master tosses kerosene into the flames. The resulting eruption of 15-foot flames causes the pot to overflow, discarding the oily scum and leaving the delicious contents clean and ready to eat.

Two people place a pole through the basket handles and carry the

steaming fish and vegetables to the restaurant's service area, where the meal is often served buffet style.

#### FROM PRACTICAL TO POPULAR

Fish boils haven't always been restaurant fare. It's difficult to nail down the specifics, but it's possible it's been happening in some form for thousands of years.

Some say the fish boil has its roots in the culture of the northeastern Wisconsin indigenous Potawatomi tribe, who are said to have collected the fats and oils from cooking for other uses rather than simply boiling them away.

Other stories say the fish boil originated in the early 1800s with

Scandinavian immigrants as a way of feeding a lot of people all at once. Lumber companies and commercial fishermen could quickly prepare the meal for workers at one location at the end of a long day.

The first Door County restaurants to realize the tourism value of fish boils were the Viking Grill in Ellison Bay and Fish Creek's White Gull Inn in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Others quickly followed suit, and a Sconnie tradition was born. 🍷

*Kathryn A. Kahler is associate editor for Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine.*





PHOTOS BY NICK COLLURA/TRAVEL WISCONSIN

*Door County spots like the Old Post Office Restaurant in Ephraim know how to wow the crowd with a classic fish boil: Get the fire roaring, add tasty food, stoke the flames, mind the boilover and serve!*



# Fish boil FLAVOR

DIY RECIPE  
SATISFIES  
CRAVING  
FOR CLASSIC  
EXPERIENCE

## DOUGLAS GRIFFIN

If you can't travel to Door County for the flash and flair of a classic boilover, don't worry. Replicating the flavors in your kitchen or own backyard is doable!

With a few key fish boil tools and the star ingredients, you'll be ready to go. Want to take it outdoors? Follow the same steps outside over a roaring campfire, boiling with a lid that's vented to allow steam to escape. 🍷

---

*Douglas Griffin is brand manager for the DNR.*

## DIY DOOR COUNTY FISH BOIL

For an indoor, home-sized version of a fish boil big enough to feed your family, if not quite a bunch of lumberjacks, this recipe from cookbook author and Wisconsin food historian Terese Allen captures the flavor of Door County.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 gallon water
- 6 tablespoons salt, divided
- 12-16 small red potatoes, uniform in size
- 8 onions, same size as potatoes (or substitute 2 large onions)
- 8 chunks (2 inches thick) whitefish, trout or salmon steaks (1-2 pounds total), skin-on
- Melted butter
- Lemon wedges
- Salt and pepper to taste

### DIRECTIONS

1. Bring water and 3 tablespoons of salt to a boil in a large pot over highest heat.
2. Scrub potatoes; cut off a small piece of peel from opposite ends of each potato. Add potatoes to the pot and boil vigorously for 12 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, peel the onions, leaving the root ends intact. If using large onions, clip off the top end, peel and carefully quarter the onions through the root ends. Add onions to the pot with potatoes and boil five minutes.
4. Add remaining salt and the chunks of fish. Boil for 10 minutes. Drain well and portion on plates.
5. Open each potato with a spoon or fork. Drizzle melted butter over all and serve with lemon wedges. Add salt and pepper to taste. Don't forget to serve with coleslaw, rye bread and, of course, Door County cherry pie topped with Wisconsin ice cream!



## KIDS CORNER

# FEELING GROOVY?

TRY  
NATURAL  
TIE-DYE

### DANA FULTON PORTER

Show off your groovy side in a fun, eco-friendly way! Natural tie-dyeing can add a splash of color to your wardrobe by using things you already have around your home.



ISTOCK/FLY VIEW PRODUCTIONS

Use natural items like cranberries, dandelions, orange peels and more to create vibrant tie-dye colors, then show off your creations when you head outdoors.

## SUPPLIES

- Gloves
- Cutting board
- Knife
- Backyard plants or food scraps
- Water
- Large stainless steel pot with a lid (large enough for liquid dye and material)
- Cheesecloth
- White T-shirt or other fabric item to tie-dye (pre-washed)
- Vinegar
- Tongs
- Rubber bands or string
- Paint brushes or squeeze bottles (optional)

## MAKE THE DYE

1. Gather up backyard plants or food scraps for your desired color. Check out the color code for ideas!
2. Wearing gloves, have an adult coarsely chop up the dye ingredients.
3. Place ingredients in the pot with 2 cups of water per 2 cups of chopped food. For spices, use 2 cups of water per 2 tablespoons of spice.
4. Have an adult bring the mixture to a boil, then let it simmer for 20 minutes.
5. After boiling, remove pot from heat, cover with a lid and let it steep (sit with the plant material still in the pot) for one hour.
6. Filter plant parts out of the dye liquid with a cheesecloth.
7. Repeat the above steps for each color dye you'd like to make.

**Pro tip:** You can pause here and use these liquid dyes for other crafts, like dying paper and coloring eggs!

## TIE AND DYE

Now that we have the dye, it's time to tie!

1. Get your pre-washed white T-shirt or other fabric item ready by soaking it in 1 cup of vinegar and 4 cups of water. This is called a mordant and will help the dye soak into the fabric.
2. Have an adult bring the mixture to a boil and let it simmer for 1 hour.

3. Use tongs to remove the fabric then rinse it with cool water. Squeeze out excess water but leave the fabric slightly damp.

4. Twist, spiral, crumple or accordion-fold the fabric into any shape. Just like with synthetic dyes, there are so many fun tie-dye techniques you can try!

5. With the fabric folded or twisted up, tie it together using rubber bands or string. The areas tied tightly will resist the dye, which helps create a bold, unique pattern.

6. With gloves on, apply the liquid dye to the fabric. There's no right or wrong way to splash on the color. You can use a paintbrush or squeeze bottle, your hands, or simply dip the fabric into the dye using tongs.

7. Once the fabric is fully colored, let it sit overnight to allow the dye to penetrate the fabric. Make sure to leave the fabric on a baking sheet or cutting board so you don't stain your countertops!

8. After the dye has set, rinse the fabric thoroughly until the water runs clear. Now it's time to show off your fun and eco-friendly designs!

**Pro tip:** To help your tie-dye creation last, only wash it in cold water and air dry. ♻️

*Dana Fulton Porter is a publications supervisor in the DNR's Office of Communications.*

## MOTHER NATURE'S COLOR CODE

Some plants offer bright, bold colors; others are a little more subtle. Get creative and mix and match to make your perfect color combination.

Walnut shells = brown  
 Red cabbage = robin egg blue  
 Orange peels = light yellow  
 Turmeric = bright yellow  
 Dandelion roots = red-pink (really!)  
 Dandelion flowers = yellow-green  
 Cranberries = red  
 Onion skins = orange  
 Spinach = light gold





## Take care to avoid ticks

ANDI SEDLACEK

While finding your adventure this summer, protect yourself from ticks and the illnesses they can spread, like Lyme disease, anaplasmosis and others.

- Cover as much of your body as possible with long sleeves and pants. Tuck your shirt into your pants and your pants into your socks.
- Wear light-colored clothing to easily see and remove any ticks.
- Treat clothes in advance with permethrin, an insecticide that also helps keep away mosquitoes.
- Use an Environmental Protection Agency-registered insect repellent with DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535.
- Walk in the center of trails where grass and vegetation are mowed. Avoid tall grass and wooded and brushy areas.
- Post-hike, check everyone for ticks — pets, too! Be sure to look behind knees, under armpits, around the hairline and ears, and at the waist.

• At home, put clothes in the dryer for 10 minutes on high heat. If possible, shower within two hours of coming inside to wash off any ticks and do a thorough tick check.

If you find a tick embedded in your body, remain calm and remove it as soon as you find it. Use tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible while gently pulling it up and out in one fluid motion. Use rubbing alcohol to clean the bite site.

Note the date you removed the tick and save it in a sealed plastic bag or take a photo of it before disposing of it (put it in alcohol or flush it down the toilet) in case you develop symptoms later.

The often flu-like Lyme disease symptoms typically develop 3-30 days after a tick bite and include fever, chills, fatigue, muscle aches, joint pain and nausea. If you think you might have Lyme disease or another illness spread by ticks, contact your health care provider right away. 🐾

---

*Andi Sedlacek is a public information officer in the DNR's Office of Communications.*



# OUTDOORS

## SUMMER SAFETY IN THE

## Use sunscreen to defend your skin

DANIEL ROBINSON

Summer is here, and everyone is ready to get outdoors. You've probably packed a water bottle, snacks and bug spray.

Before you head out, ask yourself: Did you remember the sunscreen?

Unfortunately, the average American doesn't use sunscreen daily, and roughly a third of Americans don't use sunscreen at all.

"Rates of melanoma nationally and locally have been rising over the past decade," said Alex Peeters, an outreach specialist at the Wisconsin Cancer Collaborative.

"One study showed around 90% of skin cancers are associated with exposure from UV radiation from the sun."

A recent study showed that applying one ounce of SPF 15 sunscreen can reduce your risk of skin cancer by 40%. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend SPF 30 sunscreen with "broadband spectrum" protection. This is the only type that protects from the sun's harmful UVA and UVB rays.

If you're spending time outside this summer, you should reapply sunscreen every two hours, or more often if sweating or swimming.

Water bodies reflect UV rays, so applying sunscreen when you're on the water is particularly important. If you plan on being outdoors for an extended period, consider using a higher SPF sunscreen. 🐾

---

*Daniel Robinson is a videographer in the DNR's Office of Communications.*





# HAVE THE RIGHT LIFE JACKET?



Be sure it's U.S. Coast Guard-approved  
(Check the label printed on the inside of the life jacket)



## KIDS

(Adult life jackets don't fit kids)



## ANGLERS & OPEN MOTOR BOATS

(Suspender inflatable)



## PERSONAL WATER CRAFTS & SPORTS

(Inherently buoyant)



## PETS

(Harness with lift handles)



## STANDUP PADDLERS

(Belt-pack inflatable)

# SPRING ISSUE PUZZLE ANSWERS

NEW YORK TIMES SUNDAY CROSSWORD

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# Highlights Hidden Pictures™ ANSWERS



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# NEW YORK TIMES SUNDAY CROSSWORD

SEA CHANGE  
BY WILL NEDIGER/  
EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

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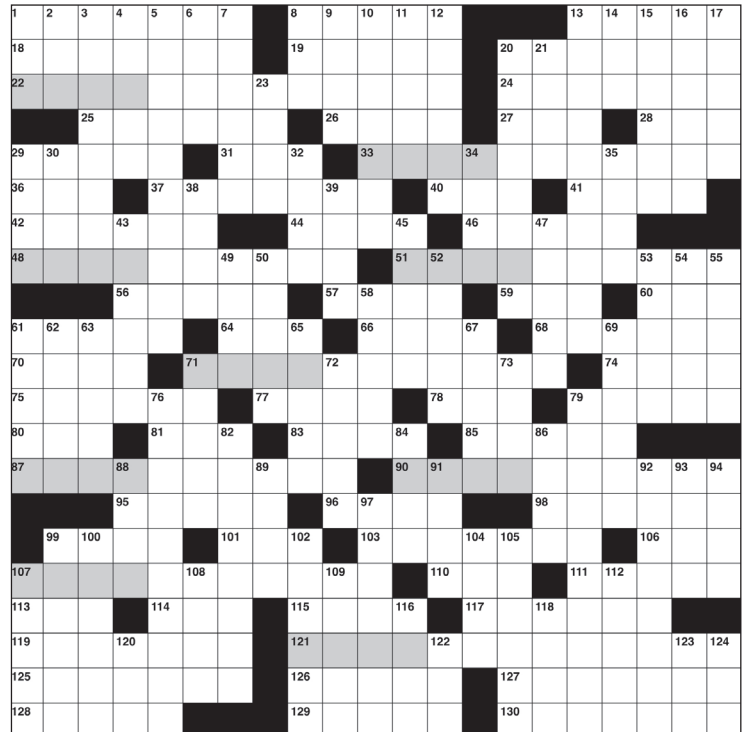
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Look for puzzle answers in the Fall issue.



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