

DNR eDigest

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[Previous E-Digests](#)

[Print This Page](#)

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 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.

March 26, 2009

In this E-Digest:

- [Deadline for PRIDE Awards nominations rapidly approaching](#)
- [GEF 2 doors to elevators unlocked; secure equipment and personal items](#)
- [Barnier cited for leadership in wildland fire management](#)
- [Google search engine will focus customers' information searches](#)
- [Employee Trust Funds surveying satisfaction with insurance](#)
- [Susan Sylvester chosen Michigan State's Outstanding Alumni](#)
- [Recognize fellow employees in special May "DNR Digest"](#)
- [Brown bag session a lesson on understanding your credit report](#)
- [Wildlife Society honors Buenzow for outstanding contributions](#)
- [Horicon Service Center returns to former location on March 31](#)
- [John Buss is Bowhunters Association's "Warden of the Year"](#)
- [2009 Statewide Arbor Day Poster Contest winners announced](#)
- [Wildlife Federation names Jim Horne 2008 "Warden of the Year"](#)
- [Forestry training put to the test with jobless landowner](#)
- [Retiree Niebauer returns to accept Fish and Wildlife honors](#)

 [Print](#)

Deadline for PRIDE Awards nominations rapidly approaching

It's not too late to submit nominations for Secretary **Matt Frank's** PRIDE Awards. The nomination period ends March 31.

To nominate a co-worker or team, take a few minutes to fill out the brief form on the ["Secretary's PRIDE Award"](#) webpage, found in the awards section of the "Secretary's Office" page on *"MyDNR."*

Award winners in each category will be invited to a special recognition ceremony hosted

by Sec. Frank during Employee Recognition Week in May.

There are still a few days left before nominations close--so get them in soon!

To read more about the PRIDE Awards, go to [“Submit nominations for second year of Secretary’s PRIDE Awards,”](#) published in the February 12 issue of the “DNR Digest.”


Top

 [Print](#)

GEF 2 doors to elevators unlocked; secure equipment and personal items

By: Kari Beetham, Division of Customer and Employee Services

Access to the GEF 2 building has changed. The doors to the first floor elevator lobby no longer are locked, allowing visitors access to all of the floors in the central office. As a precaution, employees are to take steps to assure that department equipment and personal items are secure at all times.

The department’s request to refill the visitor services desk position currently is with the Department of Administration (DOA). In the meantime, the interior double doors that open to the elevators are unlocked indefinitely because no one is on hand to assure visitors sign in, issue visitor nametags or direct the public to offices or conference rooms.

The doors on Main Street, Butler Street and the GEF 2/3 plaza remain locked for security purposes. Employees must continue to use their building access/ID cards to enter at these locations.

According to DNR Law Enforcement's Homeland Security coordinator **Bill Engfer**, the number of reports of thefts or strangers in GEF 2 has been down significantly since increased security was implemented last July.

Footnote: *Kari Beetham is administrative policy advisor for the CAES Division.*


Top

 [Print](#)

Barnier cited for leadership in wildland fire management

By: Blair Anderson, Bureau of Forest Protection

The Leadership Committee of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group recently recognized the exemplary leadership demonstrated by fire suppression specialist **Jim Barnier, Jr.** by awarding him the “Paul Gleason Lead by Example” award. Barnier is the first state employee to receive this award, which generally is bestowed upon individual federal employees and teams that demonstrate leadership in the field of wildland fire management.

Barnier, stationed in Wisconsin Dells, received this prestigious award for his outstanding demonstration of initiative and innovation in improving the system that provides information used to predict fire behavior, which assists firefighters in better preparing for burning conditions and ultimately protects them from potential harm.



Fire Management section chief Blair Anderson presented the Lead by Example award to Jim Barnier, who displayed it proudly.
WDNR Photo

The specific effort on Barnier’s part that drew attention to his leadership accomplishments pertained to rectifying a shortfall in fire weather information. Not one of his specific duties, he decided that the need was so great that he put in a great deal of extra time and energy to develop a new, innovative system that generated a new set of fire behavioral indicators using existing weather data sources.

Additionally, Barnier developed a web-based system that allows all Wisconsin field fire employees access to the newly-developed data. As a result, firefighters are better equipped to predict the burning conditions they’ll likely encounter on a given day.

Paul Gleason was a wildland firefighter in Southern California, whose career was exemplary as a student and teacher of firefighting and a leader of firefighters. After his death from cancer in 2002, the Wildlife Coordinating Group created the award to recognize those who reflect Gleason’s dedication and leadership.

Barnier is the first state firefighting professional to receive this award. He continues to set an example of excellence in the Wisconsin fire program, and his ongoing efforts continue to pay dividends, directly and indirectly, within and beyond Wisconsin.

 [Print](#)

Google search engine will focus customers' information searches

By: John Bushman, Bureau of Technology Services

Customers searching the DNR's Internet site soon will save on time and frustration as they seek information using "Google Search." No longer will they end up with research abstracts when they're looking for the opening day of fishing season .

A significant milestone along the route to a new and improved DNR website, the [Google Search Appliance \(GSA\)](#) is the nuts and bolts of the Google search engine--indexing and searching millions of documents.

The call center in the Bureau of Customer Service and Licensing will conduct a pilot of this new search tool as part of the initial testing of GSA. Its integrated hardware and software will make it easy for programs to set-up and maintain. This powerful, user-friendly search engine will be up and running on the external website in May.

Google Search will focus customers' information needs

Over the next month, the GSA Team will work with many of the agency's programs to optimize how our customers get the information they seek. Team members, in collaboration with program Internet managers, will first survey program staffs to determine who their customers are e.g. snowmobilers, hunters, forestland owners, industrial engineers, etc.

For each customer type identified, the team next will pinpoint the types of services customers request, and when they make those requests (e.g. most snowmobilers register their vehicles October through March). This data will help determine what information is displayed at the top of the search results list during a customer's word or topic search.

Members of the GSA Team are: **Margie Damgaard**, Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater; **John Bushman**, Bureau of Technology Services; **Jeff Margenau**, Bureau of Education and Communication; **Dennis Weise**, Bureau of Technology Services; **Drew Feldkirchner**, Bureau of Endangered Resources; **Bonnie Gruber**, Bureau of Parks and Recreation; **Chris Welch**, Bureau of Science Services; and **Kevin Wissink**, Bureau of Forestry Services.

Web Redesign Project moving along on schedule

The department is making real progress developing a new Internet website. Scheduled to be up and running by July 20, the external site will feature an updated look and exciting new tools to improve how we communicate with our customers.

For background information on the Web Redesign Project, read the February 26 "DNR

Digest” story [“Leave your mark on Internet homepage, enter redesign competition”](#) and the March 12 [“GovDelivery® allows public to subscribe to information service”](#) story.

Footnote: *John Bushman is an IT systems development consultant and co-leader of the Web Redesign Project.*


[Top](#)

 [Print](#)

Employee Trust Funds surveying satisfaction with insurance

By: Department of Employee Trust Funds

The Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) has contracted with Synovate to conduct a health insurance satisfaction survey of a sample of insured participants. The survey results will be published in the health plan report card included in the 2010 “It’s Your Choice” booklets and also will be considered during health plan premium negotiations.

ETF encourages employees contacted by Synovate to complete the survey. Synovate has randomly selected employees. Employees may not volunteer to participate in this study.

The randomly-selected employees will receive a pre-notification inviting them to complete the survey on the Internet. Employees for whom ETF has worksite e-mail addresses will be sent an invitation via e-mail in lieu of the mail invitation. Synovate will follow up with a mail version of the survey for non-respondents.

The Office of State Employment Relations (OSER) has approved the use of a limited amount of work time for employees to complete the survey during scheduled work hours, without loss of pay. Employees need to choose a time to complete the survey that doesn’t interfere with work duties. Any time an employee spends participating in the survey beyond scheduled work hours will be on the their own time. No overtime compensation is authorized. The survey should take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete.


[Top](#)

 [Print](#)

Susan Sylvester chosen Michigan State's Outstanding Alumni

By: Lisa Gaumnitz, Office of Communication

Susan Sylvester's passions for water and for introducing young people to its wonders

have brought her a pair of recent awards.

Sylvester, wastewater permits section chief, will receive the Michigan State University College of Natural Science (CNS) 2009 Outstanding Alumni award during an April 17 ceremony in East Lansing.



Susan Sylvester, pictured here with her daughter Michelle (Mikki), will add the Outstanding Alumni award to her display that already also includes the 2008 Rosemary Fleming Award.
WDNR Photo

Earlier this year, she received the 2008 Rosemary Fleming Award for fostering environmental stewardship in Girl Scouting. Sylvester has been a Girl Scout Troop Leader for over seven years for her daughter Mikki's Cadette Troop #216 and continues to provide environmental leadership to young women.

The Michigan State University CNS award recognizes alumni for outstanding professional achievement and support of the university or its College of Natural Science. Nominations are submitted by faculty, staff and alumni, with the college's alumni association board of directors selecting the recipient.

Read more about why MSU is honoring Sylvester with this award at the university's ["CNS Outstanding Alumni Award"](#) webpage.

Sylvester received a bachelor's degree in fisheries from MSU in 1976, and a master's degree in entomology in 1978. She joined the DNR in 1994 as the administrator of the Division of Environmental Quality, and in 1996 became the first administrator of the newly-reorganized Division of Water responsible for all water programs including fisheries, water quality, and drinking water and groundwater.

Sylvester served as Water Division administrator until 2003. In her role as wastewater permits section chief, she is responsible for wastewater permits issuance and enforcement including all databases for the watershed program and integration of this information.

Before joining DNR, Sylvester was a supervisor in the U.S. Environmental Protection

Agency's (EPA) Region 5 hazardous waste management program. She worked for the Michigan DNR from 1975 to 1981, going on from there to become director of Citizens for a Better Environment in Chicago until 1983. Sylvester then joined the EPA's Chicago regional office. In 1988, she became executive director of the Midwest Environmental Enforcement Association in Elgin, IL.

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


[Top](#)

 [Print](#)

Recognize fellow employees in special May “DNR Digest”

By: Diane Brinson, Bureau of Education and Information

I can't believe that March is almost over! Before we know it, the May 6 “State Employee Recognition Day” will be upon us. That means I'll devote the May 7 issue of the “DNR Digest” to recognizing department employees. To do a bang up job of it, however, I need your help.

We'll publish a special issue of the “Digest” dedicated to testimonials about and photos of your co-workers on the job. This photo of West Central Region's urban forestry coordinator **Cindy Widstrand** unloading boxes of tree seedlings is an excellent example of the kind of action shots I like to see



West Central Region's urban forestry coordinator Cindy Widstrand helped unload a semi-truck load of boxes containing tree seedlings from the Griffith Nursery, for pick up by landowners. Also pictured are forester Chris Widstrand, safety warden Bill Yearman and hydrogeologist Christine Lilek.

WDNR Photo

Start placing your photos in the “2009 Employee Recognition Photos” [2009 Employee Recognition Photos](#) folder, where we can retrieve them for preparation and posting. Photos should be sized at 640 pixels wide by 480 pixels high, with a resolution of 75 pixels per inch or greater. Name the file with as few words as possible.

Whether you contribute to the work of the agency from a desk or the outdoors, we encourage you to submit testimonials for possible publication in the May “Digest.” Tell us in 75 words or less why you like working for the DNR and with your co-workers.

Finally, send me any words of praise received from outside the department. Whether from a private citizen, a local official, a regulated business or whomever; their compliments on a job-well-done mean a great deal.

Be sure to send testimonials and photo captions to [Diane Brinson](#). **The deadline is April 22.**

Footnote: *Diane Brinson is editor of the “DNR Digest.”*


[Top](#)

 [Print](#)

Brown bag session a lesson on understanding your credit report

By: Jeff Carroll, Bureau of Human Resources

If you're like many people, reading and understanding your credit report can be a challenging experience. But, it doesn't have to be. The DNR Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is sponsoring a free “Understanding Your Credit Report” seminar on Tuesday, April 7 from 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. in room G09 of GEF 2.

Ellen Bernards, a knowledgeable and entertaining certified consumer credit counselor with GreenPath Debt Solutions will provide answers to the following commonly asked questions and many more:

- What is a credit report?
- What is a credit score?
- How can I obtain my personal credit report?
- How does my credit history affect me?

Bernards has been a financial counselor with GreenPath since 2004, and offers her expertise in credit, budgeting, debt elimination, bankruptcy and housing counseling.

The EAP has arranged to record the seminar for future viewing on Mediasite. After April 15, go to the [“DNR Employee Assistance Program”](#) web page and click on the “Understanding Your Credit Report” link.

You also may want to tune into the current Mediasite presentation [“Winning the Credit Battle.”](#) another EAP-sponsored lunchtime seminar featuring Bernards recorded on March 12.

Footnote: *Jeff Carroll is director of the Employee Assistance Program.*



 [Print](#)

Wildlife Society honors Buenzow for outstanding contributions

By: Greg Matthews, South Central Region

Long-time DNR wildlife technician **Brian Buenzow**, Janesville, recently received accolades from the Wisconsin Chapter of The Wildlife Society (TWS) for his efforts in enhancing wildlife resources, primarily in Green and Rock counties. TWS’s annual Don Rusch Award goes to a working professional who has made outstanding contributions to wildlife conservation in Wisconsin.

“Brian has the energy of three people and wildlife habitat has experienced a quantum leap under his influence. He’s turned landowners into wildlife stewards, city-dwellers into habitat managers and youth into wildlife advocates,” noted Buenzow’s former supervisor and DNR retiree **Doris Rusch**. Rusch is the widow of Don Rusch, the former head of the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit.



Joining Brian Buenzow (2nd from left) to celebrate his Don Rusch Award were his wife Mary Ann (far left), Doris Rusch and Carl Batha.

WDNR Photo

“Brian epitomizes the philosophies and credos of Dr. Donald Rusch, long-time wildlife scientist and advocate, and the namesake of the award,” she added.

Buenzow has served Rock and Green Counties for 27 years and is well known by the area's outdoor community for his ability to raise and secure outside funds for helping protect and manage wildlife habitat on both private and public lands.

“Brian is a consummate advocate who has made significant changes on the landscape for game and non-game species,” pointed out Buenzow's former supervisor and DNR retiree, **Carl Batha**, Dodgeville. In 2001, Batha was the recipient of TWS's inaugural Don Rusch Award.

“Brian has not forgotten the dedicated sportspersons, as there is no other (group) that taxes themselves with licenses and stamp fees all dedicated to conservation. Brian is the pulse and heartbeat of the hunter and fisher and the reason he's an excellent recipient,” said Batha.

Early in his career, Buenzow recognized that DNR couldn't impact wildlife populations managing only the islands of habitat on state wildlife areas surrounded by private land. He used his engaging personality and enthusiasm to create many partnerships with private landowners, conservation groups, federal and non-DNR personnel to enroll thousands of acres of private lands in federal set-aside programs and convert that land to wildlife habitat to complement the habitat on public lands, according to the TWS nomination paper.

Buenzow's peers in the wildlife profession recognized him for:

- Managing one of the largest prescribed burn programs in the state. He typically is burning day and night from April 1 to mid-May when the weather allows, spending additional time on weekends working for other partners, such as Pheasants Forever.
- Hiring, training and mentoring many wildlife professionals who work throughout DNR and other organizations.
- Working currently on a wetland/grassland restoration project using federal, state and private funds that when finished will restore over 700 acres of wildlife habitat.
- Managing and maintaining the largest leased public hunting ground program in the state, encompassing 11,000 acres open annually for public hunting.
- Becoming the first DNR technician/biologist in the state to begin managing dove hunting on public lands.
- Working hard to provide for and promote the interests of the hunting community.

Buenzow, whose wife **Mary Ann Buenzow** is the DNR forester serving Rock and Jefferson Counties, also had been recognized as DNR Wildlife Technician of the Year in 1989.

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

 [Print](#)

Horicon Service Center returns to former location on March 31

By: Greg Matthews, South Central Region

The department's Horicon Service Center will move back to its former location off State Highway 28 on March 31. The newly-remodeled building located between Horicon and Mayville soon also will house the Horicon International Education Center.

The service center temporarily was relocated to 1210 N. Palmatory St., Horicon since November 2007, when construction began on the education center.

"The Palmatory office will be closed to the public on March 30, and the Horicon Service Center will reopen for normal business hours at our new location on Tuesday, March 31," said customer services supervisor **Darlene Luehring**.

Business and office hours at the new address, N7725 State Highway 78, will be 8:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesdays through Fridays. The service center is closed to the public on Mondays.

Open hours for the new Horicon International Education Center have yet to be finalized.

Visitors traveling to the new service center from the west and south should note that State Highway 33 through the City of Horicon is undergoing reconstruction, and they should follow detour signs to access State Highway 78.

The Horicon Service Center offers one-stop shopping for most DNR programs, including hunting and fishing licenses; park stickers and trail passes; boat, snowmobile and ATV registration; information on environmental permits; or simply answering questions about the state's natural resources.

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


[Top](#)

 [Print](#)

John Buss is Bowhunters Association's "Warden of the Year"

Also honored internally for public relations skills

The Wisconsin Bowhunters Association recently named conservation warden **John Buss**, Prairie du Sac, their 2008 "Warden of the Year." The award acknowledges Buss's

outstanding service to the people of Wisconsin through the “Community Wardening” program he’s built in Sauk County.

Buss has been stationed in Sauk City since 1985, where his tenure in the station has played a key role in his success, according to chief warden **Randy Stark**. The lower half of Sauk County is his area of responsibility.

“John has established solid external partnerships with local sporting clubs, service clubs, schools, voice and print media outlets,” said Stark.

“More than anything, John is personable and easy to talk to. Communication is one of his many talents,” read the WBA award.



Supervisor John Holmes presented John Buss (right) a plaque recognizing him as the Outstanding Conservation Warden for 2008 for his public relations programs.
WDNR Photo

Stark attributes Buss’s notable record of tracking down wildlife violators to the community network he’s built with cooperators and landowners who consistently provide needed information.

Warden supervisor **John Holmes**, Poynette, added that “John has a great combination of tenacity and compassion when investigating violations. I am always amazed by the complexity of the investigations and John’s ability to shake the violator’s hand when he is finished with the investigation. John has a gift.”

Buss, along with Hayward warden Sue Miller, played a key role in the investigation of a bull elk that was killed illegally in Colorado. As the result of interviews he conducted with several Wisconsin residents, Buss provided beneficial information and professional reports that earned high praise from Colorado’s Division of Wildlife officials. This work contributed to building a case that resulted in the conviction of several individuals charged with illegal elk hunting.

“We’re grateful to the Wisconsin Bowhunters Association for its commitment to recognizing the important contribution wardens make to the conservation of our natural resources,” concluded Stark.

Buss also noted internally for his outreach skills

Continuing this theme, Buss was recognized as tops among his peers in the DNR's 11-county South Central Region in 2008 for his communications and education programs, including making school presentations, teaching outdoor skills and working with sporting clubs.

"John is an outstanding conservation warden and his public relations activities stand a cut above in this crucial area of law enforcement," said Holmes.



[Top](#)

 [Print](#)

2009 Statewide Arbor Day Poster Contest winners announced

By: Genny Fannucchi, Bureau of Forestry Services

Trees are Terrific...in Cities and Towns

Imaginative masterpieces from students around the state depict the theme "Trees are Terrific...in Cities and Towns" to visually portray the many benefits that trees and forests provide to communities large and small in this year's Arbor Day Poster Contest. And your vote made a difference!

The Division of Forestry extends a special "thank-you" to the more than 250 employees who cast votes, shared thoughts and selected the winners of the 2009 Statewide Arbor Day 5th grade Poster Contest. Your contribution made this process a success and reminded us that we do best as a society and as an organization when we seek intergenerational enrichment and work together on ways to enhance the quality of life in our cities and towns for generations to come.

View all of the entries online at ["2009 Arbor Day Poster Results."](#) The Winning entries display a colored ribbon. The name of the artists and their schools are listed at the top of the same page.

The Division of Forestry will invite the top three winners, their families and teachers to a Special Arbor Day Recognition Ceremony at the State Capitol.

Want the adventure to continue? If so, cast your vote in the national online competition, sponsored by the National Arbor Day Foundation, running from March 30 to April 3. After March 30, go to the ["Arbor Day Foundation Poster Contest"](#) webpage and cast a vote for your favorite among entries from 47 states. The "popular" winner automatically will compete with four posters that the National Arbor Day staff has selected to go

before the official panel of judges.

Footnote: *Genny Fannucchi is the Division of Forestry's education and awareness specialist.*


[Top](#)

 [Print](#)

Wildlife Federation names Jim Horne 2008 “Warden of the Year”

When the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation convenes its annual meeting on April 4, it will officially name warden **Jim Horne**, Shawano, “Warden of the Year” for 2008 in recognition of his outstanding service to the citizens of Wisconsin.

“Jim became a conservation warden in 1987. Since that time, he has earned a reputation as an outstanding conservation warden and member of the local community. His infectious ‘positive attitude’ and willingness to ‘lend a hand’ whenever and wherever possible most certainly contributed to that reputation,” said chief warden **Randy Stark**.



Conservation warden Jim Horne will receive “Warden of the Year” accolades from the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation.
WDNR Photo

Stark also described Horne as a team player who has furthered the conservation ethic and public safety by developing strong and trusting relationships with individuals, groups, organizations and agencies throughout his area of responsibility.

“Jim makes himself readily available to the public in a number of venues to listen, share information and answer questions, including his regular participation on a live radio show in Shawano,” noted Stark.

Beyond his law enforcement program, Horne has demonstrated a particular passion for working with youth and other novice outdoor enthusiasts. He plays an active role in area learn-to-hunt programs, disabled hunts for youth, kids fishing tournaments and

safety education programs.

As an example of Horne's commitment to young people, Stark referred to his coaching a young woman who was apprehensive at the rifle range as she prepared for the 2007 Learn to Bear Hunt program. He's credited with restoring this novice hunter's self confidence to the point that she not only was able to hit the target, she killed a bear that same weekend.

Stark expressed his appreciation for the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation's commitment to recognizing the contribution wardens make to natural resources conservation.


Top

 [Print](#)

Forestry training put to the test with jobless landowner

The Division of Forestry offers its employees training in "Crucial Conversations," and one forester applied what he'd learned in working with a landowner who cooperates with the DNR in managing his forestland. The cooperater had lost his job at a mill and told the forester that other companies were delaying payments to loggers by three to four months. Times clearly were getting harder in this area of the state as a result of the failing economy.

This forester, who wishes to remain anonymous, recounted this story to **Julie Graziano**, Forestry's organizational development analyst, and Employee Assistance Program associate director **Patrick DuCharme**. They in turn shared the story and reiterated tips on interacting with others and managing our stress levels during highly stressful times.

Read this compelling story and the advice from Graziano and DuCharme in the "ForesTREEporter" story ["Staying Up When Times are Down."](#) If your job involves interacting with the public or businesses as a regulator, you may discover some words of wisdom that can help you accomplish your objectives in a respectful and compassionate manner.


Top

 [Print](#)

Retiree Niebauer returns to accept Fish and Wildlife honors

By: Barb Zellmer, Bureau of Management and Budget

Long-time DNR employee and recent retiree **Tom Niebauer** made a return visit to GEF 2 on March 12, to accept recognition from Tom Melius, Region 3 director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and DNR Secretary **Matt Frank**. The two administrators were on hand to honor Niebauer for his many years of work with both the FWS and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA).

Melius took time during his trip to Madison to meet with Sec. Frank to discuss a range of issues and to congratulate Niebauer for his many years of dedicated service in furthering the common goal of fish and wildlife conservation.



Tom Niebauer happily displayed the plaque he received from the Fish and Wildlife Service. Tom Melius is to Niebauer's right and Sec. Matt Frank to his left.
WDNR Photo

Kudos pointed to his leadership and long-standing membership on several AFWA committees, including Fish and Wildlife Trust Funds; time serving on state legislative and federal budget committees; and work on several joint state-federal task forces with other state fish and wildlife agencies and the US FWS.

The FWS director Melius highlighted Niebauer's "friendly advice" as being particularly important in addressing challenges and moving forward. He accepted the recognition with a smile – although as a retiree we hear he's been smiling a lot.

Footnote: *Barb Zellmer is chief of the Management and Planning Section*


Top



[DNR Intranet Index](#) || [Search](#) || [DNR Home](#) || [Wisconsin Home](#) || [CE Intranet Home](#)

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