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State Park System transition reflects changing times and challenges

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In a message to all state parks system employees in May, Division of Land administrator Laurie Osterndorf explained the new system of decisionmaking and operational streamlining that has occurred with realignment of parks properties within four districts and transfer of management responsibility for state parks from DNR's five regions to the Bureau of Parks and Recreation.

"In light of the current state of the economy, changing demands on natural resources, new recreational challenges and uncertain future budgets, the Bureau of Parks and Recreation did an analysis of how to most efficiently and effectively provide outdoor recreation opportunities, natural resources interpretation and education, and protection and enhancement of the unique landscapes and resources managed within the Wisconsin's State Park System (WSPS)," said Osterndorf. Secretary **Matt Frank** then approved the approach.



Amnicon Falls State Park maintenance worker Tom Danielson swept the platform at the base of the Upper Falls, where visitors also can view the Douglas Fault.

WDNR Photo

A reassessment of the traditional ways of carrying out WSPS responsibilities redefined the program's focus, emphasizing system decisionmaking and park operations streamlining universally. Although Osterndorf described this approach as creative, she pointed out that it's used in every other state park system in America.

Cross-program team addressed details of new structure

A transition team deliberated about cross-program integration, park district boundaries, communication, and roles and responsibilities. The team was comprised of **Jean Rygiel**, WSPS Southwest District Park and Trail manager; **Kathy Gruentzel**, Dodgeville Park property supervisor; Northern Unit-Kettle Moraine State Forest supervisor **Jerry Leiterman**; **Tim Miller**, Northwest District Parks and Trail manager; Bureau of Parks and Recreation director **Dan Schuller**; **Sanjay Olson**, chief of the Engineering and Construction Management Section in the Bureau of Facilities and Lands; Division of Customer and Employee Services administrator **Carrie Mickelson**; **Mark Aquino**, South Central Region land leader; Northeast Region land leader **Jean Romback-Bartels**; **Bill Smith**, Northern Region land leader; West Central Region director **Scott Humrickhouse**; **Dave Borsechnik**, South Central Region property supervisor; **Angela Ewing**, Bureau of Human Resources program manager; and **Julie Amakobe**, Bureau of Facilities and Lands department facilities manager.

One of the major issues on the table was continuation of services currently provided to the parks and southern forests by the regions based on the counties in which the properties are located. For example, staff at Wildcat Mountain State Park still will work with the Human Resources manager out of Eau Claire on personnel issues and will continue to work with the warden from Vernon County on law enforcement matters. Throughout transition team discussions, priority was placed on continuing and adjusting cross-program integration that's been a key element to the success of the WSPS.

"Historically, the program has worked closely with other department programs to assure the highest degree of customer service and resource management," said Schuller. "This integration will continue to be a priority under the new structure."

Trends at the root of the parks system restructuring

Highlighting the Parks program position vacancy rate, Osterndorf wrote to WSPS staff: "This dramatic change in staffing levels, coupled with changing public demands has compelled us to modify traditional roles and discover new ways to complete our work while still providing exemplary visitor services."

"Although some things will change, some things must remain the same. Over the last several years, park visitation has remained strong, camping demand has dramatically increased, and the user base has expanded and diversified."

WSPS structure goes from five regions to four districts

The long-standing five region model has been modified to four park districts, each supervised by a district supervisor. To the greatest extent possible, this change evens out field assignments by redistributing personnel and property assignments. Supervision at the field or work unit level remains the same

"This model uses creative thinking to re-focus staffing and apply resources in new ways. Working together, I believe we can develop a systems approach to program integration, management presence, consultation and communication among staff that will overcome difficulties, increase productivity and bring the excellent, consistent service that citizens expect from the Wisconsin State Park System," Osterndorf explained.

Staff roles and duties altered within new structure

Key to the restructuring will be a District Park and Trail Manager (supervisor) for each of the four districts, who reports directly to the new Property Management Section Chief position located in the central office. Each manager will oversee park maintenance, visitor protection, personnel investigations, fleet and capital equipment, and resource protection.

Permanent reassignments to the District Park and Trail Manager positions are:

- **Arnie Lindauer**, Northeast District, Sturgeon Bay
- **Greg Pilarski**, Southeast District, Milwaukee
- **Jean Rygiel**, Southwest District, Eau Claire
- **Tim Miller**, Northwest District, Ladysmith

The Park and Trail Managers will report to the bureau's new Property Management Section Chief, now in recruitment. This centralized position will be responsible for overseeing park maintenance, visitor protection, human resources processes, fleet and capital equipment management, and resource protection.

The department's five Regional Directors will continue in their key role of coordinating cross-program integration and communication, as well as remaining the contact for local units of government and those state legislators representing constituents within their regions.

As well, each region's Land Leader will continue to play an important role in WSPS masterplanning, land acquisition and development projects, engineering, and other parks land and facilities transactions. They'll further carry on their role of program integration on the regions' Land Leadership Teams. The Land Leaders no longer will be responsible

for direct supervision of park staff, however.



A bike rider on the Capitol City Trail pays his trail fee at one of the kiosks along the route.

WDNR Photo

The new [“Properties Assigned to the Bureau of Parks & Recreation”](#) map shows the WSPS divided into four districts, rather than corresponding with the department’s five regions. This change affects the roles and responsibilities of staff and communications systems in a variety of ways.

Communicating changes viewed as essential during transition

The transition team and the various levels of management identified communications as essential to the success of the WSPS’s new structure.

“Communication at all levels was viewed as a tool that would move information clearly, bring consistency to program strategies, and maintain the state parks program as an integrated part of the larger agency,” said Osterndorf.

The team created a matrix based upon the information it believed staff and managers would need, from those performing day-to-day operations to those influencing policy and strategic direction.

First-and-foremost, bureau director Schuller and the appropriate Regional Director and Land Leader visited each region, with major decisions in hand. Upon explaining the new direction and the role of each level of the organization, they encouraged staff to provide ongoing feedback on actual implementation.

One issue Schuller expects to resolve in the near future is coordination of trails support across the state. “We’re working with the Northeast Regions’ Community Financial Assistance grants staff on a comprehensive trails program, where the Parks program does not currently have a trails coordinator position.”

“Our ultimate, ongoing goal is consistent delivery of top-notch service to our visitors,” said Schuller. “This is a work-in-progress, and how it evolves depends on effective two-way communication.” He expects to spend a great deal of time in the near future assuring clear and consistent communication that will result in every level of the WSPS

organization engaging in a process that successfully enhances service to the public and the management of Wisconsin's outdoor recreational resources.



DNR joined other forces in large bust of drug grows on public lands

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Twelve DNR conservation wardens assisted with the takedown on August 11 of a large marijuana drug growing operation on U.S. Forest Service Lands in Oconto and Menominee counties and surrounding area. The department's wardens joined forces with more than 200 federal, state and local law enforcement personnel.

This joint investigative, containment and eradication effort was lead by investigators from the Oconto County Sheriff's Office, the Wisconsin Department of Justice, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration and the United States Forest Service.

The primary issues for DNR are the safety of those using public lands and preventing the destruction of public property, explained chief warden Randy Stark.

Thousands of marijuana plants were eradicated in the massive law enforcement operation that took place on the Lakewood-Laona District lands of the [Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest \(CNNF\)](#). Now that the law enforcement actions are nearly completed on the sites, work is underway to remediate the damage caused by the growers.

According to a Wisconsin Department of Justice news release: "Several individuals suspected of involvement in this operation have been taken into custody and face federal charges. This operation will continue into the immediate future and remains an open and ongoing investigation."

Illegal drug growers clear large areas of vegetation and often divert water from rivers, streams or lakes for irrigation. In addition, agencies are concerned about the use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. These kinds of hazardous materials can get into water systems causing long-term damage. Cleanup that followed the enforcement effort included removing trash left behind by the growers and demolishing any structures. Depending on the scope of the damage, land and water can be left unproductive and even unusable.

Illegal drug grows are purposely in remote locations. Still, authorities discourage the public from trying to visit these sites out of curiosity because they remain crime scenes and may present dangers.

Funding for the cleanup of drug cultivation sites on federal lands comes through a 2010 federal appropriations bill. Sites suffering the greatest damage will be addressed first. Long-term monitoring of the restoration efforts will be needed to assure all the damage has been remediated.

For more information on the department's work on illegal drug grows in Wisconsin, read the May 6, 2010 "Digest" story "[Video trains staff on drug grow operations on public lands](#)" and the April 22, 2010 story "[State ramps up efforts to deter illegal drug activity.](#)"

The following news accounts were among those that appeared following the August 11 action in the Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest:

LaCrosse Tribune: ["Workers examine alleged pot mess in national forest"](#)
Minneapolis Star Tribune: ["Feds: 1 group behind pot farms in Wis. Forest"](#)



Around the state, DNR employees shine

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Central office success story

- Kudos to **Sharon Fandel**, acting upland wildlife ecologist in the Bureau of Wildlife Management, for her significant role in writing and editing Wisconsin's Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program grant application. DNR is seeking over \$3 million in federal funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to expand public hunting, fishing and trapping access to private lands. Sharon worked as part of a cross-divisional team to pull this application together, but took the lead in writing and editing Wisconsin's grant application. This was an extremely complicated and rigorous grant application on the part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, with a very-short deadline. Sharon should be congratulated for her work. **Scott Hull**, *research scientist in the Bureau of Science Services*

Northeast Region success stories

- To **Randy Matty** (air compliance engineer in the Bureau of Air Management, Green Bay): We are writing to express our thanks for your agreement and approval of our ESP Internal inspection deadline extension request. In this dynamic economy we are experiencing not only in Northeast Wisconsin, but across the nation, it is important to support the continued growth of the manufacturing industry. We appreciate the fact that you recognize our current business conditions, and support what is best for our customers and our mill's continued success. We appreciate your continued support, and look to you and the Department of Natural Resources as a valued partner in the Thilmany Papers Nicolet Mill's overall success. *Jay Weigelt, Nicolet Mill Power Manager*

- Forwarded by Northeast Region director **Ron Kazmierczak**: Folks--I have attached a [Waterfowl Hunting guidelines pamphlet](#) that was developed by Bruce Deadman of Duck's Unlimited locally here in GB (Green Bay). This addresses the long standing conflict between waterfowlers and some of the property owners along the southern shore of Green Bay. We have met with a number of legislators and neighborhood groups about this issue for years. This is a pro-active move by DU to provide info to both sides on the issue. Our **LE (law enforcement) staff** including but not limited to (LE supervisor in Green Bay) **Chris Groth**, (warden in Green Bay) **Darren Kuhn** and others have been and continue to be involved in this issue as well. Well done informational piece that should help bridge some gaps...

- To **Joe Schwantes** (forester stationed in Wausaukee): Just a note to take the time to thank you once again for your assistance with the organization and implementation of the SFI county forest audit for Marinette County. I believe the auditors were very impressed with the fine work we do up here on this county forest. They certainly have recognized we have great cooperation within DNR as well as with our partner, Marinette County Forestry. There was also great dialogue with the auditors all day about what we do and how we implement it. This event couldn't have been a success without your participation. Keep up the great work that you do a county forest liaison...the rapport we have with all our internal and external partners in Marinette County is recognized statewide. **Cole Couvillion**, *DNR's Northeast Region forestry team leader*

- To **Jeff Buchholz** (forestry technician-mechanic in Wautoma): Letting you know how popular the Low Ground Unit was (on my shift) at the State Fair. There were numerous questions as how it's used, and just how does this go through a swamp? Also a number of fair goers commented on the 3 ton truck asking questions on its use & function. A couple with forestland in Waushara County asked me

to thank the Wautoma crew for protecting their property. Please extend this. It is great how you have placed this equipment in such a position where our 10,000 visitors per day can view it easily. It was a highlight of our exhibit. On behalf of the Public Awareness Team, Thanks again. **Tom Albrecht**, forester stationed in Shawano

- I would like to thank **Linda Williams** (North East Region forest health specialist in Green Bay) for taking time away from her weekend to present at the scrub oak workshop in Crivitz. As always Linda did a great job presenting and opened a lot of eyes on scrub oak issues. Landowners really enjoyed her presentation and commented to me afterward how much they learned from Linda. It was great timing following the large scale defoliation and has been a hot topic and thanks to Linda a lot of the landowners' questions have been answered. Thanks Linda!" **Steve Kaufman**, forester in Wausaukee

- To Steve Kaufman and Linda Williams: On behalf of the North Team and the Peshtigo Area, I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank you both for participating in the Scrub Oak Workshop last weekend in the Crivitz Area. I have heard some very positive feedback from some of your audience members. There was a great turn out and obviously, the health and management of scrub oak is of great interest and concern for many landowners in Marinette County. I realize there is a ton of work that goes into the preparation of such an event, but your efforts have paid off greatly. Great Job! **Cole Couvillion**, Northeast Region forestry team leader

- To Jeff Buchholz: I just want to thank-you again for your help securing the low ground unit and 3 Ton Pumper for this year's State Fair. I've been getting calls from staff commenting about how well the equipment exhibit is being received by the public. Our visitors are asking many questions. One of the shift leaders suggested a spec sheet write up on the muskeg unit...people are very curious about it...what is the psi, how much water can it carry, how fast can it travel...etc. This outreach would not have been possible without the great support of the NER. This exhibit helps us gain the public trust needed to protect, manage and sustain Wisconsin's forest resource. *All the best*, **Genny Fannucchi**, forest resource education and outreach specialist, Bureau of Forest Business Services

- To **Robert Rosenberger** (water management specialist in Peshtigo): Thank you for the quick turnaround on our request for extending our municipal launch ramps. I appreciate your help and as we continue to move Oconto forward, am certain that we will need your help again. Thanks again for your assistance. *Sincerely*, Mayor Tom Fulton

- After 30 years of service to the citizens of Wisconsin and the DNR, **David Beer**, forester/ranger in Langlade retired on August 3, 2010. Dave devoted his career to the practice of sustainable forest management and protection of Wisconsin's forests. During his career, he became well-known among his many close friends, colleagues and co-workers for his passion for the 'art and science' of forestry. He has been a great friend and colleague to all of us, and we will miss him. I extend my thanks and gratitude to Dave for his public service to this agency. A retirement party is being planned for early October. **Ron Gropp**, forestry team leader in Peshtigo

- Warden Darren Kuhn (Green Bay): Thank you for taking the time and letting me accompany you during your job. I really enjoyed myself and I know what it is like to be a DNR Warden. That job shadow opened my eyes to a new and exciting career. It will help me make decisions about my future and what I want to do with the rest of my life. *Sincerely*, Brian Kife

Northern Region success stories

- Dear **Tom (Duke)** (regional forestry staff supervisor): Do you know what a great worker you have in **Brian (Schwingle)**, plant and pest disease specialist in Rhinelander)? Just thought I'd sing his praises for a bit. I'm the lady who wondered what was wrong with her 100+ year-old oak that was dramatically dropping leaves in early June. I had a US forester look at the leaves, then the tree, but he didn't feel it was oak wilt. He must have thought further, because suddenly the DNR, Brian in particular, was very

interested in my sick tree.

This young man became totally engrossed in it, and very willingly shared his knowledge of what he thought was wrong with it: oak wilt. Since it was affecting perhaps the first tree in this area, his interest was keen and response so helpful. I had my neighbors join in the discussion, and Brian very willingly, graciously and painstakingly, explained the dangers of oak wilt. We all have oaks on our properties, so the thought of what could happen to them was unnerving.

I know it's his job, and why he attended college/grad school, but he went way over the top in helping my neighbors and me determine what to do to save the others. I just wanted to make sure you know this young man is very capable, intelligent, caring and helpful. I'm sure the above accolades don't surprise you, but it always helps a supervisor know his workers in the field are really, REALLY doing their jobs. *Thanks for listening...*

Michele Bergstrom

- Nomination of **Steve Bade** (real estate specialist in Ashland) for the 2010 Vanguard Award: As a real estate specialist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Northern Region, Steve Bade has been successfully negotiating with willing land owners to acquire lands and easements for the North Country National Scenic Trail in Wisconsin for the past 10 years. Because of Steve's hard work and passion for the trail, the DNR has acquired a nearly-continuous corridor for the trail between the western edge of Iron County, Wisconsin, and the Minnesota state line. Ten parcels of land totaling 833 acres have been purchased for the trail and many other transactions are still in various stages of negotiation and processing.

Steve has worked very closely and collaboratively with the North Country Trail Association staff and volunteers, as well as the National Park Service staff, in contacting landowners and convincing them that selling some or all of their property for the North Country Trail is a great use of their land. Steve also volunteers his personal time attending meetings with local government boards and officials in order to explain and promote the trail. Steve's efforts have had a significant positive effect on the permanent protection and scenic quality of the North Country National Scenic Trail in Wisconsin. He is a tireless advocate for the trail and is deserving of special recognition. *Ken Howell, Land Protection Coordinator for the National Park Service North Country National Scenic Trail*

Editor's Note: Steve Bade received The Vanguard Award, which is given to "A legislator or other public official whose leadership, actions and advocacy have substantially benefited the North Country Trail." The North Country National Scenic Trail runs through the states of North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York. Wisconsin has the most active and successful land acquisition program of ALL the states. The trail runs through the northern counties of Douglas, Bayfield, Ashland and Iron. The Wisconsin segment will have about 220 miles of trail once completed from the Minnesota state line to the Michigan state line.

South Central Region success stories

- **Mirror Lake State Park** has been honored with another spotlight. In the July/August 2010 edition of **Camping Life Magazine**, Mirror Lake is ranked as one of the ["Top 10 Wildlife Hot Spots in the United States The best places for wildlife photography"](#) by writer Jack Ballard and a "few of his photographer friends."

• Thanks to **all at SCR** who contributed to the Adopt a School - School Supply Drive for Toki Middle School. Elizabeth Kluesner and her two kids just FILLED the back of their large vehicle with all of your donations. The donations will go to Toki Middle School at 4:30 this afternoon. Your contributions will help get the kids off to a good start for the school year. Who knows which one of these kids may become a Nobel Prize winning scientist, a fantastic teacher, a prize winning journalist or a valuable DNR employee! Thanks so much for your generosity, it will make a difference! *South Central Region director Lloyd Eagan*

Southeast Region success story

• Congratulations on a job well done from regional director **Gloria McCutcheon**, **Greg Pilarski** (Bureau of Parks and Recreation program manager) and **Doug Hoskins** (Bureau of Land and Facilities Management program manager) to **all department employees who volunteered for the State Fair, especially employees from the Southeast Region**: The department's attractions and program stations at its Natural Resources Park were popular with fairgoers of all ages. The energy, time, sweat equity, and commitment that our staff put forth helped to make the Department of Natural Resources State Fair an outstanding education experience, a passport to interactive activities, an overall enjoyable event in a park setting, and a great success.



Teachers give high marks for Chiwaukee Academy natural resources training

By: Amalia Baldwin, Office of Communication

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This year, DNR-sponsored professional development for educators was held in the first week of August during the [Chiwaukee Academy](#) at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside campus in Kenosha. By the end of the week-long session, K-12 educators of southeastern Wisconsin went home inspired by new approaches to incorporating lessons about natural resources into their diverse classroom curriculum.

"This was the most memorable and useful conference I've been to in a long, long time (maybe ever)!!," was how one educator described her experience. Entitled "Where You Live: Enjoy Nature While You Teach and Learn," the DNR's course incorporated K-12 curriculum materials and background information on forestry, water, wildlife, air quality, climate change and recycling.



Teachers studied a pond at Pringle Nature Center during an activity at Chiwaukee Academy.

WDNR Photo

DNR educators have developed and taken this course to academies in Rhinelander, La Crosse, Appleton and Milwaukee. This was the department's first summer attending the Chiwaukee Academy. By participating in these academies, teachers earn graduate credit and gain inspiration to begin the school year.

Eighteen enthusiastic teachers ranging in grade levels from pre-kindergarten to high school math and science attended the Chiwaukee Academy. They "bounced" from indoors to out, as DNR educators had them measuring trees, smelling the air for "hitchhikers," racing to recycle, "migrating" to the oily Gulf of Mexico, and following a water droplet from an icy glacier to a distant cloud, among other activities.

Natural resources educators **Christopher Tall**, Bureau of Forestry; **Christal Campbell**, bureaus of Watershed Management and Air Management; **Lindsay Haas** and **Mary Hamel**, Bureau of Air Management; **Janet Hutchens**, Office of Communication; **Dan Werner**, Bureau of Waste and Materials Management; and **Elisabeth Olson**, Bureau of Waste and Materials Management led the activities, sharing their expertise in natural resources subjects

Teachers learn "hands-on," just as their students will

One day found the teachers exploring the Pringle Nature Center in Bristol, where they learned about and participated in several activities that Pringle offers to K-12 classrooms on field trips. While at Pringle, Bureau of Fisheries Management educator Theresa Stabo showed teachers a variety of activities from the angler education materials.

On the last day of the conference, the teachers "took the classroom floor" as each presented a lesson from one of the week's guides, critiqued by DNR educators.



Teachers learned about fish adaptations during a Project WILD activity that they can take back to their classrooms.

WDNR Photo

When all was said and done, teachers (and DNR educators) were exhausted, but

enthused and inspired to be returning to their classrooms this fall with many new ideas. Following are three comments teachers wrote in their reflection logs that capture their feelings about the week:

- “Overall this has been a wonderful experience. The presenters are very knowledgeable, approachable with questions, and seem to love their work.”
- “I loved this class. The program offered a LOT MORE than I expected. All the information and materials we received were useful, in that they can be adapted to a very wide range of ages and we will absolutely use everything we were given and we are so excited to have had the opportunity to have access to the workshop!! All of the teachers and presenters were fun and full of great information and ideas we can use!! Awesome class!”
- “I have to say that this has been a GREAT conference, and I would highly recommend this class to anyone looking into taking it. I feel the DNR...really has a handle on what goes on in school and what should be taught. Thank you!!! I have been enthralled every day.”

Comments like these left DNR educators ready and excited to begin planning next summer’s academy.

Footnote: *Amalia Baldwin is a natural resources educator in the Office of Communications. She coordinated DNR’s educators at this year’s academy. During the week, Baldwin taught activities, evaluated teachers and kept things on schedule.*



2010 DNR State Fair exhibits and activities are hits with fair-goers

By: Kathleen Wolski, Office of Communication

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“The DNR rocks!” was the enthusiastic review of a youngster as he left the DNR’s State Fair Park after exploring the program exhibits and completing his “Passport to Fun” mission. The department distributed about 12,600 passports to children and families during this year’s 11-day State Fair.

Most reviews of the 2010 State Fair include comments on the weather, as in “hot and humid.” The extreme weather didn’t keep people at home, however, and many of the 876,000 people who attended the State Fair found their way to our Natural Resources Park.



Parks and recreation specialist Sabrina Tolley and high school intern Gabrielle Gallegos staffed the bureau display and helped young explorers with their “Passports to Fun.”
WDNR Photo

The DNR theme this year was "Get Outdoors!" Visitors discovered the great places to visit and the many things to do in our state parks and forests, and on our rivers and lakes. It also was a great opportunity for program staff to meet Wisconsinites from all over the state and talk about natural resources, the environment and our work. A popular activity this year was the "National Archery in the Schools Program" target-style archery. Families with young children were happy to see the return of the kids' casting clinics, and Smokey Bear's schoolhouse and campfire safety lessons. The Coast Guard Auxiliary teamed up with our conservation wardens, offering tips on boating safety to kids and adults.

Bureau of Science Services and Office of Energy program staffs helped potential scientists of all ages discover the many wonders of Wisconsin's natural resources. Havenwoods State Forest in Milwaukee again featured some of their resident reptiles and amphibians to the delight of (most) visitors.

DNR air monitoring staff again worked with the National Weather Service to show how to compare weather conditions and air quality, and on a couple of days actually were able to track ground level ozone pollution levels.

Hunters and anglers bought licenses, and potential employees stopped by the career booth to talk with Bureau of Human Resources staff about careers with DNR.



Gary Vander Wyst, area forestry staff specialist from Park Falls, talked about forestry in Wisconsin with fair goers of all ages."

WDNR Photo

Visitors of all ages tested their knowledge of Wisconsin's two great lakes, our trees and animals found here. There was much interest in the Division of Forestry's exhibits highlighting invasive plant species.

Also popular was the large state map illustrating all the state parks, forests and wildlife areas. Visitors added their "I've been here" markers to show the places they've visited and discovered where they might like to go next.

A hearty "congratulations" to all programs and staffs that made the 2010 DNR State Fair exhibit a resounding success.

Footnote: *Kathleen Wolski is an outreach coordinator in the Office of Communication.*



End of game bird brood observations brings request for reports

By: Brian Dhuey, Bureau of Science Services

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The end of the 10-week game bird brood observation period was Saturday, August 21, and the Bureau of Science Services is waiting to hear about any ring-necked pheasant, ruffed grouse, turkey, bobwhite quail, gray partridge, prairie chicken or sharp-tailed grouse broods spotted during staff field work this summer. Results from the survey provide the Wildlife Management program with valuable information it uses to make predictions about the upcoming small game hunting seasons. Science Services expects to publish its preliminary report on observations in early September, so reports are needed on or before September 1.



Trempealeau County turkey hatch.

Photo by Mark Lemke

Look for the final report in April at the "Wildlife Surveys and Report" link on the ["Wisconsin Wildlife Reports"](#) website. DNR personnel have conducted this survey for over 25 years. It provides long-term indices to game bird and mammalian abundance and distribution in the state.

Record your observations using the ["Ten-Week Brood Observation Report."](#) Complete all three pages of the form, moving between pages by using the "next page"/"previous page" buttons found at the top of the form. When you're through filling out the form, either print and mail it to me, Brian Dhuey, SS/SOC, 2801 Progress Ave., Madison, WI 53716 or click the "Mail" button to email it to me. Be sure to refer to your tally sheet when filling out either of the reporting forms.

While the ten-week brood observation period has closed, Science Services encourages anyone recording deer observations to report them using the ["Summer Deer Observations"](#) form.

If you have questions about filling out either of the electronic forms or the ten-week brood or summer deer survey, call me at (608)221-6342.

Footnote: *Brian Dhuey is a research scientist in the Wildlife and Forestry Research Section.*



One-on-one support of schools begins with Madison's Toki Middle School

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Supply drive kicks off partnership hoped to be model statewide

DNR staff has provided K-12 (kindergarten through 12th grade) environmental and natural resources education for decades. So, when the Foundation for the Madison Public Schools asked the department if it was interested in the ["Adopt-a-School Program,"](#) it was a natural fit. After considering the needs of three middle schools, the department chose Toki Middle School on the city's west side and kicked off the effort with a school supply drive in the central office and South Central Region.

In announcing the decision in a letter to DNR employees, Secretary Matt Frank referred to it as "part of the youth initiative we began during Earth Week." He views the partnership with Toki as a model that can be used by the department with other schools around the state.



Elizabeth Kluesner (left) coordinated DNR's Toki School supply drive and joined principal Nicole Schaefer (right) in filling backpacks with donated items. In the background, Kluesner's daughter Katherine helped organize supplies.

WDNR Photo

"It's my hope that this model can not only help the kids at Toki, but also test potential ways that we can enhance the effects of the time that our staff spends in schools and with youth across the state."

Collection barrels were set out and school supply lists hung in GEF 2 and the South Central Region headquarters, between August 2 and August 17. Included in the 27 different types of school supplies and the more than 1,300 pieces collected were 106 calculators, sure to be put to good use by the students at Toki.

Elizabeth Kluesner, DNR's "Nature is Our Business" project coordinator, explained that after looking at the needs of three Madison schools, focusing on their student populations and community support, the department chose Toki because of its demographics, its students' challenges with science, and the heavy emphasis placed on science at the high school that Toki students will some day attend. Nearly half of the school's 538 sixth through eighth graders qualify for free or reduced-cost lunches.

To determine how the department can further help Toki students and staff, Secretary Frank sent out a request to central office and SCR headquarters employees to complete an ["Adopt-a-School Volunteer Questionnaire"](#) identifying "areas where we can best build our partnership with Toki Middle School." Analysis of the results will match activities with employees willing to volunteer to help with them.

Frank also encourages all DNR employees to spend up to eight hours each year working with "schools or young people on outdoor and environmental education."

"Adopt-a-School Program" meshes with DNR's educational programs

DNR education staff provides classroom resources and offers professional development in environmental education to teachers throughout Wisconsin. "We've offered to conduct in-service programs for Toki teachers. We can bring Project WILD, Project WET and Project Learning Tree to the teachers at Toki along with our air and waste/recycling teaching activities," said Carrie Morgan an educator in the Office of Communication and one of the group that toured the three Madison Middle Schools.



Toki principal Nicole Schaefer (left) and DNR CAES administrator Carrie Mickelson took a break from the task of sorting school supplies.

WDNR Photo

"These programs are not just for the science teacher, but for the language arts, social studies, health and art teachers as well—integrating environmental education throughout the curriculum.

"I also see great opportunities for career education for the students. And, I'm hoping the students and teachers at Toki will be interested in participating in the Green and Healthy School program sponsored by DNR and the Department of Public Instruction," Morgan added.

Secretary Frank to become acquainted with Toki next month

The Secretary will give of his time on October 19 to participate in the Foundation for Madison School's "Principal for a Day" program. To personally get to know Toki students and their school, he'll shadow Principal Nicole Schaefer.

"This Adopt-A-School model leads to a structured partnership between an organization and a school. One goal of the program is to forge partnerships with economically disadvantaged kids to improve students' achievement," said Frank. "I believe that the dedicated staff here at DNR is a good match for this goal--and can build in the added benefits of getting youth outdoors as we develop our partnership."

If you'd like to learn more about how to become a part of the "Adopt-a-School Program,"

email [Elizabeth Kluesner](mailto:Elizabeth.Kluesner@dnr.wisconsin.gov) or call her at (608)266-1648.



Horicon Marsh 2010-2011 speakers' series begins September 1

By: Liz Herzmann, Horicon Marsh

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As part of its education program, the [Horicon Marsh International Education Center](#) is continuing its popular guest speaker program, running from fall 2010 through spring 2011. These presentations provide programs on a wide range of natural resource and environmental topics of interest to the public.

Kicking off the 2010-2011 lecture series on Wednesday, September 1, will be Horicon wildlife biologist **Brenda Kelly**. She'll update the audience on wildlife staff's activities during this year. Those attending will learn about Horicon Marsh's water level management, prescribed burns, and wildlife and vegetation surveys.



DNR research scientist Lisa Hartman, with turkey vulture "Uncle Butzie," will join fellow scientist Mike Mossman for the October 6 presentation on turkey vultures.

WDNR Photo

All lectures are on the first Wednesday of the month and begin at 7 p.m. Each lecture will be held in the education center's auditorium, accessible via the lower entrance. The center is located between the cities of Horicon and Mayville on Hwy. 28. Check out "[Horicon Marsh Maps](#)" online.

Following is the full schedule of 2010-2011 speakers and topics:

- **September 1, 2010:** DNR wildlife biologist Brenda Kelly on "Horicon Marsh management"
- **October 6, 2010:** Wildlife biologists **Mike Mossman** and **Lisa Hartman** on "Turkey vultures" (with live turkey vulture)
- **November 3, 2010:** Founders of Bat Conservation of Wisconsin Ken and Barb Bowman on "Bats of Wisconsin" (with live bats)
- **December 1, 2010:** "Outdoor Wisconsin" TV show's Dan Small and founder of the Lake Delton Fisheries Restoration Project Ben Hobbins on the "Lake Delton Project"
- **January 5, 2011:** Master designer Shannon Barniskis on "Creating a Bird Friendly Garden"
- **February 2, 2011:** DNR environmental enforcement specialist **Pam Kober** on "Making the Connection, Environmental Protection and the Public Health"
- **March 2, 2011:** DNR assistant bear biologist **Linda Oliver** on "Black bear in Wisconsin"

• **April 6, 2011:** Wisconsin Geocaching Association member Cary Kaczik with “An Introduction to Geocaching”

Footnote: *Liz Herzmann is an assistant naturalist at the Horicon Marsh International Education Center.*



Urban youth Leadership Academy pilot leads to mentoring at State Fair

By: Kathleen Wolski, Office of Communication

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Students gain experience with DNR careers by working with agency staff

This pilot was conceived during my participation in DNR’s 2009-10 Leadership Academy (LA) and executed as my LA project. I wanted to expose urban teens to the many different programs and careers in our agency and the good work we do for the natural resources and the environment. The program exhibits at our Natural Resources Park during the State Fair seemed like a fun and interesting introduction for these young people.

I recruited ten Milwaukee area high school students to work side-by-side with program staff at their displays. Each student committed to attend the program for six hours a day for a minimum of four days. Many of the students opted to attend more than the minimum required and, by all accounts, found their experiences to be interesting and the time they spent worthwhile.

“I like how I get to learn new things that I never experienced before,” Breanna Cox, 16, told a reporter. To read more about the teen volunteers’ involvement, go to **Milwaukee Magazine’s** “News Buzz” story ["Getting smarter at the State Fair."](#)

Take a look at Milwaukee area students having fun and learning about DNR jobs in this ["Urban Youth Career"](#) slideshow.

A big **“thank you”** to all the programs and staff that mentored these students. All of the students greatly appreciated your kindness and the time you took to share your expertise.

Footnote: *Kathleen Wolski is an outreach coordinator in the Office of Communication.*



Peninsula State Park hosts “Talking Tombstones” at Blossomburg Cemetery

By: Tom Turner, Northeast Region

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With a tip of the hat and a glance back to the famous 1939 Pulitzer prize-winning play “Our Town” by Thornton Wilder, Peninsula State Park hosted a similar event titled “Talking Tombstones” in late July and early August. The public, along with “others,” was cordially invited to “drop in” at any time.



Peninsula State Park volunteer Barbara Southwell played the role of Julia Duclon for visitors of all forms when "Talking Tombstones" revealed the past lives of the residents of the Blossomburg Cemetery.

WDNR Photo

Wilder's third act takes place in a cemetery near the mythical town of Grover's Corners. "Talking Tombstones" takes place at the very real Blossomburg Cemetery in Peninsula State Park.

Like Wilder's play, the spirits of the deceased take human form to allow playgoers to meet actual characters from the park's past including -- Dr. Sneeberger, Vida Weborg and Gertrude Howe -- all of who claim Blossomburg as their final resting place.

One of "Our Town's" main characters, Emile, dies in childbirth and, after internment, her ghost learns it is possible to re-live parts of her past life. Emily returns to Earth to re-live just one day, her 12th birthday, and realizes how much life should be valued, "every, every minute." Poignantly, she asks the play's stage manager whether anyone realizes life while they live it and is told, "No. The saints and poets, maybe--they do some."

Kathleen Harris, a park naturalist/educator, is the person behind this true-to-life interpretative program, which is presented by the Peninsula staff and volunteers.

Footnote: *Tom Turner is the public affairs manager for the Northeast Region.*



[Opening day of museum deer hunting exhibit one month away](#)

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As fall approaches, the [Oshkosh Public Museum](#) is gearing up for its new sporting exhibit, "Deer Hunting: Wisconsin's Autumn Tradition." The exhibit explores the rich history and deep tradition of Wisconsin deer hunting and will be open from September 25, 2010 through January 30, 2011.

“Deer Hunting: Wisconsin’s Autumn Tradition” takes an in-depth look at the history, nature and future of the sport of white-tailed deer hunting and explores the heady chronicle of Wisconsin deer camps, hunting tales, trophy bucks and favorite weapons.

The deer hunting exhibit will mix history and tradition to capture the thrill of the hunt. From prehistoric times to the present, “Deer Hunting” takes a detailed look at hunting trends and techniques throughout the years. The exhibit explores the environmental and economic significance that the white-tailed deer and the sport of hunting have on Wisconsin, and tackles topics such as the rise of bow hunting and the recent growth of the number of women in the sport.



Borrowed from the Oshkosh Public Museum’s website, this photo of a buck shows its antler velvet, a highly-vascular skin that supplies oxygen and nutrients to the bone as it grows. (Source: “Wikipedia”).

Visitors to this fall show also can set their sights on classic guns, hunting artifacts and stunning wildlife. Interactive displays will invite visitors to experience wildlife conservation and hunting techniques first-hand.

Weekend programming during “Deer Hunting” will explore a variety of hunting and conservation topics. Broad topics and interactive displays and demonstrations will make the exhibit and weekend programs great for the whole family.

An original exhibit designed exclusively by the Oshkosh Public Museum, it’s the first to offer a complete look at the history and tradition of Wisconsin’s favorite fall-time sport and is a “must-see” for all avid hunters and outdoor enthusiasts. The museum invites hunters to submit pictures by September 18 of their deer camps for possible inclusion in the exhibit. Both historic and present day images are needed. To include a photo in the exhibit, either drop off images or CDs at the Oshkosh Public Museum or mail them to 1331 Algoma Blvd., Oshkosh, WI 54901. Email questions about photo submissions to museum curator [Deb Daubert](#) or call her at (920) 236-5767.

Learn more about the Oshkosh Public Museum

The Oshkosh Public Museum, which attracts visitors from across the state and beyond, is the second-oldest public museum in Wisconsin. The museum houses more than 250,000 artifacts and historical documents representing the Lake Winnebago Region, and incorporates ten permanent exhibit displays.

The museum is housed in the historic 1908 Sawyer Home, designed by notable Oshkosh architect William Waters. The museum supports the city's longstanding tradition of preserving heritage and history, and serves as a historical and cultural anchor for the nearly 600,000 residents of Wisconsin's Lake Winnebago region. Check the museum's "[Exhibitions](#)" webpage in early fall for a complete listing of weekend lectures, demonstrations and special events. You'll also want to take a look at "[Driving Directions, Hours and Admission](#)" for the museum or call (920) 236-5799 before heading out.



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