



Wisconsin natural resources. Vol. 19, No. 6 December 1995

Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources,
December 1995

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WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES

A photograph of a young evergreen tree, possibly a spruce or fir, heavily laden with snow. The tree is the central focus, standing upright. The background is a dark, rocky, and textured surface, likely a cliff face or a rocky forest floor. The lighting is soft, highlighting the white snow against the dark background and the green needles of the tree.

December 1995 \$3.00

Rainbows in rock

In land we trust

The might-have-been
State Park

A LIFE OF UPS & DOWNS

The brown creeper
probes bark and branch
for a meal.

Anita Carpenter

In a still deciduous forest, a slender, five-inch bird spirals up around a tree trunk, pausing every now and then to inspect the bark. It moves on, probing each crevice, working over each branch and often hanging upside down to glean the tree for insect eggs, larvae and adult insects. Satisfied that the tree has had the once-over, the bird flies to the base of a neighboring tree and repeats its spiraling ascent.

The brown creeper is not easy to detect. Its brown- and white-streaked plumage is perfect camouflage when it clings to rough tree bark. Yet the brown creeper (*Certhia americana*) is common throughout Wisconsin forests year round, especially during the April and late fall peak migrations. The normally solitary creeper may be found in mixed flocks of chickadees and nuthatches during migrations. Creepers tend to work their way from the bottom of a tree to the top, while nuthatches spiral their way down limbs in search of food.

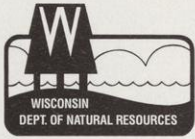
Brown creepers are North America's sole representatives of the tree creeper family. All six species are well adapted to a life of clutching and probing tree trunks — cryptic coloration, long pointed tail feathers with stiff tips to support the birds as they hitch around a tree, long toes with sharp curved claws to grasp bark, and curved beaks adapted to probe deeply into fissures or behind bark to extract juicy morsels.

The brown creeper's beak and toes curve downwards to keep a firm grasp while probing tree trunks at all angles for food.

GREGORY K. SCOTT



Printed in U.S.A.
PUBL-IE-012
ISSN-0736-2277



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Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine (USPS #34625000) is published bimonthly in February, April, June, August, October and December by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 101 S. Webster St., Madison, WI 53707. The magazine is sustained through paid subscriptions. No tax money or license fees are used. **Subscription rates** are: \$7.97 for one year, \$13.97 for two years, \$18.97 for three years, plus \$1 a year for postage. Second class postage paid at Madison, WI. POSTMASTER and readers: send **subscription questions** and **address changes** to *Wisconsin Natural Resources*, P.O. Box 7191, Madison, WI 53707, or call toll free 1-800-678-9472. Subscription information you provide may become part of a mailing list rented to reputable companies to help support the continued production of the magazine.

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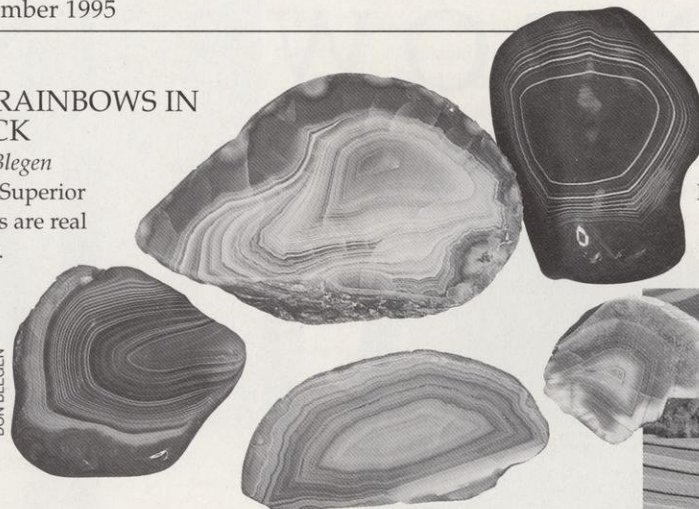
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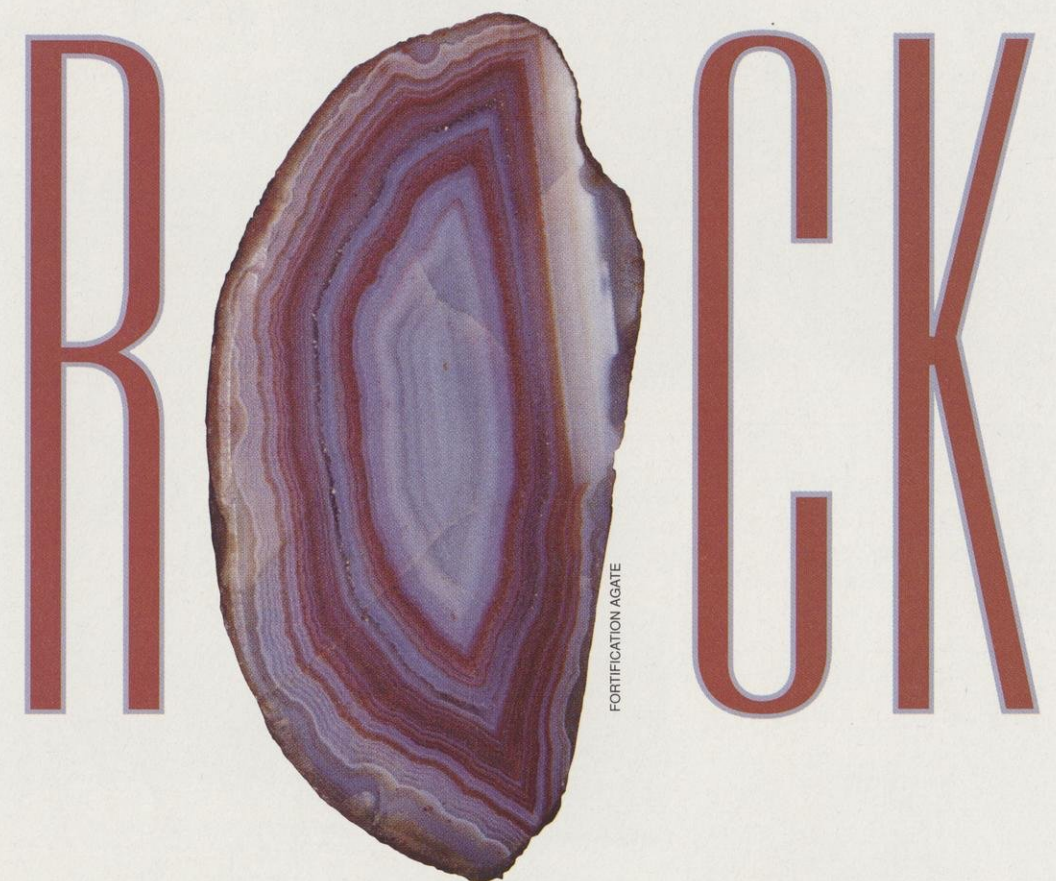
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RAINBOWS IN ROCK



FORTIFICATION AGATE

Story and photos by
Don Blegen

Collectors stoop in
pursuit of a
remarkably
stunning stone.

To hold a Lake Superior agate is to contain more than a billion years of the earth's turbulent geological history in the palm of your hand. Formed in the lava of ancient volcanoes in northern Canada, freed by eons of weathering, scattered by ancient floods, bulldozed to the south by at least four separate glaciers, and spread and scattered again by the torrential streams from the melting ice, an agate's lumpy outer

crust bears the marks of a long, rough life. Inside, an agate is all delicacy and elegance, colorfully banded in infinite variety.

Agates may be found on the shoulders of highways, on the gravel bars of streams, along the beaches of Lake Superior, in gravel pits — nearly anywhere there are gravel deposits. A raw agate can be pretty nondescript, but the same agate cut and polished or tumbled to a high gloss can be a thing of beauty — a rainbow forever frozen in rock.



MEG TURVILLE-HEITZ

Agate hounds cruise the Lake Superior coast and gravel bars just after storms to see if nature has churned up rocky treasures.

Gems of the North

The semiprecious agate is found in various places around the planet: Mexico, Brazil, Germany, Australia, Western Africa, etc. The Lake Superior form, however, is so varied in its patterns and colors that it is considered by many to be the most beautiful of all.

Agate is a variety of quartz called chalcedony, which usually has concentric bands of varying color. It is a volcanic rock formed in cavities of basalt and open seams of other non-granite igneous rocks. Iron oxides infiltrating into the stone over time create the bands of color.

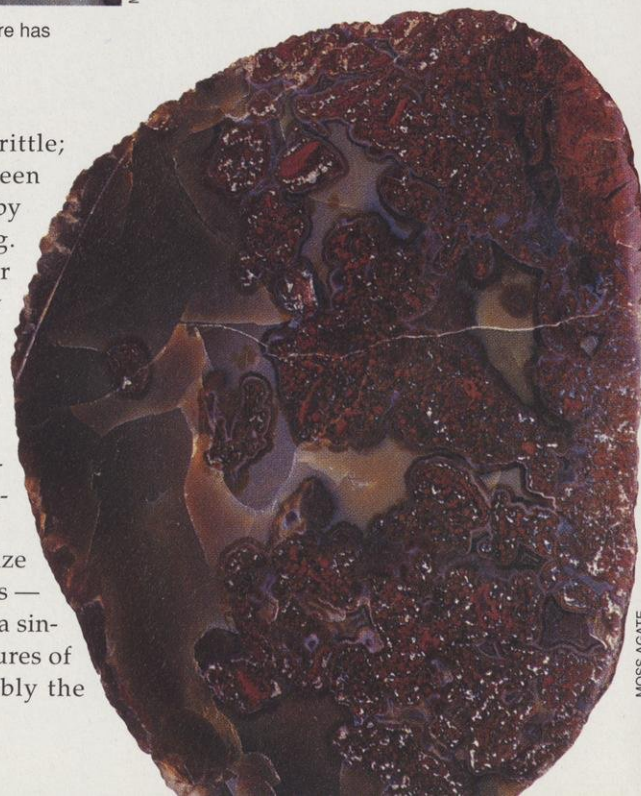
This very durable stone is harder than steel and capable of scratching

glass. Yet agate is also brittle; most large stones have been broken into smaller pieces by weathering and crushing. Large agates (fist-sized or bigger) are rare and many are filled with quartz crystal, making them less desirable. But a very few have solid patterns throughout, and these are the most coveted and prized by collectors.

Agate collectors categorize the stones into several types — not always an easy task, as a single agate may contain features of two or more types. Probably the

most common is the *quartz-filled agate*, where all or much of the core of the agate is quartz crystal, lacking pattern or color. A very attractive type is the *fortification agate* (also called topographical or banded) because the pattern looks like an aerial view of a fortified castle. *Eye agate* (also called bull's-eye) is aptly named for its concentric rings. *Moss agate* has its color deposits in irregular, branch-like patterns. *Sardonyx agate* has its colors arranged in perfectly parallel lines. These are the five most recognized types; an expert would add a few more categories for precision's sake.

Some collectors cut their agates on a diamond saw and polish only the cut face to a mirror-like finish, bringing out the beauty and subtle details of the pattern. Others tumble their agates in varying grades of carborundum grit for several weeks to produce the same effect over the entire surface. Some polishers do both, cutting the large stones and tumbling the small ones. Still other collectors are concerned primarily with size and refuse to cut or tumble, preferring the raw stone.



MOSS AGATE

In search of a stone rainbow

Although any gravel deposit, natural or artificial, may contain agates, you're likely to have more success finding a rock rainbow in northern or western Wisconsin, where the glaciers deposited great amounts of debris. On

some gravel roads in northern Wisconsin, you can pick up dozens, even hundreds, of small agates in a few hours.

To locate larger agates, gravel bars on fast streams are good bets. So are gravel beaches — and gravel pits, if you're one step ahead of the rock-crusher. You'll improve your chances

enormously if you get to the gravel beaches after a storm has mixed the gravel, or if you get to the gravel bars right after a flood has receded and stirred up the substrate. It's best to be quick about it: There are a lot of agate-pickers out there, and they scour these areas thoroughly. After a sharp-eyed

SARDONYX AGATE



Theodore C. Vanasse displays the natural beauty trapped in rock and fossil.

Little house of wonders

In a weathered wooden outbuilding on his Spring Valley, Wis. farm, Theodore C. Vanasse has assembled an amazing collection of agates, mineral specimens, fossils, and Indian artifacts gathered in Wisconsin and elsewhere. The Lake Superior agates photographed for this article are from his collection.

Ted is a recognized expert on agates; his 1951 publica-

tion *Lake Superior Agate* was the definitive work on the topic for many years. Ted is also a top-notch geologist and botanist, and has considerable expertise in paleontology. Mostly self-taught, widely read and keenly observant, he has spent a lifetime in the pursuit of knowledge. In Japan, this inquisitive and thoughtful 89-year-old would probably be a living treasure.

Ted's outbuilding may not be impressive, but what it contains certainly is. Beautifully cut and polished agates, plus museum-quality amethyst, malachite, tiger-eye and other mineral specimens from all over the world gleam in his glass cabinets. Fossils include trilobites and horn corals from half a billion years ago, a mastodon tusk sluiced from an Alaskan gold field with a high-pressure hose, and a huge two-pound tooth from a *Carcharodon megalodon*, an extinct relative of the great white shark. When your own teeth stop chattering from the sight, you can turn your attention to a collection of spear points, stone knives, axe-heads, skinning tools and other items used by prehistoric cultures. Be sure to ask if you can examine at least a few of Ted's 2,600 different types of wood; you'll enjoy his wood carvings, too. It's a little house of wonders, and it's open to the public.

Ted would like to share his knowledge and show his specimens to scientists, teachers, students, and anyone who is curious about earth science. Tours of the museum can be arranged by calling Ted at (715) 778-4458.



A dazzling variety of eye agates await the collector who can find them and polish them. Rock tumblers can take a week to a month to tumble or vibrate a smooth, lustrous surface on agates.

picker or two has gone over a spot, the picking will be pretty poor until new material is brought to the surface.

How do you spot an agate? Start by looking for stones with these identifying qualities:

Color — Most agates have a reddish brown hue from the iron oxide deposits.

Pattern — Contrasting bands of color are often visible.

Texture — Look for a pitted surface, especially noticeable on whole, unbroken large agates.

Translucence — Hunt with the sun at your back; agates will often give off a translucent glow in the sunlight.

Waxy surface — Many unbroken agates look as if they have been coated with wax.

Pick up anything that looks suspicious. You'll come up dry on a lot of suspects, but sooner or later, you'll find one, then another, and another, until you have a pocketful. After a bit of success, you'll get an eye for it. Just as you are able to spot a familiar face in a crowd of strangers, you will be able to spot an agate among a multitude of ordinary stones.

Your first agates will probably be

small, but your first really prize agate just might get you hooked for life. Agate hunting can be a fully absorbing hobby, or it can be simply one of those pleasurable pursuits that enrich another pastime. A trout fisherman may take a break and check the gravel beneath his waders. A hiker may take a bit of extra time to look over the rocks in a gravel pit. A canoeist or boater may decide to pull up for a look at a gravel bar or beach.

You never know. The next bit of gravel may hold the biggest agate you have ever found or will ever find. Or the most beautiful.

Once the allure of these magnificent rainbows in rock gets into your blood, it's there for good. □

Photographer and agate collector Don Blegen is always on the lookout for stone rainbows near Spring Valley, Wis.

Learn more about agates

Enrich your search for agates with the following books:

Chesterman, Charles W., *Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Rocks and Minerals*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1989

Duke, H.C., *The Agate Book*, Mineralogist Publishing Co., Portland, OR, 1951

Pearl, Richard M., *Gems, Minerals, Crystals, and Ores*, Golden Press, New York, 1967

Vanasse, T.C., *Lake Superior Agate*, Spring Valley SUN, 1951

Wolter, Scott F., *The Lake Superior Agate*, Lake Superior Agate, Inc., Minneapolis, 1986

Woolley, Dr. Alan, *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Minerals*, Gallery Books, 1990



QUARTZ-FILLED AGATES

TOWARD AN OUTDOOR ETHIC



Resting during a hunt on the Rio Gavilan, 1938.

Editor's note: Nina Leopold Bradley — researcher, family planning specialist, and daughter of the renown ecologist Aldo Leopold — recently addressed the Governor's Symposium on North America's Hunting Heritage in Green Bay, Wis. Her talk traced how hunting experiences throughout her father's life shaped his views about outdoor ethics and land ethics. An edited version of her remarks follows.

Nina Leopold Bradley

In this day and age hunting and hunters often get a bad rap. City folk, vegetarians, and environmentalists are assumed to be anti-hunting. Not so with Aldo Leopold. To him, hunting was an expression of love for the natural world; it initiated a kind of bonding with the land.

To those who knew him through his essays or through personal friendship, Aldo Leopold is remembered for his keen observation, his philosophic penetration, and his clarity of expression. As his daughter, I also knew this, and his genuine, personal warmth.

In preparing this talk, my understanding of my father has expanded measurably. In tracing his love of the outdoors and the hunt, I have reviewed many letters he wrote home from school — from Lawrenceville in New Jersey and from Yale in Connecticut. In those days people did write letters, and in this case all the letters were saved. What a treasure trove!

Letters from the 17-year-old Aldo to his mother and father are extravagant in describing the exciting adventures he had exploring new lands. They reminded me of John Muir in his exaltation describing an unspoiled Yosemite or the new adventure of crossing a glacier!

A few years later, writing from Yale as a 19-year-old, his letters take on quite a different aspect. They are more factual, less descriptive of the natural world, with lengthy explanations of what he is learning, the books he is reading, his professors, his friends and especially his girl friends.

Reading these letters I have laughed, cried and interrupted my husband over and over to read aloud one paragraph after another. Here was my father using language such as "Gee," "Golly" or "Ye Gods;" my father going to football games, playing golf, talking about girls, about exercise

A. STARKER LEOPOLD, LEOPOLD PAPERS UW ARCHIVES

and muscle building, about clothes and running out of funds.

Well, this was a new view for me. It embarrassed me a little to read his thoughts as a young person and to learn that he really was a very regular guy. It does not diminish my sense of awe or my sense of love and respect — at the same time, it is a revelation and a delight.

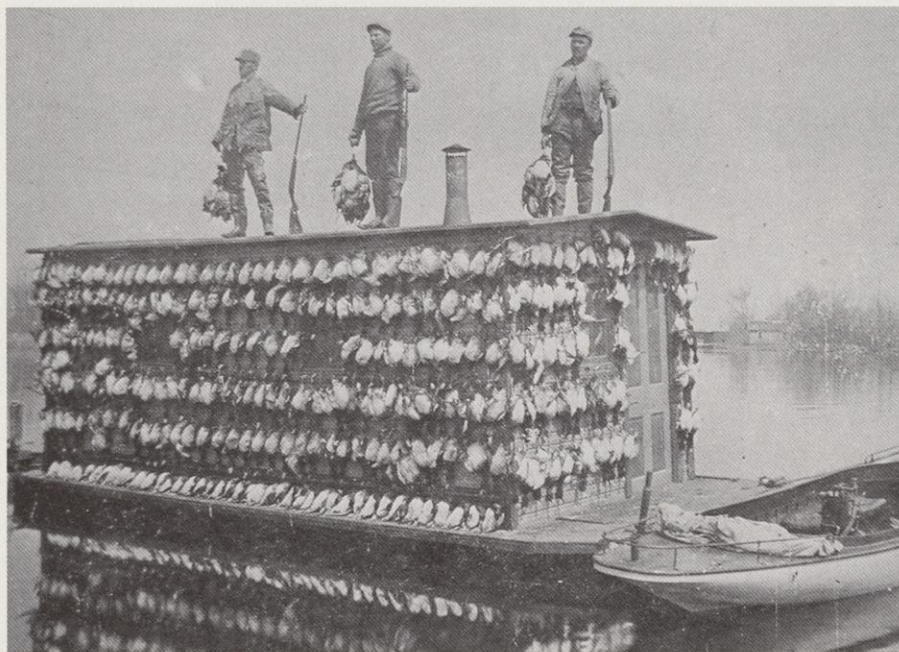
To better understand how this young man matured, how his enjoyment of the hunt led to his later pioneering efforts in wilderness protection and an ethical approach to land use, I



LEOPOLD COLLECTION UW ARCHIVES

(above) Like father, like son. Carl Leopold imbued his children with a love of the outdoors and respect for a sporting hunt.

(below) By contrast, the era of market hunting clearly showed why all game should not be fair game.



DNR PHOTO FILES

will briefly review a little history.

Aldo Leopold was imbued from childhood with the lessons of fair play. He saw the rules of sportsmanship as the *only* reasonable behavior for a young outdoorsman and hunter.

Dad's father, my grandfather Carl, taught his four children in a more than casual manner the ways of the natural world. Carl's love for the outdoors and the hunt were a guiding force for his whole family. He was a positive, firm man with an adventurer's passion, but he also had a naturalist's understanding of the outdoors. It was easy for his children to pick up these characteristics.

In the late 1800s, the Leopold family of Burlington, Iowa lived in a house atop a limestone bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. Down the bluff and across the railroad tracks the big river was a migratory pathway for a quarter of the continent's ducks and geese. The river bottomlands formed a year-round wildlife wonderland for a growing boy.

In those days there were no restrictions on hunting methods: no seasons or bag limits, save those evolved in a personal code of the individual sportsman — A hunter was limited only by his marksmanship, what he wanted

and what he could carry — Market hunters were the prime beneficiaries of this unrestricted enterprise, gathering literally boatloads and wagon loads of game to supply shops and restaurants across the nation.

The slaughter of migratory waterfowl in the 1880s and 1890s was overwhelming. Populations declined dramatically. By the turn of the century, waterfowl numbers plummeted and there was still no effective limit on the amount of game one could take.

Carl Leopold was among those who saw the trend and adjusted his hunting techniques accordingly. By the time his boys began to hunt, they had a well-developed personal code of sportsmanship.

Curt Meine, my father's biographer, listed these techniques used by my grandfather:

- To avoid losing a downed bird, he never loaded a gun until the sun had actually risen.
- He always used a double-barreled gun so he could take a second shot at a bird he had wounded with the first.
- He pursued crippled birds until they were found or at least until a reasonable search had been made.
- He never used automatic or pump guns, believing their power was excessive and they tempted the hunter to shoot at game that was out of range.
- He never hunted after the sun went down.
- He set his own bag limit and stopped hunting certain species altogether.

Eventually, he gave up all spring hunting of waterfowl and became an outspoken critic of the legal sale of game.

In addition, Carl often left his gun behind and took the family to the woods on outings and picnics, just to observe the goings-on. Though he lacked the scientist's formal training, he was a very good naturalist; he had a lifelong ability to read the woods.

In 1904, at the age of 16, my father was sent East to the Lawrenceville Academy in New Jersey. Beside his formal studies, he followed his bent



Hunts and extensive nature walks from an early age fostered a lifetime habit of recording his field notes. Over time, what Aldo Leopold saw evolved into a life view of land, human behavior and responsibility toward natural resources.

toward ornithology and natural history. He typically set aside an hour or two each day and took off with a small notebook and his grandmother's opera glasses, recording his observations in a journal.

In his letters home, he included many of his field observations, thoughts and memories about life at home along the Mississippi. These letters, three or four a week, became a veritable phenology of the season — a chronology of natural events.

Here are just a few examples.

March 21, 1904, as a 17-year-old:

"I am very sorry that the ducks are being slaughtered as usual...when my turn comes to have something to say and do against it and other related matters, I am sure that nothing in my power

will be lacking to the good cause."

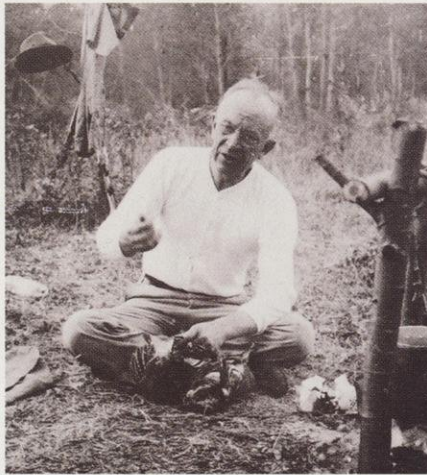
In January, 1905 one can feel a sense of nostalgia as he wrote to his father:

"The old gun adds a real sense of companionship to my room when I am studying, even when it is stowed away out of sight in the drawer. Whenever I handle the trusty weapon a score of olden memories come gently back, and once more, I see waving reeds of the marshes with a swift phalanx of waterfowl in the sky above. Or again the reeds are gaunt and dry and shaken by the wind, the first white mist of snow eddies down in silence, half veiling the low flying line of big gray mallards, which pass by with a measured swish of strong pinions and make for the other side of the swamp. Soon there are two sharp reports, a sound of wading with

low spoken instructions to old Leo, and I know that Papa has scored."

One feels an interesting kind of "homesickness" as my father speaks to his younger brother:

"Tonight, as I came back from a long cross-country...I find Carol's account of your big duck hunt, with all the details which bring one back to the old swamp itself, and make the mallards fly again as they used to. I'd tell you that you who see the mallards yearly, and yearly breathe the spice of the marshes, forget all about what it really is. Now that I have been away, I think of only the best things of the marshes, and forget the shooting part. I might easily forget my gun on a trip to Eagle now. Only I remember the whistling phalanx of wildfowl, inspiring with the poetry



DNR PHOTO FILES

Leopold's hunting experiences whetted a professional curiosity that he would develop as a forester and researcher. His game management theories spawned the field of wildlife ecology that forms the basis for providing quality hunting today.

of motion, the sonorous quack of the greenhead, the dainty little teals, the wild thrill of the occasional goose. And then the beauty of the dawn in the fierce storm of late November. I can see the gray silent strip of woods, the gray rattling rushes, the cold pitiless blue of the windblown ponds. How phantomlike and ghostly the hurtling flocks sweep by, dim against the cold gray sky of early morning — How merciless the biting wind, and the joy of just fighting it, of just feeling that the great storm in its power can not keep you away. It is

so magnificent and so indescribable. One never forgets it all — So now, although far away, not an autumn passes but that I enjoy the old swamps just as if I were there."

In his first spring at Yale, Aldo achieved a balance of sorts between the out-of-doors and the indoors. Hard work and hard play, tramps and dances managed to coexist.

The general flavor of my father's letters home changed as he faced the challenge of Yale University classes. There were still tramps in the woods, but there was a new spirit:

"My dear Mama:

I was putting Margery on the train up in New Haven when I happened to meet Sue and Betty Barrow in the same car. Partly in order to see them and partly because the train was already started well out of the station, I rode down here to Bridgeport. I have an hour to kill before I can get back, so I am writing you this note. I have been somewhat too busy to write you recently, as you can probably imagine."

Another letter from 1908 gives still another image:

"As for the year in general, I have never done as much work, or learned as much, or had a better time in my life."

Years later Leopold wrote that "there are two things that interest me: the relation of people to each other, and the relation of people to land." That, of course, accounted for just about everything; his interests were not narrow, and at Yale they were evolving both toward people and land.

Leopold was 18 years old when he entered Yale University. He was changing from amateur hunter and naturalist to trained professional forester. Socially a whole new sphere of people and activities opened up to him.

For the rest of his life, Leopold took any opportunity to put down on paper his ideas on the ethics of sportsmanship. These ideas anticipated his later philosophical development, and addressed an issue long debated among conservationists: the seeming inconsistency in being both hunter and protector of game.

To Leopold the title "sportsman" was the highest honor to which a



STEPHEN J. LANG



Bob McCabe, Flick and Professor Leopold after a woodcock hunt, 1946.

hunter could aspire. Sportsmanship was personal — a matter of human conscience. His theme evolved that “game conservation will never succeed merely through repressive laws. It must be founded on a respect for living things.” This was consistent in his philosophy from childhood to maturity.

Aldo’s hunting habits would change during his lifetime, but his code of honor would not, except to expand and include broader interests than hunting. For example, in the 1930s after my father began restoring the abused land on his sand county farm, he enjoyed hunting woodcock there each fall. In spring, however, it became a family project to study and census the breeding woodcock on the farm. Then in fall, my father would hunt woodcock in Adams County, but not on his own property. Soon thereafter he gave up hunting woodcock anywhere at any time! The sport of watching the courting birds in spring took precedent over the sport of the fall hunt.

A serious and emotional hunting issue for Aldo Leopold was triggered by the deer irruption in northern Wisconsin in the 1940s. Reports of deer starvation and range depletion caused him to prescribe pretty harsh herd reductions. After much debate the Conservation Commission voted for a split deer season, one for bucks and one for antlerless deer.



His professional interests grew from natural resource theorist to activist. Aldo Leopold served on the Wisconsin Conservation Commission setting resource policy and direction. Those policies continue to evolve into concepts like biodiversity, sustainable forestry and wildlife management that looks as much at habitat and people as animals.

Herd reduction was accomplished, but unevenly throughout the state. The resulting confusion and lawlessness only ignited an already hostile public.

The deer controversy stimulated Leopold’s growth as a conservation philosopher. Maintaining a healthy deer herd depended on having healthy range. His ideas about land health and diversity evolved over many years, but the deer controversy brought it into sharp focus.

To Aldo Leopold hunting was neither an abomination, nor an inconsis-

tency. It was a way to actively participate in the drama of life in an ecologically-balanced and civil manner.

What Leopold’s hunting attitudes, both as a young man and as a mature man, have to say to us in 1995 I am not quite sure. Certainly a need for rekindling true sportsmanship would be one admonition. Basing more of natural resource policy on ecological thinking, would be another. □



A winter's tale

Allen M. Young

Come along with me and good man Richard Schmidt as we walk in near-dawn light across a frozen lake in the Wisconsin Northwoods. We are here, tucked away from well-traveled roads, to taste the essence of the season. Winter here comes up crisp and silent at one moment, blurred and blustery the next. It kindles mind and spirit to respect the true tests of life: tenacity, resiliency, survival.

We walk steadily through the whiteness, moving forward toward a distant tree line at the horizon, a narrow ribbon of deep, uneven gray. We near the shore, the trees and a magnificent awakening daylight of muted hues. It is glorious to be here.

We have come to this place during a special in-between time when quiet reigns supreme. Deer hunters have been gone for several weeks and it's a bit early for snowmobilers to be out in full force. Here and there on the large lake we spot an ice fishing shanty, but it is silence and the lack of other people that crystallize in this frozen place.

The sun slowly lights this morning; first, a thin break in the pewter clouds, then a brightening orange line of open sky just above the trees. A gentle snowfall begins. My buddy and I blink away the flakes, searching for signs of the living.

We approach the line of trees at water's edge. Felled birches hug the shoreline. They look like piles of matchsticks, handiwork of beavers who lived on this lake last summer.

We know this place well in warmer weather. It is very different now, with roughly sculpted ice two feet thick beneath our feet. A blanket of crunchy snow covers the ice, but in patches where the snow has been blown away smudges of green and brown peek through. We know this frozen oasis is drumming with life beneath the ice cover. The beavers shared this lake with a pair of loons, an occasional blue heron, and a multitude of fishes, frogs and dragonflies.

Near the bank we take shelter from the wind and turn our backs to the shore. Even through the ice and snow we can spot the place where we stopped in the boat only a handful of months ago. There, the loons watched over their chick in the cool water. A huge dead tree was a favorite haunt of an eagle. Frantically scurrying whirligig beetles

ERIC MOSHER

zipped wildly on the water surface, interrupting the otherwise glass-like smoothness of the lake.

Near here a pontoon boat ride at dusk brought us face-to-face with countless rust-red dragonflies. We shut down the boat's motor and drifted, listening to the loud clicking of hundreds of pairs of dragonfly jaws feeding on mosquitoes and gnats. No matter the time of day or night, there were always hundreds of tiny insects dancing just above the lake's surface and along its border: good fodder for dragonflies and bats, too.

How different things are today! The flakes fall straight down in a slow sprinkle of diamond sparkle, coating everything, everywhere we turn. A heavier snowfall days earlier draped the bare branches and evergreens. Now, sparrows and nuthatches flit silently about among the pines, stirring up puffs of snow in search of tender buds.



KEN HUIJANEN (INSET) C.O. HARRIS

Only in winter do we examine a bald-faced hornet's nest and admire its form.

Soon we spot a grapefruit-size grayish sphere hanging in an aspen tree: an abandoned paper wasp nest. It is suspended from a branch slung low over the lake's edge. The nest's occupants have long since succumbed to killing frosts, but not before producing a handful of new queen wasps that quickly mated, left the nest and now hide in protective crevices waiting out winter. Only this time of year can one be pleased to find a wasp nest.

Surely last summer we boated past this very spot many times and never noticed the wasps, hidden from our view by the birches and aspens lining the lakeshore. Next summer, the queens that survive this killing cold will begin the papermaking cycle all over again — stripping away slivers of worn wood, mixing it with body juices and crafting a well-engineered nest for future broods.

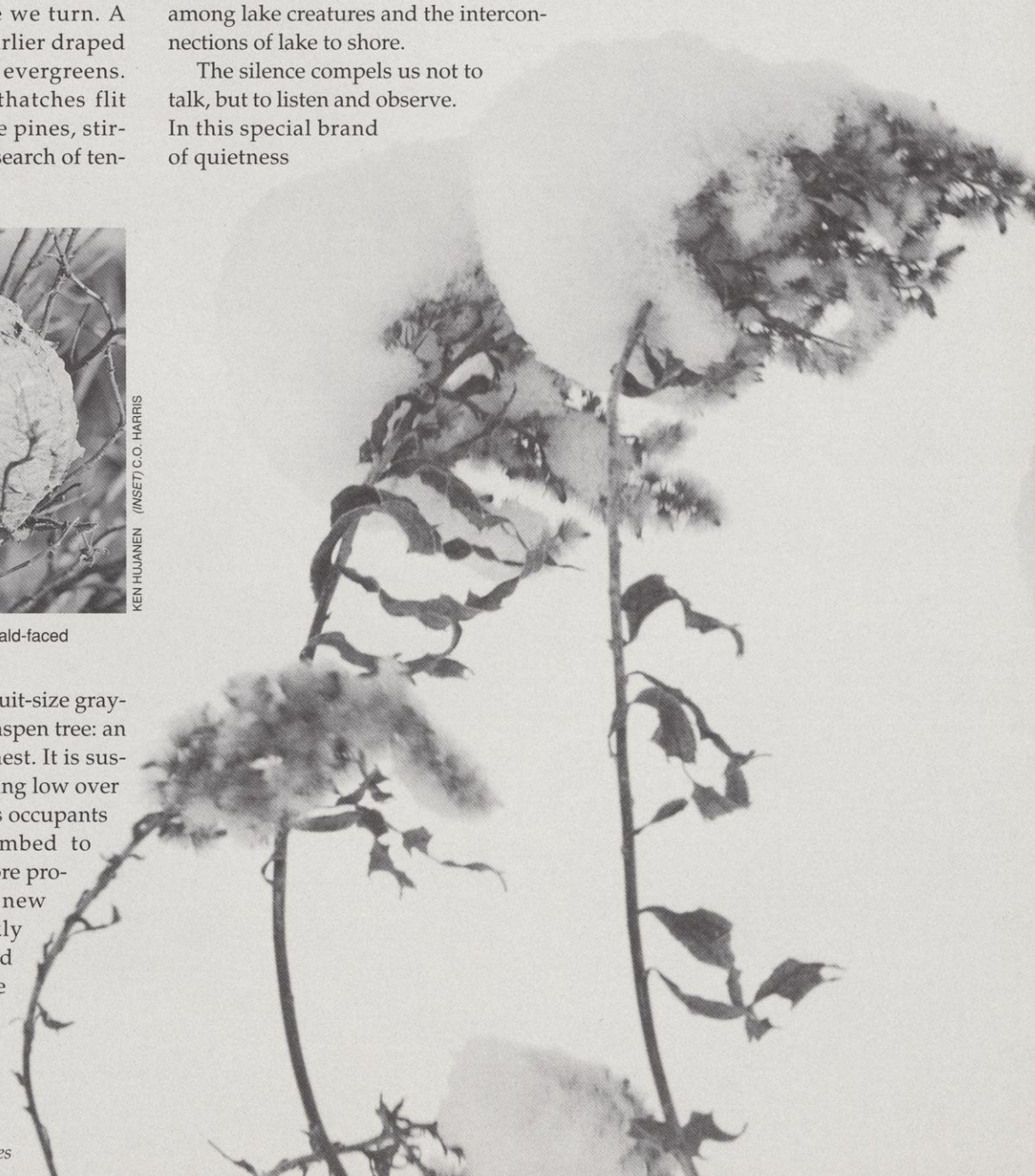
The numbing cold gets to us; we start to head back. On this sub-zero morning, we marvel at the strength of gnats, water striders and wasps that can endure these brutal conditions. Nature can outwit the elements; it takes people to break the fragile connections among lake creatures and the interconnections of lake to shore.

The silence compels us not to talk, but to listen and observe. In this special brand of quietness

you can almost hear the noises of life yet to be now muffled by ice and cold.

It's good to walk with a friend through the cold, back to the house and the warmth of a well-stoked fire. We do not have to converse to appreciate the experience. Breathing the crisp fresh air brings a refreshing optimism about nature's capacity to survive, in one form or another. The frigid winds hold an inner warmth and heightened awareness that we too are woven into the rugged tapestry of land, sky and water. □

Allen M. Young is Curator of Zoology at the Milwaukee Public Museum.



BOB HURT ARCHITECTURAL ENVIRONMENTS

IN LAND WE TRUST

All places are not created equal. Meet the local organizations that give Wisconsin's special landscapes the attention they need.



Placing land in trusts has always been a good way to preserve individual property. Now the concept is expanding to sustain the natural, historic, recreational and cultural values that define "community".

Steve Seyfert and WNR magazine staff

While federal and state legislators debate the reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act and introduce property rights legislation, the land preservation movement in the United States quietly moves forward. Across the country, concerned citizens have joined together to preserve wildlife habitat, wetlands, scenic areas, historic sites, and farmland.

Local land trusts — conservation organizations that work with individual property owners and communities to protect habitat and enhance local resources — have become small but effective leaders in the drive for land preservation. Since 1992, the number of land trusts in the United States has increased by 22 percent, to almost 1,100. Combined, these organizations have protected over four million acres.

Private land preservation groups

are a relatively new phenomenon in Wisconsin. The *Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation*, established in 1958, is the oldest and largest of the state's preservation organizations. The Land Trust Alliance, a national organization, estimates that there are 28 local land preservation groups in the state. To date, these groups have preserved over 10,500 acres of Wisconsin's special places and spaces.



ROBERT B. BENJAMIN

Trusts can preserve natural features and human access to them. Last summer the Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve opened and dedicated the Nancy Meech Trail.

How local land trusts work

Land trusts are nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations dedicated to preserving land for a variety of purposes. Generally, land trust members are local residents willing to volunteer time and funds to protect a part of the landscape they've come to know and love.

Some trusts protect land in a specific geographic region, like the *Geneva Lake Conservancy* in Walworth County, which concentrates its protection efforts almost solely within the watershed of Geneva Lake. In contrast, the *Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation* works throughout much of the state to develop and maintain the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. Still other organizations have been established to protect a particular resource: *The Prairie Enthusiasts* work to preserve and manage remnant prairies throughout southern Wisconsin and the upper Midwest. And some groups, like the *Cable Natural History Museum* and *Riveredge Nature Center*, focus less on land acquisition and more on teaching an appreciation for land

through workshops, talks and nature hikes.

"Not every land trust identifies conservation as its primary objective, but that is clearly the focus of most Wisconsin land trusts," says Brian Hotz, program director for Gathering Waters, Inc., a new service center for Wisconsin land trusts.

"The land trust is a tool for communities to preserve their rural character. It provides another avenue for the community to influence how it will grow and look into the future." Hotz noted trusts are being used nationwide to preserve green space, scenic views and maintain open spaces. In inner cities community land trusts are setting aside space for community gardens, parks, saving historic districts and providing affordable housing in deteriorating neighborhoods. "It all depends on the needs of the individual and the community," Hotz said.

Land trusts use several techniques to preserve property, including:

Conservation easements — This legal agreement between a landowner

and a trust sets permanent limits on how land can be used to protect its conservation values. The landowner continues to own the property and can use it, sell it or pass it on to heirs, but future owners are bound by the terms of the easement, which the land trust oversees. The *Door County Land Trustees* preserved over 300 acres in Door County using conservation easements, and has targeted another 1,000 acres for future protection. In northwestern Wisconsin, the *Wisconsin Farmland Conservancy* holds easements on more than 900 acres of farmland, and is working with rural communities and landowners to protect Wisconsin's rural areas.

Land donation — It's only natural that the special qualities that draw people to certain property create a desire to preserve the land. Donations can take several forms — outright donations, a reserved life estate that donates the property after your death or after your family's lifetime, donations by will, donations that establish income during your lifetime, and other flexible options.

Land acquisition — Sometimes people leave land trusts commodities or commercial property to be sold at a later date with the understanding that proceeds will be used to acquire property meeting the goals of the land trust. On Lake Superior's Madeline Island, the *Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve* has acquired over 2,220 acres for public use.

Deed restrictions — These agreements by property owners in an area preserve the characteristics of several adjoining properties; for instance, shorelines, forest tracts or prairies can be preserved intact in this way. The *Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation* has purchased or placed deed restrictions on 640 acres in the watersheds of Big and Little Cedar lakes in Washington County, long recognized for their productive largemouth bass and northern pike fisheries.

Trusts also can accept donations of land and easements, allowing property owners to claim federal and state tax benefits for contributions to non-profit organizations. This strategy allows

land trusts to operate without having to expend large sums for land acquisition, or incur property and income taxes.

Funding for local land preservation comes from a variety of sources, including membership dues, individual donations, corporate donations, government grants, endowments, merchandise sales, and foundation grants. Some organizations, such as the *Sand County Foundation*, receive funds from the leasing of its property for farming and logging. Wisconsin's statewide Stewardship Program, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, provides funds to land trusts and other nonprofit organizations for parks, habitat protection and restoration, recreational trails and urban green space. Funds for land trusts are also available under the DNR's Lake Protection Grant Program.

Some local governments have created nonprofit corporations to assist in preserving their open space and environmental features. As part of its open space planning effort, the Village of Chenequa in northwestern Waukesha County established a nonprofit village foundation to aid landowners in qualifying for tax breaks for donations of property or conservation easements.

"A land trust can help communities provide relief from tax payments and property maintenance while ensuring that the public benefits remain," Hotz said.

Launching new trusts

Land trusts can help communities and individuals maintain control when preserving the conservation values of private parcels. The concept has garnered bipartisan support in the Legislature as a way to permanently protect the beauty and natural features of land and waters without building big bureaucracies.

"The great strength of land trusts is that they are entirely voluntary," says Hotz. "Most trusts start with people who are interested in protecting their land and their neighborhoods. There is tremendous community pride in cer-

Land trust conference



Want to learn more about land trusts? Plan to attend all or just part of a training session on how to organize, fine-tune or attract new interest in land trusts. The three-day session will be held January 19-21, 1996 at the Westwood Conference Center, 1800 W. Bridge Street in Wausau. Day one will provide workshops on how to start a land trust and the nuts and bolts of running a nonprofit conservation organization. On the 20th, you get a full day of "how-to" skills — how to draft and close deals, various types of land transactions, working with landowners to tailor a plan to their needs, understanding tax laws and tools of the land trust trade. Day three will highlight fundraising techniques for getting grants and sponsors. For details and registration materials, contact Brian Hotz at Gathering Waters, Inc., 633 W. Main Street, Madison, WI 53703, 608-251-9131.

Here is a list of Wisconsin land trusts and other land preservation organizations. The list was supplied by the Land Trust Alliance and Janet Beach Hanson, non-profit program manager, at DNR's Bureau of Community Assistance.

Gathering Waters, Inc.
Wisconsin's Land Trust Clearinghouse
633 West Main Street
Madison, WI 53703
608-251-9131
Fax 608-251-8535
Contact: Brian Hotz

Cable Natural History Museum
Post Office Box 416
Cable, WI 54821
715-798-3890
Contact: Alison Slavick

Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation
555 North Port Washington Road
Milwaukee, WI 53217
414-962-3670
Contact: Geoffery Maclay

Chiwaukee Prairie Preservation Fund
810 Sycamore
Racine, WI 53406
414-637-3141
Contact: Donna Peterson

Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation
333 West Mifflin Street
Suite 106
Madison, WI 53703
608-258-9797
Contact: Ruth Oppedahl

Des Plaines Wetland Conservancy
9629 113th Street
Kenosha, WI 53142
414-697-0070
Contact: John Burke

Door County Land Trustees
Post Office Box 345
Ephraim, WI 54211
414-839-2897
Contact: Tom Davis

Friends of the Menomonee River
1970 Ludington Avenue
Wauwatosa, WI 53226
414-476-3787
Contact: Robert Boucher

Geneva Lake Conservancy
Post Office Box 356
Fontana, WI 53125
414-248-3358
Contact: Mary King

Gordon Bubolz Nature Preserve
4815 North Lynndale Drive
Appleton, WI 54915
Contact: Mark Brandel

Green Rock Audubon Society
2042 Meredith Drive
Beloit, WI 53511
Contact: Bill Hallstrom

Hasley Lake Association
Post Office Box 140
Long Lake, WI 54542
Contact: Lon Nowak

Hawthorne Hollow
800 Green Bay Road
Kenosha, WI 53144
Contact: Carl Bullmore

Ice Age Parks & Trail Foundation
Post Office Box 423
Pewaukee, WI 53072
414-691-2776
Contact: Nancy Sanderson

Kenosha/Racine Land Conservation Fund
4007 First Street
Kenosha, WI 53144-0001
Contact: Barbara Vess

Kinnickinnic River Land Trust
N8203 1130th Street
River Falls, WI 54022
715-425-5738
Contacts: Peg Kohring or Robert Chambers

Lac LaBelle Environmental Foundation
516 Lac LaBelle Drive
Oconomowoc, WI 53066
Contact: George Stampf

Lakeland Conservancy
Post Office Box 1148
Minocqua, WI 54548
Contact: Gregory Harrold

Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve
Post Office Box 28
La Pointe, WI 54850
612-588-0390
Contact: Phil Greenburg

Muskego Lakes Land Conservancy
South 64, West 18431 Topaz
Muskego, WI 53150
414-679-1707
Contact: Ron Ford

Ozaukee Land Trust
14135 North Cedarburg Road
Mequon, WI 53092
Contact: George Row

Philadelphia Community Farm
Post Office Box 668
Osceola, WI 54020
Contact: Verna Kragnes

Prairie Enthusiasts
4192 Sleepy Hollow Trail
Boscobel, WI 53805
608-375-5271
Contact: Gary Eldred

Ridges Sanctuary
3892 Cherry Road
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235
Contact: Carl Scholz

Riveredge Nature Center
Post Office Box 26
Newburg, WI 53060
414-675-6888
Contact: Andy Larsen

Sand County Foundation
201 Waubesa Street
Post Office Box 3037
Madison, WI 53704
608-242-5913, 244-3511
Contact: Brent Haglund

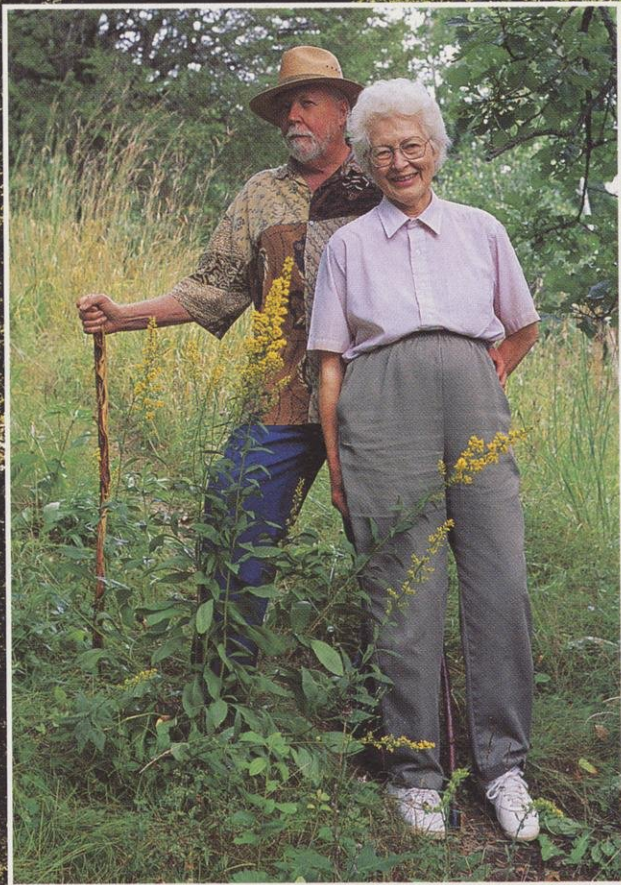
Waukesha Land Conservancy
108 Fox Street
Mukwonago, WI 54751
Contact: David Paddock

Wisconsin Farmland Conservancy
Post Office Box 353
Menomonie, WI 54751
715-235-8850
Contact: Tom Quinn

Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society
13010 West Wilbur Drive
New Berlin, WI 53151
414-786-9647
Contact: James Reis

Woodland Dunes Nature Center
Post Office Box 2108
Manitowoc, WI 54221-2108
414-793-4007
Contact: Bernard Brouchoud

PHOTO: GERALD C. JOHNSON



tain places or a certain look that they want to preserve. Sometimes a community doesn't realize how much the look and flavor of their area means to them until it is 'threatened' by development.

"The trust is a tool for people who have a vision of land uses they want to maintain," Hotz said. "That vision may be preserving farmland, or a stream, or a neighborhood. Land trusts have many tools to work with property owners, meet their needs and dedicate property for some long-term purpose."

Gathering Waters, Inc. was established by eight land trusts in Wisconsin to help other individuals and communities set up and run land trusts here.

The center provides a wide range of "how-to" information — how to incorporate organizations so they qualify for federal tax-exempt status, how to organize the group, how to perform real estate transactions, how to assess a parcel's value and plan to protect it, and how to hire professional consultants when you are getting in over your head.

People can find useful references, computer programs and contacts in the center's library.

Gathering Waters acts as a clearinghouse to put fledgling NCOs (nonprofit conservation organizations) in touch with other state and regional groups that show the newcomers by example how to buy and manage parcels. The organization plans to sponsor state and regional training sessions on conservation practices, legal requirements and practical tips for new property managers.

The center also serves as a legal land trust that can acquire properties through purchases, donations or other techniques before turning them over to nonprofit groups or public agencies for long-term management.

Since it was set up in March 1995, Gathering Waters has already helped the Bayfield Regional Conservancy incorporate, worked with the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust to set up a conservation easement program to preserve several hilltop prairies, provided seed money to start a Fox/Wolf River



(left) Weeping Cliff is one of the scenic gems preserved by The Kinnickinnic River Land Trust.

(left inset) Florence and Clarke Chambers teamed up with the Kinnickinnic group to maintain their oak savanna.

(above) A Blufflands Alliance of land trusts in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois and Iowa works with private landowners and communities along the upper Mississippi River to sustain farmland, protect erodible slopes and maintain scenic vistas while respecting private ownership.

land trust, and aided the Baraboo Range Preservation Association in securing easements on 300 acres along the Baraboo River.

Protecting the places that make Wisconsin special isn't always easy. Like many other nonprofit groups, land trusts must find ways to stretch limited funds and get the most out of small, often volunteer staffs. Nor are their actions always perceived as good: Local officials may be reluctant to support land trust conservation initiatives, and some trusts have encountered public opposition to particular projects. Arranging for future management of trust property is an issue some land trusts are not yet prepared to tackle, says Janet Beach Hanson, DNR nonprofit program manager. Take prairies,

for example. Prairies require intensive management, which may involve the burning of large areas to maintain grasses and forbs. Some land trusts may not have the staff, funds, or technical expertise to handle properties that need special attention.

Despite the obstacles, land trusts continue to offer innovative strategies for preservation, and provide local residents with a sense of ownership and a chance at building a bond with a piece of land. It's likely land trusts will play an important and growing role in the state's future land conservation efforts. □

Steve Seyfert is a land use planner for Camiros, a planning consulting firm in Madison, Wis.



THE STATE PARK

might-have-been

George Rogers

Editor's note: Spotlight is our occasional feature on the events, people and concepts that have shaped our conservation history.

Imagine a 760-square-mile state park in northern Wisconsin, an uninterrupted expanse of living, breathing biodiversity — pines and deciduous forest; old-growth and young saplings broken only by sparkling lakes and streams.

It's not your imagination. Wisconsin had such a park, and lost it. The park was created by the Legislature in 1878 and covered most of what is now Vilas County as well as eastern Iron County. But in less than 20 years it was gone.

The State Park (so-called because it was the first proposed park) was created through passage of a bill introduced "without warning or explanation" by Assemblyman William Baker of Monroe, wrote Vernon Carstensen in *"Farms or Forests: Evolution of a State Land Policy for Northern Wisconsin."*

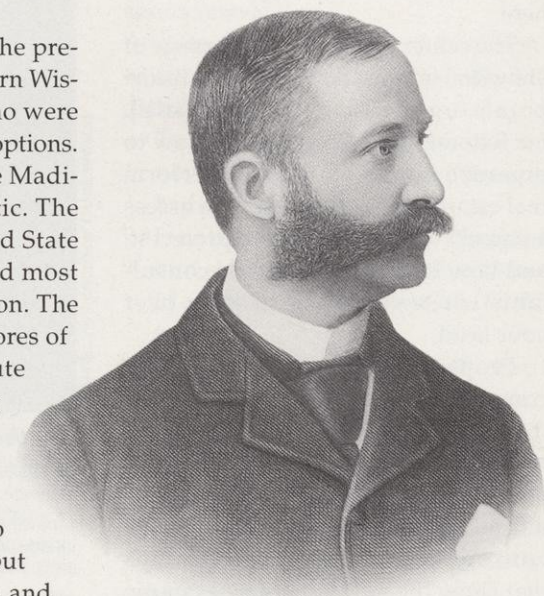
The bill and the state law that followed had a gaping flaw: The state only owned scattered parcels totalling 50,631 acres within the park boundaries, about 10 percent of the total acreage. Those responsible for administering the state-owned property inside the boundaries were dubious from the start that they could fill-in such substantial gaps since the tax-paying populace lived in downstate areas, state tax rolls were too thin to

purchase much property and the prevailing power brokers in northern Wisconsin were lumber barons who were not about to limit their cutting options.

At least one newspaper, the Madison Democrat, was enthusiastic. The paper described the designated State Park as "one of the wildest and most beautiful spots in the lake region. The whole tract is studded with scores of charming lakes which constitute the source of streams running toward every point in the compass...The park has never been thoroughly explored and few settlers have undertaken to make a permanent residence, but it abounds with fish and game, and if preserved in its natural perfection will be one of the finest bequests the present could possibly hand down to coming generations. It needs no improvements over what nature has done for it."

The endorsement didn't garner much support. In fact, when the state-owned land within the park boundaries was sold 19 years later, in 1897, few additional acres had been purchased. The state's 58,000 acres within the State Park sold for an average of \$8 an acre; peanuts today, but perhaps a significant amount to the 19th-century legislators who authorized the sale.

The land was put up for sale in 1897, "for the most part sold to lumber companies. Shortly thereafter big timber played out in Wisconsin," noted



STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN ARCHIVES

(above) William Baker has a grand vision of a grand park.

(right) Virgin timber of the types that were common in the State Park block.

Milo M. Quaife, in "Wisconsin, Its History and Its People," written in 1924.

An estimator for the state Commissioners of Public Lands may have been factual or putting the best face on things when he stated in 1898 that the state was lucky to have sold the park property because "the fires of last year did great damage to the pine."

Truly, the deck was stacked against the proposal. Attitudes toward nature were different in the 19th century. Trees were often seen as an obstacle to



DNR PHOTO ARCHIVES



MICHAEL WEIMER

The region set aside for the State Park was huge — 760 square miles of prime Northwoods timber and lake country. Today the shorelines on hundreds of lakes in the area are prime choices for homes and one of the nation's favored destinations for retirement and year-round recreation. Large tracts of public land here are still managed as state and county forests. The concept failed when it became obvious that the state would not have the financial resources or commitment to purchase much land within the envisioned property boundaries. The state's 58,000-acre holdings were auctioned off in 1897 for about \$8 an acre.



ROGER REIF

farming, something to be removed so the land could be plowed and grazed. The pioneering homesteaders had no way of knowing what time would teach, that soil and climate would never produce agricultural bounty in northern Wisconsin to equal the productivity of southern Wisconsin's prairie farms.

Moreover, the park lands might well have been logged even if the land had stayed in state ownership. Some of Wisconsin's early lumbermen were famous for ignoring property lines. As early as 1876 the commissioner of the General Land Office recommended the immediate sale of government timberlands on the grounds that private owners were in a better position to defend their property against theft than was the state.

Also in that era and sparsely-populated area, it's unrealistic to believe the forest would have remained unaltered even if the state had owned the whole 760 square miles. Fire, wind, disease and natural succession all bring change to woodlands.

One might wonder what induced the 1878 Legislature to establish this vast park before the age of the automobile, when it was hard to get to northern Wisconsin even by train.

Quaife wrote: "Whether the real motive was a love of parks and scenic values or whether it was to hold back the sale of heavily timbered lands, which were going pretty fast and cheap at that time, is not precisely known, but the fact is clear that these lands were set aside under the name of a state park in a region abounding in lakes and streams, and one that could well make a splendid park area."

Just think of the lakes bordered by massive trees, with eagles and ospreys hovering over their clear waters. Some of the lakes within the boundaries of the park would have included Fence, Trout, Big and Little Arbor Vitae, Big and Little St. Germain, Plum, Star, Presque Isle, Crawling Stone and dozens, no hundreds, more.

Much of the woodland must have been spectacular. Perhaps it looked a lot like Sylvania, the 30-square-mile tract just north of the Wisconsin line in



The region still sports a marvelous mix of soaring resources including osprey and some stands of big pine.

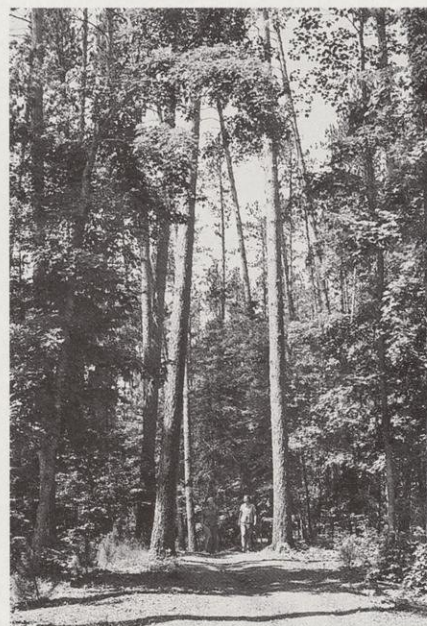
STEPHEN J. LANG

Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Sylvania escaped development because it was a privately owned hunting and fishing club before the U.S. Forest Service acquired it in the late 1960s. It has more than 30 lakes and ponds with unspoiled shorelines.

Though the forest in the State Park was old-growth, it wasn't all 400-year-old white pine. Northern Wisconsin's forest also consisted of red and jack pine, spruce, balsam, white cedar, tamarack and hardwoods. It was a mixture of upland and swamps, big trees and small ones. Traveler J.G. Norwood wrote in 1847 that the hills around Trout Lake had "a sparse growth of small pines and birch."

Had the State Park survived intact as Sylvania has, our northern Wisconsin communities might have developed in different areas. Places such as Arbor Vitae, Boulder Junction, Manitowish Waters, Sayner and Winchester might have developed around the fringes of the State Park, catering to the needs of people coming to see the wonders of unspoiled nature.

Though the Northwoods has seen more than its share of development, the region still holds large tracts of publicly-owned land within the original State Park boundaries. The Northern Highlands and American Legion State Forests both lie within the original project. The trees we see today are second-growth. Though impressive,



DNR PHOTO ARCHIVES

it's hard to imagine what we might have seen. An even more remarkable forest might have come down to our own generation in public ownership and management. Clearly our more than 50 state parks, state forests, state trails, county forests and parks preserve a lot of natural grandeur within their boundaries, but it's fair to say none quite match the scale of the magnificent might-have-been State Park of northern Wisconsin. □

George Rogers writes an outdoor column for the Stevens Point Journal in Stevens Point, Wis.

We annually publish a subject index of our stories each December. A subject/author index of our stories from 1977-1990 is available for \$1.75 including tax and handling. Send checks payable to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to *WNR Magazine Index*, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, Wisconsin 53707.

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- See also **WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT**
"Shamus in a lab coat."
Kerry Beheler-Amass and
Kathy Patnode.
October p. 4-9

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

- "Finding the right place at the right time." Mary K. Judd.
June p. 24-28
"Shamus in a lab coat."
Kerry Beheler-Amass and
Kathy Patnode.
October p. 4-9

WOODPECKERS

- "Power struggle." John J. Mutter, Jr.
August p. 2, 29



GREGORY K. SCOTT

Bugs, eggs and larvae are teased from their hiding places in the bark's fissures and scales.

Continued from page 2

Brown creepers spend most of their lives clinging to the vertical world of tree trunks. At night they roost by hanging onto the trunks. In daytime they feed by scaling trees. During nesting season, brown creepers tuck small stick nests lined with grasses and mosses behind loose bark or in a tree crevice. The females incubate an average of six, white, $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch eggs for 14–15 days. The young leave the hidden nest chambers as excellent climbers if inept flyers.

So how do you find a bird that isn't big, bold, flashy, brightly-colored or vocal? You become a trunk watcher. You'll gaze at hundreds of tree trunks and see many white-and red-breasted nuthatches and woodpeckers before that telltale spiraling will catch your eye. Just as soon as you think you see something, the creeper will disappear to the far side, then reappear several feet higher or at the base of a nearby tree. Patience and perseverance are a must if you wish to observe brown creepers.

The elusive birds can also be located by their call notes. The short, lispy calls are quite soft and high-pitched; they don't carry very far and are easily drowned out by other woodland sounds. Brown creeper "songs" are one of the first birding sounds we fail to detect as our hearing deteriorates.

The creepers are rarely attracted to bird feeders, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't watch for them. During migrations, they might just spiral up a tree just outside your back door. Stay alert: If you aren't watching for that subtle spiraling motion or if your ears are tuned to the radio instead of nature's music, you may never realize that these secretive birds have crept so close. □

Anita Carpenter writes about nature's comings and goings from Oshkosh, Wis.

Readers Write

KESTREL CLOSEUP

Robert Zimmer's August article on the American Kestrel was quite interesting. For the last eight years a female kestrel has been an occasional visitor to our urban neighborhood. Most of the time we have seen her perched on the electrical wire strung above our back yard. One time I saw her dive toward a flock of sparrows at our birdfeeder. The sparrows retreated to safety in a nearby hedge, and the kestrel flew off in search of other prey. Another time we saw the kestrel chasing a large butterfly in a midair contest that resembled a dogfight between two World War II flying aces — In our most recent encounter, the kestrel landed on the branch of a maple tree right outside our kitchen window. For nearly 30 seconds I was eyeball-to-eyeball with this small but mighty raptor — Every time I think about it my spine tingles with excitement.

*Marie T. Grogan
Wauwatosa, Wis.*

REMEMBERING THE WILD RIVERS

I got a real thrill reading your piece about the Pike, Pine and Popple rivers (June). I was born in Peshtigo 85 years ago. I planted trout on those waters as a youth and spent many happy weekends fishing those waters. I even remember the year when a dam broke on the Pike River and a trout hatchery on Whiskey Creek lost its entire stock. We sure had a couple fine weeks of fishing that year!

I camped above the Eight-Foot Falls on my honeymoon and caught a big fish. I was making a back-cast with a red maribou and cast into the falls. When I tried to recover my line I had a big fish on. The stream divides out of the pool on its way down to Eight-Foot Falls

and I finally brought that fish to net just above the falls.

Another time in the 1930s a friend and I went bow hunting just west of Amberg. We didn't see a deer so we stopped at a tavern west of Amberg Road about 10 miles or so north of Athelstine. We were the only ones in the place and were having a couple of beers, talking with the bartender about bow hunting when two other fellows came in. One of the newcomers made a remark that bow hunters couldn't hit the broad side of a barn.

After a few more insulting remarks, I couldn't take it anymore. I was no expert by any stretch of the imagination, but I told him to put his money where his mouth was. The upshot was I had to prove myself. We picked a spot between the top of the bar and the ceiling. The bartender took down a little bottle of whiskey which left me about a three inch by three inch space.

Then I went out to the car, got my recurve bow that pulled at 50 pounds and I proceeded to put that hunting arrow in the very center of the space about 40 feet away. I couldn't have done that again for all the money in the world. It was just bragger's luck!

I wonder if those men will read this, 'cause I'd sure like to hear from them. My buddy and I didn't have to buy another beer that day.

I went back to that bar a year or two later and that arrow of mine was laying across the mouth of a mounted black bear.
*John L. "Spike" Holcomb
Stevensville, Mont.*

THANKS FOR THE UNUSUAL

I am impressed with the number of interesting, informative issues that you bring readers which are not covered by the mainstream press. Such topics as potential crafts and hobbies as well as

Readers Write

local stories of interest throughout Wisconsin are much appreciated. You are doing a commendable job in these efforts.

David E. Thomas
Sheboygan, Wis.

TALL TIMBER

A good many years ago I recall a picture of the "last remaining" or "only virgin stand" of white pine in Wisconsin. Could you describe its location, size in acres, degree of protection, relative value and a bit about the people who saved it?

Robert Seward
Santa Barbara, Calif.

Readers, this one stumped us a bit. We are aware of several excellent remnants of the vast pinery that covered northern Wisconsin. Several parcels of virgin timber remain because they were not accessible to logging equipment, the terrain was too soft or too hilly to be logged commercially, or the parcels were in private ownership and not logged. Our foresters wondered if Mr. Seward saw a picture of the magnificent Cathedral of the Pines on the Nicolet

National Forest near Townsend and Lakewood. Another wondered if he was referring to the "Big White Pine" which is in excess of 130-foot-tall and 13 feet in girth in the Flambeau River State Forest in southwestern Sawyer County near the Rusk and Price county lines. Yet a third thought he might mean a marvelous stand of old growth and second growth pines in Council Grounds State Park or a stand in a City of Tomahawk park, though these last two are second growth trees.

Although most of the large timber was logged from the post-Civil War to post-World War I period, scattered parcels of our natural heritage remain. Many of the finest examples are preserved as natural areas, managed by land trusts and protected by private owners who appreciate the parcels in their care.

HOMEGROWN LUMBER

I recently read your June article "Homegrown, Homemade Lumber," and I'd like to share an interesting business venture with your readers. The junior and

senior students at Weyerhaeuser High School near Ladysmith are in their second year of the "Blue Hills Manufacturing Partnership." This student-run business uses four solar-powered lumber drying kilns to custom dry lumber for people who have small lots of lumber cut by portable saw mills like the ones mentioned in your article. I thought readers should know that there are businesses around that will gladly dry small lots of lumber at a reasonable price.

Richard A. Manor
Technology Education Teacher
Weyerhaeuser High School
Weyerhaeuser, Wis.

For those dyed-in-the-wool, do-it-yourselfers who would like further information, may we suggest "Processing Trees to Lumber For the Hobbyist and Small Business," University of Wisconsin-Extension bulletin #60 by Eugene M. Wengert and Dan A. Meyer, which provides directions for making your own solar kiln to dry home-sawn boards.

PUBLIC NEEDS SAND AND GRAVEL

I was very interested in your August article on recovering sand and gravel pits. As a former zoning administrator in Dane County, I was responsible for working with many firms, towns and municipalities to mine and restore such pits. Dane County has had reclamation requirements which have been enforced since 1969. The mineral extraction contractors and the permits issued worked hard to make miners good neighbors AND good land stewards. The public doesn't realize how much benefit we all get from having sand and gravel for construction projects, roads, building and landscaping materials. All of these areas are subsequently reclaimed

as parks, agricultural land or commercial development sites.

It gets discouraging these days that even with conditional use permits and reclamation plans, portions of the public object to any kind of mineral extraction. I remember a site where even after we rerouted the haul route 1 3/4 miles to avoid a subdivision at an additional cost of \$75,000 to the taxpayers, there was substantial public opposition to clay extraction for a public landfill. We have built environmental, social and reclamation requirements into the plans, but people have to be willing to reach reasonable compromises. Clearly, we are going to continue to use these materials.

Bill Fleck
Madison, Wis

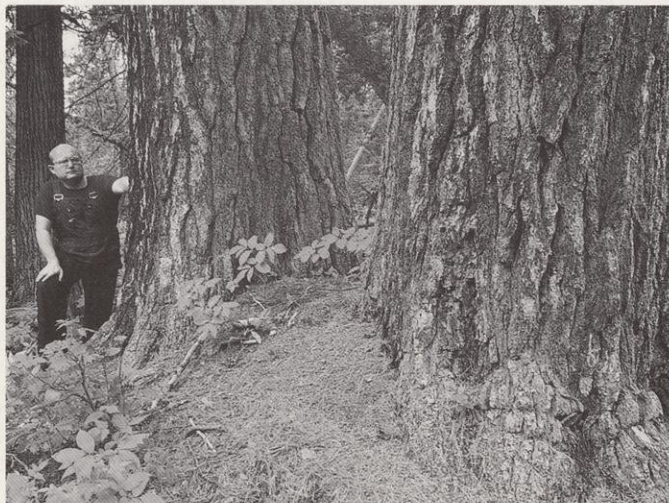
NEW LEGAL JOURNAL

I appreciate your attempt to maintain a lively balance of articles between environmental and natural resource issues and between the use and protection of Wisconsin's rich natural heritage. The excerpts by Thiel on Wolves in the December issue was fascinating. It was a good example of your editorial commitment to providing policy pieces along with recreational pieces.

Your readers may be interested in a new forum for vigorous discussion of environmental law issues in this state, Wisconsin Environmental Law Journal. We offer a variety of articles on environmental and natural resources law issues from a variety of perspectives. Potential subscribers or writers can reach us at the University of Wisconsin Law School, 975 Bascom Mall, Madison, WI 53706 or call (608) 262-3264.

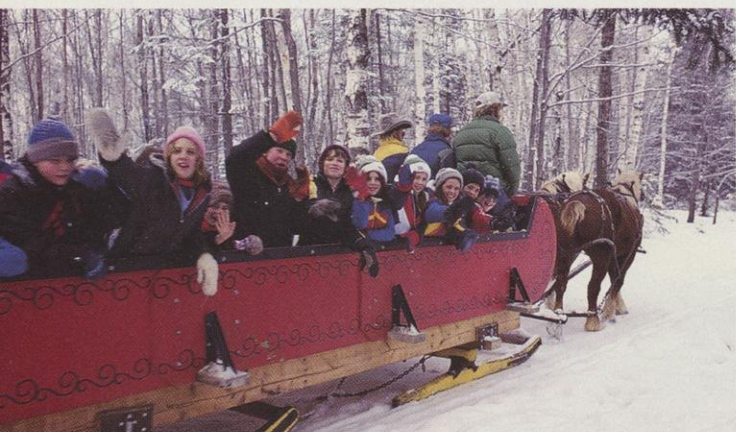
Ernest W. Grumbles, Editor
Madison, Wis.

Scattered stands of big timber still exist, like this more than 300-year-old white pine in the Brule River State Forest.



SCOTT NIELSEN

WISCONSIN TRAVELER



Revive an old tradition. A sleigh ride with friends and family brightens up a winter day.

Pony express

Neither rain, nor snow, nor dark of a late afternoon in December stays the equine-inclined from enjoying their favorite pastime during Wisconsin's winters. Horse fanciers know there's nothing more exhilarating than a quick canter down a snow-dusted trail atop a spirited mount. And could there be anything better to promote a sense of peacefulness than a slow winter walk on a sturdy mare, the silence unbroken save for the muffled clip-clop of hooves and the occasional snort? (Depends on the kind of snort, does it? Benighted soul, read no further and hope Santa has not forgotten your favorite brand of holiday cheer.)

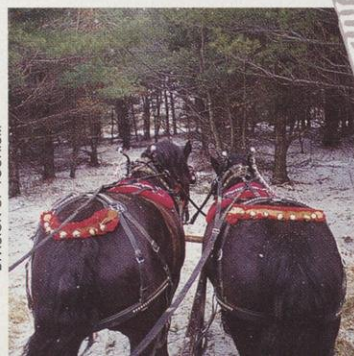
Sleigh rides being the traditional form of recreation this time of year, it takes a special kind of traveler to get out and go one-on-one with a horse in the snow. Look at it this way: If the Marlboro Man can do it, afflicted as he is with that square-jutting jaw, so can you.

A bit of advance planning

will help set you and yours on the right trail with the right four-legged companions. First, assess the riding abilities of your party. With inexperienced riders and children, you'll want easy, level trails; more accomplished equestrians may seek challenging rides on paths running through hillier terrain.

Next, contact the stable in advance. Most stables require reservations for winter rides. Ask questions about cost, terrain, ride duration, trail length, whether the rides are guided or unguided, and if any amenities like hot cocoa or coffee are provided. If

Relax! The horses know the way.



there's something special you want, like a picnic lunch with a campfire, or a horse like Black Beauty, or shining silver tack, ask — most stable owners are prepared to tailor trail rides

according to the customer's wishes.

Horses being horses, and winter being winter, a trail ride in December or January undoubtedly will be something to remember. If you get lost, there's no need to worry: The horse knows the way.

The following stables offer winter rides, but are by no means the only ones that do. For a more complete list, call the Wisconsin Division of Tourism at 1-800-432-TRIP and request a Recreation Guide.

Chippewa Falls

Red's Riding Ranch
(715) 723-4089

Trails wind along the Chippewa River. Special rates for four or more.

Eagle

Swinging W Ranch
(414) 594-2416
Tour the Kettle Moraine State Forest on horseback.

Friendship

Quad D Ranch Riding Stable
(608) 339-6436 and
1-800-RANCH-75
Ride on 300 acres near Castle Rock Lake.

Marathon

S & R Ranch
(715) 355-5644
Listen up, beginners: They offer a free mini-lesson before the ride begins!

Mountain

Mountain Pine Ranch
(715) 276-7444
Ride through the Nicolet National Forest. (No rides November 18-26)

West Bend

Sleeping Dragon Ranch, Inc.
(414) 644-5065
Specializing in group rides.

Wilton

Circle S Trail Rides
(608) 435-6975
Guided rides through southwestern Wisconsin forests.

Trail guides

The next best thing to having Tom Mix or Gene Autry in the saddle is having the Horsemen's Guide to Wisconsin Trails tucked in your saddlebags. Published by the Wisconsin State Horse Council, the guidebook contains maps, terrain descriptions and lists of all the county, state and national forest areas in Wisconsin that have riding trails. For a copy, send \$1.50 to Wisconsin State Horse Council, 1675 Observatory Dr., Madison, WI 53706. For a free brochure on the state's 240 miles of public trails for horseback riding, write the Wisconsin DNR, Bureau of Parks & Recreation, Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707.

