

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 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.

April 23, 2009

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Take a tour of Menomonee Valley brownfields success stories

By: Jim Schmidt, Southeast Region

Visitors walking or biking the Hank Aaron State Trail now can view several of the many brownfields redevelopment projects along the way that have enhanced the Menomonee River Valley. Just in time for Earth Day/Week, the Southeast Region's (SER) Remediation and Redevelopment staff has published and distributed "[The Menomonee Valley Brownfields—Walking Tour](#)" brochure to guide visitors as they travel past buildings and landscape that have transformed the valley from brownfields to environmental success stories.



"Spartina" is part of Milwaukee's new stormwater park.
Photo courtesy of Menomonee Valley Partners MVP

"The Menomonee Valley has a rich history of native and European settlement, community and industrial growth, economic hardship and eventual rejuvenation," reads the brochure. "For a glimpse of this rich history, take a Valley tour of former brownfield properties along the Hank Aaron State Trail!

The seven redevelopment projects highlighted in the brochure are among 10,000 Wisconsin brownfields, where real or perceived contamination hinders clean up and development. Stenciled on the pavement along the Hank Aaron trail is a logo with a number that corresponds to the following sites described in the brochure:

- **Site 1:** Miller Park
- **Site 2:** Menomonee Valley Industrial Center
- **Site 3:** Stormwater Retention Basin
- **Site 4:** Marquette University Valley Soccer Fields
- **Site 5:** The SIGMA Group Corporate Offices
- **Site 6:** Former Milwaukee Stockyards
- **Site 7:** Harley-Davidson Museum Complex

Southeast Region Remediation and Redevelopment staff worked with Milwaukee in an effort to "investigate, clean up and eventually redevelop these former underutilized properties" according to the brochure.



Melissa Cook, the Hank Aaron Trail coordinator and Margaret Brunette worked on the project and viewed the logo marking the SIGMA site along the tour.

WDNR Photo

The history of the Menomonee Valley's settlement and industrial growth is one of "riches to rags." Today, what at one time was a 1,500-acre marsh, the valley is described in the brochure as "a natural resource and economic gem."

The SER has distributed copies of the brochure to some of the area businesses it features, as well as the DNR Lakeshore State Park and Discovery World Museum. For more information and to request a copy of "The Menomonee Valley Brownfields Walking Tour" brochure, contact SER hydrologist **Margaret Brunette**, who was the project manager for the cleanups and involved with producing the brochure, at (414) 263-8557

Footnote: *Jim Schmidt is the SER's Remediation and Redevelopment Section supervisor.*


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Retirement planning workshops: Stepping stones to retirement

Representatives from the federal Social Security Administration, the Wisconsin Retirement System and the Wisconsin Deferred Compensation Program (WDC) will host three free informational workshops for public employees next month. Those attending the workshops will learn more about using these programs as stepping stones as they prepare financially for retirement.

The workshops will run from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in Sun Prairie, Racine and Tomah, on the following schedule:

- **Monday, May 11:** Auditorium of the Sun Prairie Senior High School, 220 Kroncke Dr., Sun Prairie
- **Tuesday, May 12:** Auditorium of the Case Senior High School, 7345 Washington Ave., Racine
- **Tuesday, May 19:** Cafeteria of the Tomah Senior High School, 901 Lincoln Ave., Tomah

For more information, call the WDC office toll free at 1-877- 457-WDCP (9327) and select option 2. Or go to the ETF ["Three-for-One"](#) webpage.

If you're unable to attend one of these workshops, you can view a presentation at ETF's ["Member Services" video library](#).

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Science Services open house is scheduled for April 28

By: Jack Sullivan, Bureau of Integrated Science Services

The Bureau of Integrated Science Services will host a Science Open House on Tuesday, April 28. Come meet some of DNR's scientists and learn about their current research work, for example:

- Understand and adapt to climate change impacts.
- Predict the transport of emerald ash borers to our state parks on firewood.
- Assess the genetic suitability of wild trout broodstocks.
- Further understand the effects of mercury on loons.
- Improve management of grassland and old growth forest birds.

These are just some of the many research studies you'll find profiled at at this biennial open house. Drop into room G09 of GEF 2 at your convenience, between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

This event will feature more than 30 research projects and provide an opportunity for you to both learn more about how science influences DNR's decisionmaking and let us know first hand your thinking about emerging issues and future research priorities.

The Bureau of Science Services provides services to the DNR's bureaus and regions by:

- Acquiring original knowledge.
- Analyzing information and emerging technologies.
- Synthesizing information for policy and management decisions.
- Applying the scientific method to the solution of environmental and natural resources problems.
- Providing science-based support services for the achievement of department initiatives.

Much of the work that Science Services' staff does is "behind the scenes." Drop by and take advantage of this opportunity to meet some of the department's scientists and learn about their work.

Footnote: *Jack Sullivan is director of the Bureau of Integrated Science Services.*

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Apply for Citizen-Based Monitoring Partnership funds by May 1

By: *Loren Ayers, Bureau of Endangered Resources*



Sabrina Adams, a student at Hartford University School in Milwaukee, held a Swainson's thrush while helping with a bird banding and monitoring project at the non-profit Urban Ecology Center in Milwaukee. 2005 photo from Urban Ecology Center

Since 2005, Wisconsin's "Citizen-Based Monitoring Partnership Program" has sought to expand citizen participation in natural resource monitoring by providing funding and assistance to high priority projects. The deadline for applying for funds for fiscal year 2010 is May 1, which is just around the corner.

Qualifying projects include monitoring aquatic and terrestrial species, natural communities and environmental components such as water, soils and air.

The department has \$100,000 available for the 2010 fiscal year, running from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010. Funding requests are limited to \$4,999 per proposal, and funds for successful projects will be available beginning July 1.

Find application guidelines, along with information on past projects, on the Citizen-Based Monitoring Network's "[2009-10 Partnership Program Announcement](#)" webpage. For more information, email me, [Loren Ayers](#), or call me at (608)261-6449.

Footnote: *Loren Ayers is a research scientist with the Bureau of Endangered Resources.*



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DNR's "Harmony in the Woods" featured at Hmong Conference

By: Eileen Hocker, Bureau of Law Enforcement

DNR's "Harmony in the Woods" initiative featured prominently at the 14th annual Hmong National Conference in Appleton April 3 to 5, as Secretary **Matt Frank** and DNR employees joined non-agency partners in the opening plenary session, ran a panel discussion and staffed a DNR exhibit.

Frank was one of four keynote speakers for the Friday April 3 opening plenary session, which highlighted the conference theme on the value of partnerships.



Matt Frank spoke with Hmong National Conference delegate after his speech during the plenary session.
WDNR Photo

Frank said it was through partnerships with various others, including the media, that enabled the DNR to turn hunting tragedies (2004 Chai Vang murder of six white hunters; and 2007 James Nichols murder of Hmong hunter Cha Vang) into an opportunity to better relations between the Hmong and Caucasian hunting communities.

As Frank told the audience of close to 1,000 would happen, those representing the DNR explored a more indepth look at those partnerships at the DNR-sponsored panel discussion "Harmony in the Woods," immediately following the plenary session.

The "Harmony in the Woods" panel included:

- **Randy Stark**, DNR chief conservation warden
- **Byron Goetsch**, Northeast Region regional warden
- **Diane Brookbank**, Bureau of Customer Service and Licensing director
- **May Vang**, DNR Milwaukee Customer Service Center supervisor
- **Kou Xiong**, DNR Hmong liaison
- Jeff Alexander, anchor and reporter for WBAY Channel 2 News, Green Bay
- Yia Thao, president of the United Hmong and Asian-American Center, Green Bay
- George Meyer, executive director of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation and former

DNR secretary



Recreation safety warden Jeremy Cords, Green Bay, staffed the DNR Exhibit booth at the conference.
WDNR Photo

Each panelist conveyed their story, perspective and/or contribution to the “Harmony in the Woods” initiative to a near capacity-filled room.

- Stark and Goetsch summarized the 2004/2007 incidents and set the context for the “Harmony in the Woods” initiative.
- Brookbank and Vang discussed the results of the expansion of the call-center and addition of bilingual customer service operators.
- Xiong told of the Hmong hunter education and cultural presentation programs.
- Alexander played the WBAY Channel 2 “Harmony in the Woods” news clips and explained strategies for getting media involved in community issues.
- Thao stressed the importance of future generations, as represented in the room, to be involved in this ongoing issue.
- Meyer told of the groundbreaking summit meeting between Hmong and conservation leaders in July 2007 that set the stage for the success of the “Harmony in the Woods” initiative.



Diane Brookbank, May Vang, Byron Goetsch, and Randy Stark sat on the panel discussing the “Harmony in the Woods” initiative at Hmong National Conference.
WDNR Photo

Questions and comments raised during the workshop addressed the DNR’s relationship with its counterpart in Minnesota in furthering Hmong/Caucasian relations; and also encouraged the agency to continue the initiative.

The DNR also staffed a booth for two days of the conference, displaying hunting and fishing brochures, customer service and other materials, some printed in the Hmong

language.

Hmong National Development Inc., based in Washington, D.C. sponsored the Hmong National Conference. Each year its annual conference is held in a different U.S. city with a significant Hmong population and draws participants from around the country.

Footnote: *Eileen Hocker is the Diversity Outreach coordinator for the Bureau of Law Enforcement.*


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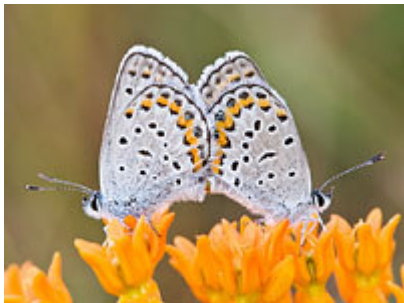
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Natural Resources Foundation makes largest donation yet to DNR

By: Jeffrey Potter, Natural Resources Foundation

At its March meeting, the Natural Resources Board accepted \$313,000 in gifts from the [Natural Resources Foundation \(NRF\) of Wisconsin](#), a non-profit group based in Madison. The foundation bucked the trend of dire economic news by making one of its largest donations yet to support the conservation programs of the Department of Natural Resources.

“During these tough economic times, we are more committed than ever to supporting public conservation projects that benefit everyone who lives in or visits Wisconsin,” said Charlie Luthin, executive director of the foundation. “We have a responsibility to protect the gifts of nature that contribute to our economic health and our overall quality of life. We are proud of our historic relationship with the DNR. This gift is just another sign of our strong partnership to protect Wisconsin's resources for our families and the future.”



The federally- endangered Karner blue butterfly is just one of many species and projects that will benefit from the Foundation's gift.

Natural Resources Foundation photo

Secretary **Matt Frank** thanked the foundation for its support of the agency's work on behalf of the state's natural resources and its citizens.

“The DNR truly values its strong partnership with the Natural Resources Foundation,” Frank said. “Contributions from partners are always appreciated, but this one is particularly generous during a national economic crisis. The foundation’s donation helps the DNR continue its work with rare and endangered species, conservation education and community conservation efforts and more.”

DNR and NRF staffs identified the conservation priorities of 20 different programs that will benefit from the funding gift.

- The largest portion of the gift, over \$146,000, will go to support rare and endangered species, including Kirtland’s warblers, Karner blue butterflies, box turtles and others on state and federal lists.
- Nearly \$120,000 will support invasive species control and land management at Wisconsin’s State Natural Areas.
- Finally, almost \$30,000 will support community conservation and property management programs with another \$20,000 to support conservation education projects.

Kim Grveles, assistant zoologist and ornithologist with the Natural Heritage Inventory in the Bureau of Endangered Resources, credited the foundation for aiding her successful work with the rare Kirtland’s warbler.

“Because of foundation funding, we are finding new Kirtland’s warbler locations, monitoring nesting events, documenting nest outcomes, and increasing nest productivity by safe-guarding the nesting site from predatory and human disturbances,” said Grveles.

This amount brings the NRF’s total cash contribution to DNR conservation programs to nearly two million dollars since 1986. Bruce Braun, chair of the NRF board and former DNR deputy secretary, was eager to share the credit for that record.

“The public has embraced our mission and thousands of donors have made this gift possible. We are truly fortunate to live in a state with both abundant natural resources and a population that holds an equally abundant respect for those resources.”

In addition to today’s gift for conservation programs at the DNR, the foundation announced \$10,000 in small grants to community conservation projects through its (former DNR secretary) C.D. Besadny Conservation Grants Program. The program provides financial support to public and private organizations and agencies working on conservation projects on a small-scale, at the local level.

A complete list of funded projects referenced in this story is available on the [“Foundation Supports DNR and Community Conservation Projects”](#) webpage.

Footnote: *Jeffrey Potter is the director of communications for the Natural Resources Foundation.*



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Department takes steps to conserve even more paper

By: Lance Green, Bureau of Air Management

Although it's difficult to determine just how much paper we use throughout the agency, the central office Green Team learned that during the past year the department ordered a total of about 850 boxes of standard copier and printer paper. That's 8,500 reams, or 4.25 million sheets.

There are movements afoot to reduce this long paper trail. For example, Richard Doty, chief of the Technical Services Section in the Bureau of Technology Services, reports "The Bureau of Technology Services managers' briefings held twice a week are paperless. We all work off the same online page, which is updated as we speak. You can't get better than that!"

Honoring Earth Day/Arbor Day theme

The Green Team honors this year's Earth Day/Arbor Day theme of "Paper and Trees" by reporting how several programs are using new technologies and simple measures to use less paper, offering some easy steps you can take.



Avery Dorland, forest geneticist and nurseries specialist in the Bureau of Forest Sciences, leads the "Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts Forestry Working Group" and presented "Wisconsin Forests & Climate Change - The Good, The Bad & The Ugly" on April 20 in GEF 2.
WDNR Photo

Asbestos Program eliminates paper notices; Amy Walden, Asbestos Program coordinator

The Asbestos Program in the Bureau of Air Management is reducing its paper use by converting to an online notification system. The program receives approximately 3,500 notifications per year for renovation, demolition and fire training burn projects. Based on the number of original and revised notifications plus faxes, I estimate we'll save around 10 boxes of paper per year. We'll also save time by combining two tracking

systems into one and by eliminating the paper copy filing.

"We were lucky to receive an exchange grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to add this process to the Wisconsin Air Resources Program or WARP, the Air Management Program's reporting and tracking system," reported **Pat Kirsop**, Emission Inventory and Small Business Section chief. "We are also coordinating with the Department of Health Services to design the system to accept notifications for their agency, eliminating another 3,500 paper copies and duplicate data entry. So this new system will save over 20 boxes of paper every year."

Endangered Resources uses 100% recycled paper; Dawn Hinebaugh, conservation biologist

On Earth Day 2008, DNR Land Division administrator **Laurie Osterndorf** emailed an "Earth Day Challenge" "[Land Division Green Memo](#)" to all division staff. In response, Endangered Resources (ER) Bureau director **Signe Holtz** created an Endangered Resources "Green Team" and charged it with developing, implementing and measuring initiatives to actively lessen the bureau's environmental impacts. With the assistance of a University of Wisconsin intern, the Green Team helped the bureau implement policies in place today, including eliminating paper waste at meetings, turning off computers and monitors, and purchasing 100% recycled paper for copying and printing.

Although the DNR and other state agencies are only required to purchase paper made of 30% recycled content, the ER bureau found that paper made from 100% post-consumer waste paper is available on state contract. While this paper costs a bit more, ER staff felt it was an important step to take and has worked to reduce overall paper consumption to make up for the price differential--creating a win-win situation. The 100% recycled paper works in all copiers and printers and is acquired easily through DNR's supply contract. If you'd like more information on this product, contact [Heisley Lewison](#), Bureau of Endangered Resources, (608)266-7012.

Air permits go electronic; Barb Pavliscak, air management engineer

In 2003, the Air Management Bureau launched an initiative to streamline the permits, compliance and emissions reporting areas of the Air Program. We began by integrating our multiple databases, and developing a unified net-based system to manage all internal and external workflow. Having all aspects of our program working within the same system and using the same all-encompassing database as its foundation has improved significantly the ease with which we can verify the quality and consistency of our data.

While it may not have been our primary goal, this initiative has significantly reduced our paper consumption. Now, the permit information for a given facility is one click away from the compliance and emissions data. Review can be done without the printouts that many used to compare data between two independent systems.

Externally, many large stationary air emission sources commonly spend hundreds of

hours word processing, printing out (in triplicate!) and submitting air permit applications that are themselves hundreds of pages thick, which we then type into our permit review documents. When our new system has been completed, permit applicants will be able to develop, edit and submit their permit application in a secure, online environment. No paper. No manual entry of data. Within three years, we expect to be receiving, reviewing and issuing the majority of the six to eight hundred permit applications we process each year electronically--a significant savings of natural and workforce resources.



Forest tax specialist Ryan Conner and forest education and awareness specialist Genny Fannucchi set up a display on tree planting in the GEF2 cafeteria for Earth Day/Arbor Day.
WDNR Photo

Steps you can take to save paper

Email. We use this time-saving tool everyday and often want to save important correspondence. Our email system offers an easy and safe way to store emails in labeled, nested files in convenient categories for easy retrieval--and no file cabinets are needed for paper copies.

You also can add a simple message to your email signature block to encourage the person receiving the email to use less paper. Try adding "Please consider the environment before printing this message" as a final line (maybe in a green font). For assistance in doing this go to ["To Create a Signature in MS Outlook."](#)

here's how to set the default to always print two-sided or duplex. From the START button on the bottom left of your desktop, select Settings, Printers and Faxes, then right-click on the printer you use and choose Properties. Select Printing Preference, Setup tab and the Duplex option (your printer may have a slightly different command. Now, all your Word documents, emails or Intranet pages will print in duplex, and you can easily change the setting to print out one-sided copies when needed.

And another thought: have you considered bringing in a cloth hand towel to work, to avoid using paper towels in the restroom? Check out this idea and others in the ["Green Guide"](#) on the Intranet to learn how to save paper at work.

Saving paper helps sustain our forests

We know there are many more ways programs and staff have learned to use less paper

and sustain trees. Trees and forests are renewable resources that are called upon daily to meet a variety of human and environmental needs. They touch our lives daily in the form, energy, building materials, paper items, food, etc., products increasingly in demand as population numbers rise around the world.

"Trees are on the job everyday along our streets, in parks and in yards, reducing noise, shading us from the summer sun and reducing pollution," said Division of Forestry administrator **Paul DeLong**. "Our annual earth year challenge is to strive to conserve products from trees such as paper, so that our forests continue to provide both products and environmental benefits for generations to come."

Share your ideas for reducing our use of paper, and we'll share them with others. Send your thoughts to me, [Lance Green](#), for the Green Team to consider and add to the "Green Guide." Then, get outside and enjoy the shade of your favorite tree!

Footnote: *Lance Green is an air management specialist with the Bureau of Air Management and compiled this story on behalf of the central office Green Team.*


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Wildlife staff builds blue heron nests at Fourmile Island Rookery

By: Greg Matthews, South Central Region

Heron guano changed soil chemistry, making nesting trees vulnerable

More than 250 bird species visit Horicon Marsh annually. This past February, DNR Dodge County wildlife staff replaced 59 Great Blue Heron artificial nesting structures on the Horicon Marsh State Wildlife Area adjacent to the Fourmile Island Rookery State Natural Area. The Great Blue Heron has been a mainstay at the natural area located within the marsh.

Horicon wildlife technicians under the supervision of Horicon wildlife biologist **Brenda Kelly** (Hill) included **Chris Cole**, **Scott Williams**, **John Christian** and **Wendy Meier** worked on the island, the largest of 36 small islands located throughout the marsh. The 15-acre island is closed to the public from April 1 to August 30 to limit nesting disturbance.

The 32,000-acre Horicon Marsh is the largest freshwater cattail marsh in the United States.



A close-up of the artificial structure from which nest platforms imitating tree branches jut out from the utility pole used to anchor the framework.

WDNR Photo

The DNR first erected nesting structures during the winter of 1992-93 on utility poles ranging from 40 to 65 feet high. The nesting platforms were placed at the top to simulate tree branches. Each pole contains eight nesting structures.

Workers placed the structures adjacent to the island because of the lack of suitable trees remaining on the island. Many of the trees fell victim to Dutch elm disease during the 1960s and 1970s and eventually fell down. A July 1984 windstorm then toppled nearly 80 large trees.

At one time, Fourmile Island contained 800 to 1,000 nesting pairs of birds that translated into 2,000 adults and another 2,000 young during the peak of the nesting season. These birds ate mostly fish and frogs, and other small animals caught along the waters edge. Much of this food ended up on the forest floor as the birds came back to feed their young and rest among the trees. This food then became nutrient rich and highly acidic fertilizer in the form of bird droppings or guano, changing the island soil chemistry. The high concentration of acidic soil stressed the trees and made them more susceptible to diseases, as well as preventing any new trees from growing. Oak wilt also has been a problem on the marsh islands.

Dutch elm disease, Oak wilt, wind storms and changing soil chemistry led to the loss of Fourmile Island's nesting trees. In the early 1990s, the department placed a series of utility poles for nesting structures adjacent to the island to compensate for the former trees.

In 2008, 37 nesting pairs resided on or adjacent to Fourmile Island. This spring, the birds already have begun arriving and building their nests on the new and improved nesting structures.

Historically, Fourmile Island was home to Great Egrets, Double-crested Cormorants, Black-crowned Night Herons and Great Blue Herons. Over time and with the destruction of nesting trees, Great Blue Herons became the predominant nester.

In addition to Dodge County DNR wildlife staff and volunteers, donations from RH Equipment and Services of Mayville, the Horicon Hardware Hank, the Horicon Marsh

Bird Club and the DNR's Bureau of Endangered Resources aided construction and replacement of the structures.

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


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Help recognize Wisconsin women in government at May 21 event

Join your DNR colleagues from around the state in attending the “22nd Annual Wisconsin Women in Government Recognition Dinner” on Thursday, May 21 at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison. Veteran Democratic political strategist and commentator [Donna Brazile](#) will be the keynote speaker.



Keynote speaker Donna Brazile

A networking reception begins at 5:15 p.m., with the keynote address scheduled for 7 p.m.; dinner and the awards program will follow. Email SCR Air and Waste's [Eileen Pierce](#) to let her know that you want to be seated at the DNR table(s). You need to purchase your own ticket by mail or online. See the [“Wisconsin Women in Government”](#) (WWIG) brochure for more information and to register.

WWIG's annual dinner is the premier bipartisan political event in Wisconsin, attended by more than 1,000 state and local elected officials, business leaders, public servants and political enthusiasts.

Since 1987, WWIG has raised money to support and encourage women to choose a career in government service. Each year, the organization awards scholarships to women pursuing undergraduate study in public service and administration, and government affairs. In addition, WWIG sponsors an annual leadership seminar through the University of Wisconsin La Follette School of Public Affairs. Over the years, several DNR employees have received scholarships from WWIG to attend this seminar.


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Wildlife employees build warbler nest boxes

By: Greg Matthews, South Central Wisconsin

Central office and South Central Region (SER) wildlife employees recently gathered on the Nevin Fish Hatchery grounds at the SER headquarters to come to the aid of the [Prothonotary Warbler](#) (*Protonotaria citrea*), a Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) for Wisconsin.



DNR employees fashioning nest boxes from PVC pipe. From left: Tom Prestby, Bureau of Wildlife Management; Jackie Curry, Darlington; and Dave Sample, Bureau of Science Services.
WDNR Photo

The small songbird is a neotropical migrant that breeds in the eastern U.S. and spends the winter in lowland tropical forests of Central America.

“Prothonotary Warblers are the only eastern wood warbler that nests in cavities. It breeds in moist bottomland forests that are seasonally flooded or permanent wetlands. Nests are almost always over water,” said **Andy Paulios**, Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI) coordinator with the Bureau of Wildlife Management.

In Wisconsin, Prothonotary Warblers nest in floodplain forests along the Mississippi, Chippewa, Black, Wisconsin, Sugar, Wolf and other large river systems. Paulios explained that many of these systems no longer have intact floodplain forests and that Prothonotary Warblers, Red-shouldered Hawks and other important bird species have likely declined from historical numbers due to loss of this habitat.

That's why 13 DNR wildlife employees got together and, in assembly line fashion, constructed 315 nest boxes as part of a pilot project to see if they can help augment breeding in floodplain forest areas which have lost a lot of tree cover.

"We are hoping to increase the population of this species along the Sugar River in the Town of Avon (Rock County) with the hopes that it could be expanded to other areas of the state," said Paulios.

Much of the nest box is made from a four inch, thin-wall PVC drain pipe adapted by wildlife biologist **Mike Foy**, Fitchburg, from a design used for blue bird boxes.



Mike Foy helped adapt the PVC drain pipe from a design used for bluebird boxes.
WDNR Photo

The nest boxes are sprayed with a Rustoleum textured light color plastic paint to help keep the box cool.

"The texture of the paint will hopefully be enough to allow the bird to grip the edge of the hole guard," said Foy.

The department already has placed nest boxes in the Sugar River bottomlands and "if all goes well, we'd like to see bird clubs and other river groups volunteer to place boxes and monitor the results, similar to that of bluebird volunteers statewide," noted Paulios.

Prothonotary Warblers have olive backs with blue-grey wings and tails, a yellow underbody, a long pointed bill and black legs. The adult male has a bright orange-yellow head, while females and immature birds are duller and have a yellow head.

The WBCI also is working to protect wintering habitat for the Prothonotary Warbler and many other long distance migrant Species of Greatest Conservation Need through

projects in Central America, said Paulios.

Those South Central Region employees participating in the prowl box projects were:



From left: Jake Fries, Alan Crossley, Sharon Fandel and Bruce Folley worked on their boxes.
WDNR Photo

Mike Foy, Fitchburg; **Craig Kopacek**, wildlife technician, Lake Mills; **Bruce Folley**, wildlife biologist, Darlington; **Dave Sample**, research scientist, Monona; **Sharon Fandel**, wildlife biologist, Madison; **Nick Van Driel**, USGS-retired, Fitchburg; **Kyle Wollin**, wildlife technician, Monona; **Tom Prestby**, wildlife technician, Monona; **Jake Fries**, wildlife biologist, Fitchburg; **Laurie Fike**, wildlife management program specialist, Madison; **Jackie Curry**, wildlife technician, Darlington; **Alan Crossley**, wildlife biologist, Madison; and Andy Paulios, Madison.

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

Footnote of-note: The Prothonotary Warbler became known in the 1940s as the bird that convinced on the House Un-American Activities Committee of a connection between former Communist Party member Whittaker Chambers and noted federal employee Alger Hiss. Chambers testified that Hiss once bragged about seeing the warbler. Hiss testified to the same incident, which convinced committee members of the pairs' acquaintance, and that Hess had secretly been a Communist while working for the federal government.


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Spring “Open Woods” scheduled for near New Glarus

By: Greg Matthews, South Central Region

A prairie and trout stream, tree plantings and self-guided walking tours are all part of a “Spring Open Woods” event scheduled near New Glarus for Saturday, May 9.



Trout stream renovation work done on the Talarczyk Tree Farm.
WDNR Photo

The “Open Woods” will run from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Talarczyk Tree Farm, W5105 Kubly Rd., about one mile east of New Glarus in Green County. Admission is free and open to the public. Participants will be able to buy food and beverages onsite or bring their own picnic lunch.

The “Open Woods” will offer a prime example of sustainable forestry practices, wildlife benefits and working with available resources to achieve success in your woods,” said DNR forester Ray Amiel, Monroe.

The Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association BlackHawk Chapter and the DNR are co-sponsoring the day. For more information, email [Loren Hanson](#) or call him at (608)289-0373; email [Curt Jacobs](#) or call his number (608)289-0260; or email DNR forester [Ray Amiel](#) or call him at (608)558-0020.

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


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Black bear sightings in southern Wisconsin more common

By: Greg Matthews, South Central Region

Black bear sightings in southern Wisconsin in the past month have prompted department wildlife biologists to underscore that the animal’s visits to this part of the state are becoming more common each year.

June is the breeding season for bears in Wisconsin and “most bear sightings we receive in southern counties occur during late May and June when sub-adult bears, mostly young males, are forced out of breeding territories up north and disperse long distances in search of new habitat,” explained DNR biologist **Becky Roth**, Spring Green.

“But this year, we’ve already begun fielding reports (of bear sightings) in early April,”

she added.

Roth noted that black bears and people have co-existed for centuries in northern Wisconsin and “there’s no cause for alarm.”



Unlike its cousin the brown bear, which is Eurasian in origin, the black bear evolved in North America two million years ago. Certain experts believe that the black bear's North American origin may account for its greater adaptability. (Source: Wikipedia)National Park Service photo

“Black bears normally are very timid and avoid all contact with people. They may cause problems by damaging bird feeders or foraging through unsecured garbage containers, and they may return to the same area if food is readily available.”

“So, if possible, keep your garbage, grills, compost, pet foods and bird feeders out of reach if a bear has been reported in the vicinity,” advises Roth.

She added that “although we’ve had a few instances in past years when bears have stayed around southern counties through the summer, most leave the area and presumably return north as the breeding season ends.”

“Last year we received reports of sows with cubs and sows with yearlings, which resulted in continued bear sightings throughout the summer. This is because female bears with their young cubs or yearlings are less likely to move long distances over a short time period.”

“The wooded hills, coulees, creeks and river bottoms of southwestern Wisconsin’s driftless area provide abundant food and cover for bears as well as potential winter den sites, so it’s possible that wandering bears will find it to their liking and some may decide to stay,” said Roth.

Wildlife biologists note that the best way to avoid trouble with bears around your home is to follow these steps:

- Don’t knowingly feed a bear.
- Reduce garbage odors by rinsing food cans before putting them in recycling containers or garbage cans.
- Compost vegetable scraps.

- Keep meat scraps in the freezer until garbage day and garbage cans in a closed building until pick-up.
- Keep pet food inside or don't feed in the evening.
- Keep barbeque grills and picnic tables clean.

General guidelines for campers include: don't sleep in clothes you wore while cooking; don't bring food into the tent; don't dump food scraps by your campsite; and make sure all food, scraps and cooking utensils are in critter-proof containers.

If you sight a bear near your home, wave your arms and make noise to scare it away. Then back away slowly or go inside and wait for the bear to leave. If the bear finds food such as bird feed or garbage one or more times, it will return. When food is no longer available, the visits will stop.

If you encounter a bear while in the woods, stay calm. Don't shoot or approach the bear. Give it space, walk away and watch from a distance. Don't approach sows with cubs.

Brochures explaining bear habitats and ways to avoid them are available from the DNR's Spring Green or Dodgeville offices. If you have bear troubles and are in need of assistance, call the U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Service's 24-hour hotline at 1-800-433-0688. To report bear sightings, email [Becky Roth](#) or phone her (608)588-3432.

Footnote: *Greg Matthews serves as the South Central Region's public affairs manager.*


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