

# DNR eDigest

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The Bureau of Education and Information's goal is to publish "The E-Digest" bi-weekly on paydays. The bureau will publish additional issues, as needed. Contact "E-Digest" editor [Diane.Brinson@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Diane.Brinson@wisconsin.gov) or at 608/266-5215 to submit stories, story ideas and photos that communicate internally the department's work, policies and issues that matter to DNR employees.

February 12, 2009

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## Submit nominations for second year of Secretary's PRIDE Awards

Secretary **Matt Frank** is seeking nominations for the second annual "Secretary's PRIDE Awards," designed to highlight the everyday accomplishments of DNR employees. Co-workers are able to nominate their colleagues, and a review panel of their peers will determine award winners. Every nominee will receive recognition for their outstanding contributions toward achieving the DNR's mission.

Employees may nominate more than one individual or team for recognition in any of the categories described below. If you submit a nomination, specify the one category most appropriate for recognizing the individual or the team.

Nominate individuals or teams that qualify under the five categories of recognition:

- **Partnership:** *Partnership Spirit Award* recognizes an individual's exceptional efforts to achieve the DNR's mission through the development and enhancement of internal or external partnerships.

- **Resource:** *Sustained Achievement Award* recognizes an individual for long-term, sustained accomplishments, and/or for leaving a special legacy of such value that they have become a DNR “resource.”
- **Individual:** *Individual Achievement Award* recognizes an individual for their efforts to further the DNR’s mission through innovation, efficiency, quality of work or working environment.
- **Dream Team:** *Dream Team Award* recognizes a work team, permanent or ad hoc, for work that furthers DNR’s mission through innovation, efficiency, quality of work or working environment.
- **Excellence:** *Leadership Excellence Award* recognizes an individual for their leadership role in furthering the DNR’s mission. Excellence is expressed in areas such as big-picture thinking, communicating a vision, strategic thinking, effective decisionmaking, building trust, managing conflict, promoting diversity, fostering innovation and advocating change.

You’ll find information on the nomination process and the nomination form on the [“Secretary’s PRIDE Award”](#) web page or in the awards section of the “Secretary’s Office” page on “MyDNR.” **Nominations are due by Tuesday, March 31.** The award winner in each category will be invited to a special recognition ceremony hosted by Sec. Frank during Employee Recognition Week. Watch the “DNR Digest” for information on the date, time and location of the PRIDE Awards ceremony.

  
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## **Tomorrow’s GIS Day Expo venue is the State Capitol**

*By: Kenny Parsons, Bureau of Technology Services*

On February 13, the Wisconsin [State GIS \(Geographic Information Systems\) Coordination Group \(SAGIC\)](#) will sponsor its first GIS Day Expo at the State Capitol building, in Madison.



The author, Kenny Parsons, staffed the SAGIC exhibit in November 2007.  
WDNR Photo

All DNR employees are invited to the GIS Day Expo to learn more about how geospatial technologies can be used to further state government business and public awareness. The primary focus of this year's expo will be Homeland Security and Emergency Response activities, e.g. spring 2008 floods. For the complete program for "Maps Matter: Working Together for Wisconsin," click on "[Geographic Information Systems \(GIS\) Day.](#)"

Activities at this GIS event will include short presentations, web mapping demonstrations and opportunities to ask questions. Some of DNR's programs will be presenting and providing demonstrations. We're expecting state legislators, legislator's aides, and a variety of staff from many other state agencies to participate in the GIS Day Expo activities.

The DNR is one of the 14 members of the [State Agency Geographic Information Coordination Team.](#)

The GIS Day Expo will run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in room 412E of the Capitol. Again, see "[Geographic Information Systems \(GIS\) Day](#)" for details on the location and a schedule of activities.

**Footnote:** *Kenny Parsons is chief of the DNR's GIS Services Section.*

  
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## **Leave your mark on Internet homepage, enter redesign competition**

*You don't have to be a graphic designer or a web master to compete*

On February 11, Customer Assistance and Employee Services administrator **Vance Rayburn** called upon everyone in the agency to be creative and submit new designs for the major undertaking to redesign the 'dnr.wi.gov' "[DNR Home](#)" page. Whether you submit your ideas in a PDF file, on a poster board or on a dinner napkin, you can help put a new face on the department's Internet presence.

"It's been a long time since our external website's design has been updated and it's time for a change," wrote Rayburn. **The deadline for the Design Competition is noon on Tuesday, February 24.**

Secretary **Matt Frank** has called for a new website at 'dnr.wi.gov' that will provide a user-friendly, easily navigable and dynamic service based on the following priorities:

- Provide opportunity to citizens of all ages to connect to the great outdoors and all forms of outdoor recreation;
- Promote citizen participation in conservation and environmental stewardship;
- Provide information regarding DNR initiatives and strategic direction, as well as updates regarding ongoing activities;
- Provide excellent customer service to citizens and businesses seeking or buying licenses, permits or registrations;
- Build and promote partnerships between the DNR and the public;
- Establish the DNR as a leader and partner in sustainable and green economic growth and development in Wisconsin;
- Foster an appreciation for the beauty of Wisconsin's natural resources and their importance to our quality of life, recreation and economy.

The August 14, 2008 *Digest* story [“Secretary sets web as a priority for the department”](#) explains the goals of the redesign project. Volunteers from around the agency became the Web Technical Team.

The Web Steering Team, with representatives from all divisions, is seeking innovative input from department employees who hear feedback from their external customers using the department's website and the programs' web pages. Who better to offer fresh ideas than those within the agency most familiar with the current level of efficiency and effectiveness of the site?

Go to [“Design Competition Details”](#) to get all of the details on the competition's purpose, entry requirements, categories and judging criteria. You may win a prize for your effort. If you have questions about the competition, email contest administrator [Sue Acre](#) or call her at (608)267-7613.

  
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## **Fisheries Management recognizes outstanding work by staff**

*By: Lisa Gaumnitz, Office of Communication*

The Bureau of Fisheries Management at its statewide meeting in the Wisconsin Dells on January 21 awarded longtime Wild Rose State Fish Hatchery supervisor **Steve Fajfer** the 2009 Fisheries Management Recognition Award for his critical leadership in the \$36-million renovation of the century-old hatchery and running the new coldwater facilities while still producing fish in the old facilities.

Fajfer started with the DNR in 1980 and it was his 1989 report detailing the aging hatchery's deteriorating facilities that launched the challenge to upgrade Wild Rose. The

grand opening for the new coldwater facilities was in August 2008 and construction is now underway on new facilities to raise musky, walleye and other coolwater species.



Steve Fajfer received this Fisheries Management Award from bureau director Mike Staggs for his leadership in upgrading the Wild Rose hatchery.

WDNR Photo

When construction of new coldwater facilities began in 2006, Fajfer's workload increased and became more complex as he dealt with construction issues and the emergence of VHS fish disease.

"Steve has displayed outstanding leadership for his staff, taking them (staff) through the disruptions of construction, displacement of their offices, addition of a visitor center and the intense high-tech training on the new systems," reads the nomination. "Steve and his staff have approached this as an adventure that will bring great rewards to stabilize efficient production and provide outstanding fishing for the citizens of Wisconsin."

Read what Fajfer had to say about the hatchery renovation in the August 2009 "Digest" story ["Wild Rose hatchery opening signals greater fishing opportunities."](#) Then listen to a video about the grand opening and learn more about this ongoing project at ["Digging for Fish: Renovating Wild Rose Hatchery for the Future."](#)

Other nominees in this category were fish biologists **Tim Larson** (South Central Region), **Doug Welch** (Southeast Region), **Jeff Janvrin** (West Central Region) and **Heath Benike** (Northern Region).

### **Eagle fisheries technician Rick Randall received kudos**

Southeast Region fisheries technician **Rick Randall**, Eagle, received a 2009 Fisheries Management Recognition Award for his instrumental roles in helping the Root River Steelhead Facility recover from summer flooding and in improving game fishing and water quality on Racine's Eagle Lake.



Bureau director Mike Staggs presented the Fisheries Management Award to Rick Randall for his role in improving the fisheries of southeast Wisconsin.  
WDNR Photo

Randall started with the department in 1980 and has been a fisheries technician at Eagle since 1984. He is noted for logging in excess of 450,000 accident-free miles transporting fish from state hatcheries for stocking into Lake Michigan, inland lakes and streams, and urban fishing waters.

He also plays a critical role in coordinating and training the fish crews who use bulldozers and other heavy equipment to improve fish habitat. Randall also led crews helping with recovery of the Root River Steelhead Facility from a massive pile up of logs and debris left by the 500-year-flood in June 2008.

The award recognized Randall for playing a crucial role in planning and executing the Eagle Lake bio-manipulation project, which employed rotenone to kill the overabundant pan fish population that was contributing to water quality problems. Staff expects to stock the lake this spring.

Other nominees in the “technical award” category were fisheries technicians **Doug Lubke** (South Central Region), **Eric Kramer** (West Central Region), **Cliff Sebero** (Northeast Region) and **Cris Sand** (Northern Region).

### **Fisheries Management Board Award goes to Al Kaas**

**Al Kaas**, who coordinates the state hatchery system, received the 2009 Fisheries Management Board Award for his leadership in a \$36-million project to renovate the state’s workhorse hatchery at Wild Rose, and for his innovations in increasing the hatchery system’s operations and efficiency.

The leaders of DNR’s fisheries program awarded special recognition to Kaas.



Al Kaas accepted the special Fisheries Management Board Award in recognition of his innovative management of the program's systems and his role in renovating the Wild Rose hatchery facilities. WDNR Photo

Kaas joined DNR in 1983 and is the statewide fish propagation coordinator, overseeing Wisconsin's 13 hatcheries and rearing stations, three Great Lakes anadromous egg collection weirs and numerous outlying rearing ponds.

"Seldom has a single individual on our staff had the kind of influence and effectiveness in changing and updating our operations," reads his nomination. "His view for what could be created at Wild Rose and his vision of including hatchery staff in all aspects from the initial planning of the facility all the way through final construction led to the creation of a state-of-the-art facility that will be the backbone of our Lake Michigan program."

Kaas was also noted for engineering great strides in upgrading computer connections for the hatcheries; developing and using statewide databases for running the hatcheries; and for tracking the production plan, fish food orders and other aspects of hatchery management.

Read more about innovation at Wisconsin's hatchery system in the *Natural Resources Magazine's* ["Taking Stock of State Hatcheries."](#)

Four former DNR fisheries staff members received Career Achievement Awards for their longtime contributions to improving fishing in the state. Honored were **Dan Folz** and **Tom Thuemler**, longtime fish biologists stationed in Oshkosh and Marinette, respectively; **Gordy Priegel**, fish supervisor at Fitchburg; and **Lloyd "Duke" Andrews**, fish supervisor out of Woodruff.

**Footnote:** *Lisa Gaumnitz is the public affairs manager for the Water Division.*

  
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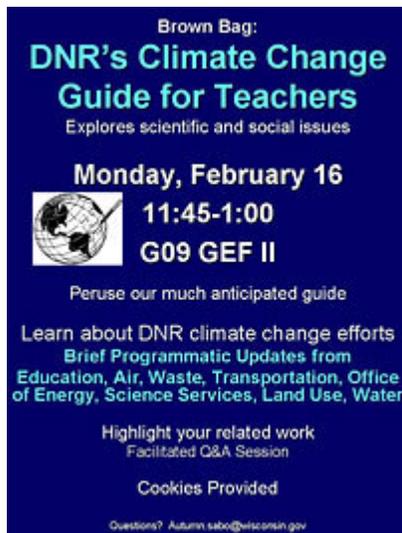
**Brown bag to celebrate climate change work and new teachers' guide**

*By: Autumn Sabo, Bureau of Education and Information*

The Bureau of Education and Information (EI) invites employees to attend a brown bag seminar on DNR's climate change efforts, at which time the bureau will unveil the department's new climate change guide for high school teachers, programs will brief participants on their climate change efforts, and those attending will participate in a facilitated discussion. The seminar will be on Monday, February 16, from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. in room G09, GEF 2 in Madison.

### **“Climate Change: A Wisconsin Activity Guide” hot off the presses**

The recently-printed “Climate Change: A Wisconsin Activity Guide” will provide teachers of grades seven through 12 and their students a better understanding of the complexities of climate change.



EI is sending out the guide to a waiting list of Wisconsin middle school and high school teachers. Created with a grant from the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board, the beautifully-illustrated guide includes Wisconsin-centric activities relevant to classes in the arts, language arts, social studies, environmental education, science and math.

Those attending the brown bag can peruse the guide or pick up a free copy to give to their family's favorite teacher. Educators also can order guides by emailing their requests to [EI's air education staff](#).

### **Programs to share and discuss DNR's climate change work**

Brown bag participants also will hear brief programmatic updates about DNR's climate change efforts and have the opportunity to join in a facilitated discussion. Among those speaking will be:

- **Caroline Garber**, chief of the Environmental Analysis and Outreach Section, and **Ed**

**Jepsen**, air management specialist, both in the Bureau of Air Management

- **Brad Wolbert**, hydrogeologist, Bureau of Waste Management
- **Cameron Bump**, environmental review and analysis specialist, Office of Energy
- **Dave Webb**, chief of the Environmental Science Services Section, Bureau of Science Services
- **Sally Kefer**, Land Use team leader, Bureau of Science Services
- **Tim Asplund**, water resources management specialist, Bureau of Watershed Management
- **Mary Hamel** and **Autumn Sabo**, natural resources educators, Bureau of Education and Information

This seminar also will allow those attending an opportunity to talk about any other climate change efforts in the department, offer suggestions for future work, and voice opinions on initiating a DNR discussion group about global warming using a course book from “Sustain Dane.”

If you have any questions about the teachers’ guide or the brown bag seminar, email [Autumn Sabo](#), or call (608) 266-2711.

**Footnote:** *Autumn Sabo is an air quality educator in the Bureau of Education and Information.*

  
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## **Led by secretary, DNR stands out at national Pheasant Fest**

*By: Joanne M. Haas, Office of Communication*

The dogs may have lured them in, but the fest kept them. And, the DNR’s leaders and staff had a lot to do with it.

When the much-anticipated National Pheasant Fest and Convention arrived in Madison on Friday afternoon, February 6 for its inaugural appearance, more than 1,000 men, women and children jammed the lobby at the Alliant Energy Center’s Exhibition Hall. It was DNR executive assistant **Mary Ellen Vollbrecht** , accompanied by her German Wirehaired Pointer Rika, who welcomed the crowd, cut the official opening ribbon and joined the lead of the 34 breed sporting dog parade.



Executive assistant Mary Ellen Vollbrecht visited with those staffing the wildlife exhibit at Pheasant Fest: ((left to right) wildlife technician Jim Wipperfurth, Poynette; warden supervisor Dave Holmes, also in Poynette; and Ben Mott, deputy water guard warden, Wisconsin Rapids.  
WDNR Photo

Pheasants Forever staffers say the dogs are nearly the biggest attraction for the event, now in its fifth year. But, it was exhibits such as the DNR's rustic cabin-like booth staffed all weekend by wildlife management experts and conservation wardens that contributed to making the fest and convention fun and educational for all ages.

Another wildly popular booth, among the more than 600 exhibits, was staffed by DNR conservation wardens and offered hunters of all ages--but mostly kids--a chance to learn how to take aim and bag a pheasant in a virtual outdoor setting. Wardens provided expert and friendly instruction to those who stood at the line, aiming the firearm at the pheasants flying everywhere on the screen.

DNR Secretary **Matt Frank** also made a couple of appearances at the three-day fest, including being a guest on an early Saturday morning broadcast on the live "Big Wild" radio show, aired from the exhibition hall and hosted by Dan "Gundy" Gunderson and Marty "Big Red" Kay. Chief warden **Randy Stark** also was a guest on the morning broadcast.



Sec. Matt Frank was an early Saturday morning guest on the live broadcast of the Big Wild radio show. He joined Anthony Hauck of Pheasants Forever, and show hosts Dan "Gundy" Gunderson (not visible) and Marty "Big Red" Kay.  
WDNR Photo

While on the air, Sec. Frank lauded Pheasants Forever for their 20 years of habitat and conservation work in Wisconsin and elsewhere, discussing how increasing the value of agricultural and forest areas helps prevent fragmentation of lands. He told listeners he leads an agency dedicated to public service and to keeping Wisconsin the special place

that it is.

Frank was a featured speaker at Pheasant Fest's first-ever Renewable Energy and Wildlife Habitat Forum, which also was mentioned in a newspaper published in Germany. Presented by Alliant Energy, the 90-minute seminar focused on the future of renewable energy and wildlife habitat. Topics included the possibility of green jobs as Wisconsin looks at renewable fuels, biomass, Agrecol, the Farm Bill, Conservation Reserve Program and more.

Pheasants Forever's final attendance tally was 20,255, with more than 1,100 joining the organization. More than 500 landowners visited the fest's Habitat Help room, where they viewed tips for managing about 20,000 habitat areas.

Organizers of Pheasant Fest said the event would return to Madison in the coming years. Next year's fest returns to neighboring Iowa.

**Footnote:** *Joanne M. Haas is a public affairs manager working with the Division of Enforcement.*



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## **DNR recognizes community coalition staffer for venison donations**

*By: Greg Matthews, South Central Region*

Michelle Friedrich, of the Southwest Community Action Coalition in Dodgeville, recently received a "Special Service Award" from the Bureau of Wildlife Management for her outstanding work in getting venison to needy families.

The donation program, which ran from September 2008 into early January 2009 during the archery and gun deer seasons in the Chronic Wasting Disease Management Zone (CWD-MZ), distributed over 54,000 pounds of venison to over 25 food pantries in 11 southern Wisconsin counties.

In cooperation with the DNR, Friedrich helps run the non-profit "Target Hunger" deer donation program, which involves southern Wisconsin Community Action Programs, food pantries and meat processors.



Regional wildlife management supervisor Eric Lobner nominated Michelle Friedrich for, and then presented her with, the Special Service Award.  
WDNR Photo

These organizations comprise the Target Hunger Team, which assisted deer hunters in donating 1,360 deer to area food pantries to help feed families experiencing financial hardship. Hunters donated almost twice the approximately 700 deer donated in 2007.

“Without her efforts, the venison donation program in the CWD Management Zone would not be a success,” noted **Eric Lobner**, wildlife supervisor for DNR’s South Central Region. Over a thousand hunters took the time to donate that extra deer for their hungry neighbors because of the positive, collaborative and aggressive ‘never-say-it-can’t-be-done’ attitude displayed by Michelle and a small group of individuals that were able to revitalize the program.”

Friedrich attended fundraisers, signed up butchers, and tracked the thousands of CWD test results so the meat could safely be released to food pantries. She also worked with a local veterinarian to provide lead screening of donated meat so it could be distributed as healthy food.

“She worked long hours both on the road attending meetings and standing on the cold, wind-blown expanse of the Barneveld registration station, helping load deer into trailers for transport to the butchers,” said Lobner.

“Literally hundreds of families in the southern part of Wisconsin will be able to enjoy fresh, lean venison that has been professionally processed and provided through the efforts of Michelle and Southwest Cap.”

The state departments of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, and Health and Family Services; local community and conservation organizations; and the outdoor media worked with the Target Hunger Team.

**Footnote:** *Greg Matthews is the public affairs manager for the South Central Region.*

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## Strawberry Creek renovation project recognizes Mark Opgenorth

“Mark Opgenorth still is inspiring people 15 months after he died on the job for the Department of Natural Resources,” began the February 1 Green Bay *Press-Gazette* story. Efforts are underway to honor and remember the late fisheries supervisor **Mark Opgenorth** through ongoing renovations to the Strawberry Creek salmon spawning facility in Sturgeon Bay.



Mark Opgenorth worked at the Strawberry Creek Spawning Facility in Sturgeon Bay.  
Photo courtesy of Green Bay Press-Gazette

Opgenorth, a 35-year veteran of the DNR’s fisheries program, died unexpectedly in October 2007 while doing a weekend site check on salmon broodfish held in the ponds at the C.D. "Buzz" Besadny Anadromous Fisheries facility near Kewaunee.

Following his death, fisheries employees and Opgenorth’s family heard from many who wanted to do something to remember him and his work. The Strawberry Creek Renovation Project gift account now receives contributions for that purpose.

Read more about Opgenorth’s legacy and various efforts to raise funds to further upgrade the Strawberry Creek spawning facility and educational displays in the *Press-Gazette's* [“DNR honoring long-time employee”](#) story.

  
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## Editor's Notes: Corrections to January 29 issue; news for retirees

By: Diane Brinson, Bureau of Education and Information

- I revised the January 29 *Digest* story "[Northern Region's John Olson honored with 2008 Wildlife Leadership Award.](#)" If you've already read this story, check out new paragraphs three through five.
- The "[Consider savings bonds in response to economic climate](#)" story provided the wrong phone number for contacting National Bonds and Trust. The correct toll free number is 1-(800)426-9314.
- DNR retirees in south central Wisconsin now have another option for receiving the *DNR Digest*. The South Central Wisconsin Association of Retired Conservationists (WARC) recently placed a link to the "[DNR eDigest](#)" on its website. Linda Meyer, retired DNR attorney and WARC president, has and will continue to forward the newsletter to many of the department's retirees via email.

  
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Produced by: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Communication and Education

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Last updated: 02/13/2009 13:12:05