

## Mike Spors

Mike Spors worked for the Wisconsin DNR as a Conservation Warden from 1979 to 2004. Mike had recruit warden training assignments in Janesville, Luck, Chilton, Rhinelander, and Kenosha. He was permanently assigned to Campbellport, in Fond du Lac County in 1980. In 1983 Mike transferred to LaCrosse, and in 1986 accepted a promotion to Warden Supervisor at Horicon. Over nearly 14 years at various times depending on existing district and/or regional organization, Mike supervised field wardens in Dodge, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Marquette, Columbia and Sauk Counties. Mike completed Northwestern University Traffic Institute's School of Police Staff and Command in 1995 where he wrote a thesis on "Community Wardening". This became the basis for instructing new and existing wardens in the philosophy of engaging the community as partners in the efforts of resource protection and education.



Mike attended the very first Waterfowl Identification and Enforcement Clinic (Duck Marshal School) in 1985 and then took the reins on organizing and directing the annual event from 1986 on. All recruit wardens and most field and supervisory wardens completed this one-week training. The Wisconsin course became the model for the Mississippi Flyway and was later adopted by states from other flyways as well. Mike served on the Mississippi Flyway Law Enforcement Committee from 1990 to 1999, and also was the Department Liaison to the Migratory Committee of the Conservation Congress for a portion of that time period.

In 1999 Mike became the Recruit Warden Supervisor for the Warden Training Academy at Ft. McCoy (Sparta,) the position he held until his 2004 retirement from state service. Mike organized and directed academy training and served as recruit supervisor during new wardens' field training assignments. Mike assisted with Field Training Officer (FTO) training and helped develop a new recruit warden evaluation process known as Daily Observation Reports (DOR's.) DOR's allowed daily observations and evaluations of a recruit's work performance by FTO's and were reviewed weekly by area warden supervisors, as well as the recruit supervisor and law enforcement training director.

Mike is originally from Melrose in southwestern Jackson County, but grew up in the Janesville area from age eleven on. He graduated from Janesville Parker High School in 1970 and the University of Wisconsin - Madison in 1975 with a degree on Biological Aspects of Conservation. His first job out of college was as Parks and Recreation Administrator for Jackson County; running the Lake Arbutus campgrounds in the summer and administering (i.e. grooming) the snowmobile trail system in the winter. Mike also was a police officer in Viroqua for six months immediately preceding being hired by the DNR.

Mike married his wife, Patricia (Pat) in 1973 and they will celebrate 39 years in August. Pat is a retired early childhood-exceptional educational needs teacher. They raised two children - Jared and Melissa. They have three grandchildren - Caden, Josie and Megan.



Son-in-law Dave Hubbard, daughter Melissa, Pat and Mike



Christmas  
December 2011

Travel to spend time with family in Randolph and Janesville occupies a good deal of Mike and Pat's time. Since retirement, they have been fortunate to visit England, Scotland and Israel. Mike is traveling to Germany to visit his brother Chris in July. Mike's dad will be his traveling companion this time.



London "Bobby", near Buckingham Palace, 2009



On Loch Ness, northern Scotland , 2009



Overlooking Jerusalem in Israel, 2011

In 2004, Mike was offered a position with Whitetails Unlimited as Field Director for southwestern Wisconsin. This offer resulted in an early retirement from DNR and three years of full-time fundraising efforts for WTU. In January 2007 Mike retired from full-time work with Whitetails, but stays on as their National Conservation Representative (very part-time.) Mike serves as liaison to the National Shooting Sports Foundation and the American Wildlife Conservation Partners. It affords some very nice travel within the US and allows Mike to stay involved with national conservation issues, especially the future of hunting and the shooting sports.

Mike enjoys hunting (especially deer and turkey) and fishing. He has been fortunate to make a few trips out of state for hunting in North and South Dakota and Oklahoma; and fishing in Canada, South Dakota and on Lake Erie. But he prefers spending time on his family-owned property near Melrose and on the adjacent Black River. Mike was an accomplished softball player in his day, but gave up the highly

competitive stuff about 15 years ago. Today he is happy dabbling (more slowly) in a less intense local church softball league.



Rabbit hunting in Scotland 2009 (note silencer on .22), 24 pound gobbler harvested May 16, 2012, South Dakota 2007, one limit

Mike has had a long time love affair with knives and other sharpened, tempered steel. What began as a hobby about 25 years ago turned into more of an obsession and now a (very) small retirement business. Mike has been traveling to knife shows around the country for several years, but now is doing more of them, as well as a number of area gun shows. Coulee Country Cutlery may be found at show tables in Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Tennessee and Georgia. Mike also maintains a booth at Highway 14 Antiques near Viroqua, Mike's collection of antique and vintage pocketknives, sheath knives, straight razors, strops, hones, shaving mugs, etc. now numbers about 3500 pieces. If you are in need of an old knife or razor, Mike is the guy to call. If he don't have it, he knows where to get it.