

Jerry Lapidakis



Jerry retired from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in 1998 after working 35 years in the forestry program. After graduating from the University of Missouri in 1963, he reported to Chuck Rieck and the forest inventory crew in Tomahawk. His first job was Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) field work with the twelve other new hires working in the newly established Menominee County.

Future assignments involved the private forestry assistance program in Crawford and Vernon Counties. Jerry then was promoted to the Area Forester for Dane, Rock and Green Counties. From 1979 until retirement Jerry worked in the Bureau of Forestry as the supervisor of the Forest Tax Unit and then as the Private Forestry Specialist.



Jerry & Karen

Jerry and Karen have been married for 45 years and live in Stoughton where they raised their two daughters Cindy and Andrea. They have four grand children who are rapidly growing up and provide Grandma and Papa with wonderful activities and lasting memories



Jerry with granddaughters Ashley & Corinne

Jerry and Karen also enjoy caring for their two acres of yard, garden and woods. In 1995, a tornado destroyed over 50 trees in their small woods but luckily there was little damage to their home. They were much more fortunate than their immediate neighbors who lost their homes. Jerry says he practices "mini forestry" in his small woods.

They have been active with the local community theater group for over 25 years. Jerry has acted in a number of shows and also works behind the scenes in set design, building and painting. Other retirement activities include traveling and attending grand kid's activities.

Since retirement, Jerry continues to work with the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association's (WVOA) foundation which owns and manages the Seno Woodland Education Center located near Lake Geneva. He was instrumental in the initial planning and development of the property into a forestry and natural resources education center. Activities included a project working with volunteers to renovate the old dairy barn into classrooms, bathrooms and meeting space. He continues to provide land management assistance and occasionally assists with teaching outdoor activities. The Center provides hands on programs for schools, youth and adult groups using curricula such as Project Leaning Tree, LEAF, and Project WILD and Master Woodland Steward.



Jerry running the equipment at the Seno Center.

But, Jerry's avocation is railroading. Before leaving DNR he had volunteered as a trainman and conductor at Mid Continent Railway. For the past ten years he has worked for the Wisconsin Southern Railroad (WSOR) as Chief Car Steward, caring for the company's vintage business train.



Jerry cleans up the Theater Car

The train is used for meetings with railroad staff and customers. The four car train is pulled by three vintage, restored diesel engines. A highlight was a trip to Glacier National Park two years ago. The WSOR cars were pulled by Amtrak and were set off in Whitefish, Montana, for five days.



Wisconsin Southern Railroad train at Horicon