

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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.

June 4, 2009

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June training will address new safety in the workplace concerns

The DNR, in conjunction with Capitol Police, will conduct training in the second half of June to raise awareness and teach skills to enhance GEF 2 employees' abilities to effectively handle workplace health and safety needs.

"This training will address everything from the use of the Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) and the Stair Chairs to the mindset needed to deal with violent intruders," said Bureau of Law Enforcement Homeland Security coordinator **Bill Engfer**.

"We already have the equipment on most of the floors in GEF 2," said **Tom Joestgen**, Safety and Risk Management Section chief. "We've already conducted voluntary training on the use of the AEDs and the Stair Chairs, and now we need to deliver it to a wider audience of employees."

Training will be scheduled in a staggered fashion, with morning and afternoon sessions over the course of a couple of days, in the hope that all GEF 2 employees will find a time slot that fits into their workday.

"The Secretary's Office is strongly encouraging each employee to participate in this essential training," said **Vance Rayburn**, director of the Customer and Employee Services Division. "The goal is to schedule the training so that it can be done floor-by-floor."

Once the training is completed in the central office, it will be made available to department staff in regional headquarters and field stations.

Watch for more details on training

Information on the location and times of this training will be forthcoming.

"In addition to asking every GEF 2 employee to attend this training, I'm encouraging supervisors to support this opportunity for their staffs by assuring that their employees can attend one of the sessions," said Rayburn.



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Bill Volkert named Wildlife Educator of the Year for 2008

By: Doug Fendry, South Central Region

The gray in this educator's hair and beard are testament to the years he's given to wildlife education in Wisconsin, and elsewhere in the world. Yes, elsewhere in the world. Before we get to that, a little history on **Bill Volkert**, recently named Wildlife Educator of the Year by the Bureau of Wildlife Management.

Volkert began working on education programs in the early 1980s, delivering interpretive programs for the Ice Age Reserve in the Northern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest. There was another unit of the Ice Age Reserve System that drew his interest, however, leading to an internationally-renowned education program.



South Central Region director Lloyd Eagan, Secretary Matt Frank and Jerry Voy of the Horicon Friends Group were on hand to present the Wildlife Educator of the Year award to Bill Volkert (second from right) at the dedication ceremony for the education center.

Photo courtesy of the "Horicon Reporter"

In 1984, Volkert (then a limited term employee LTE) started interpreting Horicon Marsh's significance as a unit of the Ice Age Reserve System. Suspecting that visitors were more interested in the wildlife at the marsh than its Ice Age significance, he developed a wildlife education program. Volkert's skills and abilities developing and presenting wildlife education programs resulted in the department making the wildlife educator position permanent in 1988.

Fast forward twenty years, and 2008 was the year that Volkert exceeded providing 3,500 programs for over 200,000 people. That is saying a lot in itself and would be worthy of an award, but there is much more to this story.

When teachers and groups asked for programs, rather than just giving programs on what interested him, Volkert asked the teachers or group leaders what environmental topics they needed for their students and members, and he then proceeded to create programs to meet their needs. This resulted in programs for adults and every school age group from grade school through college, and included hosting teacher workshops.

Numerous thank-you notes commended Volkert for his tremendous enthusiasm and passion for Horicon Marsh's wildlife, even though he may have given the same program dozens of times. Teachers and group leaders went on to share their positive experiences with others, and the popularity of the programs grew to the point that changes were needed.

Under Volkert's leadership, the wildlife education program at Horicon grew. His gifts for speaking and promoting wildlife education lead to even broader exposure:

- Serving as a frequent guest on public radio shows and participating in many television, radio and newspaper interviews.
- Helping organize and serving as DNR's liaison to the Horicon Marsh Bird Club, which established the first bird festival in Wisconsin.
- Influencing designation of Horicon Marsh as a Globally Important Bird Area.
- Organizing and serving as DNR liaison to the Rock River Archeology Society.
- Speaking to statewide and national environmental groups and professional organizations, often serving as the keynote speaker.
- Writing or co-authoring many reports, popular articles and educational CDs.

Horicon Marsh has significance beyond Wisconsin and U.S. borders. As the only Wisconsin wetland designated a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, Volkert serves as a liaison and is a guest at the Convention's annual meeting. As a result of this international exposure, Volkert has presented programs to visiting environmental delegations from many countries, most recently China and Germany.



The new Horicon Marsh Education Center now houses educational programs under Bill Volkert's direction.
WDNR Photo

A trip to Lake Baikal in Buryatia, a federal subject of Russia, led to a unique partnership with the DNR. Recognizing the environmental problems in the Lake Baikal area, Volkert developed contacts with government natural resource administrators and staff, and worked with then Secretary Buzz Besadny and DNR administrators to develop a partnership with Buryatia. Subsequently, he led delegations of DNR administrators, staff and private consultants to work with Buryatia government staff and businesses to teach them how to improve their environmental programs and create educational programs.

After forming the Friends of the Horicon Marsh group, Volkert worked with them to raise funds for the new International Education Center. Beyond the center, he believed that it was important to foster even more community support and held a summit with community and business leaders from the nearby cities of Horicon and Mayville, discussing how they could benefit from being gateways to Horicon Marsh.

Given these and many other accomplishments, Bill Volkert certainly deserved being recognized as the Wildlife Educator of the Year.

Footnote: *Doug Fendry is a regional wildlife management supervisor.*



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New tool helps link environmental exposures and chronic disease

By: Anne Bogar and Jeff Myers, Bureau of Air Management

DNR staff worked with the Wisconsin Environmental Public Health Tracking (WI EPHT) program staff in the Department of Health Services to develop a website with databases of state environmental data and public health data in one location. Environmental and health outcome data are combined and can be examined to look for important relationships and trends connecting environmental exposures and chronic disease in Wisconsin.

The importance of this tool to the DNR

The link between public health and the environment is important in managing natural resources and the environment, and fulfilling the department's mission of protecting and enhancing our natural resources. The Wisconsin "[Environmental Public Health Tracking](#)" portal is part of a national EPHT Network that is under development via the joint effort of several state and local agencies, spearheaded by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). As the CDC's EPHT website states in its background documents:

"Currently, no systems exist at the state or national level to track many of the exposures and health effects that may be related to environmental hazards. In addition, in most cases, existing environmental hazard, exposure, and disease tracking systems are not linked together. Because existing systems are not linked, it is difficult to study and monitor relationships among hazards, exposures, and health effects."

In January 2001, the Pew Environmental Health Commission issued the report "America's Environmental Health Gap:

Why the Country Needs a Nationwide Health Tracking Network.” The report, which stated that the existing environmental health system is neither adequate nor well organized, recommended the creation of a “Nationwide Health Tracking Network for Disease and Exposures.” See the [CDC](#) website for background information.

State’s website offers one-stop-shopping

The Wisconsin EPHT program’s website provides a one-stop shop for researchers, local health departments and others interested in the connection between the environment and chronic disease. Organizations can use these data to prioritize resources, complete needs assessments, conduct field work, develop community health improvement plans and respond to inquiries.

Environmental data and public health data are now available on one website at Wisconsin’s [“Environmental Public Health Tracking”](#) website. The site **currently** features data on the following:

- Carcinogenic Emissions
- Criteria Air Pollutants
- Childhood Lead Poisoning
- Asthma
- Heart Attacks
- Reproductive Outcomes
- Drinking Water

Data available soon:

- Birth defects
- Cancer
- Carbon Monoxide Poisonings

A county profile summarizes the data areas for each county in the form of maps, charts, tables and information. The data also can be queried by numerous criteria to provide tables and maps. For example, reproductive outcomes can be queried by county or statewide for outcome e.g., premature births or low birth weight, infant gender, maternal age, maternal race and year.

There also is a private website that public health officials can access, allowing them to respond in more detail to concerns about disease clusters and for further analysis of environmental factors influencing public health. If DNR staff has questions that can’t be answered by data on the website, they can contact the Wisconsin EPHT program staff to discuss the data on the private website

A team of researchers, toxicologists, epidemiologists, information technologists and public health educators within the Division of Public Health lead the Wisconsin’s EPHT program. Email questions or suggestions about the new website to [DHFS EPHT](#).

Footnote: *Anne Bogar is an air management specialist and Jeff Myers is an environmental toxicologist.*



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Project WET training offered to naturalists and other employees

By: Amalia Baldwin, Bureau of Education and Information

The Bureau of Education and Information is inviting employees to participate in DNR-sponsored Project WET, Project WILD and Project Learning Tree, as a way to gain skills and resources for enhancing their outreach and educational efforts.

In addition to training for outreach and education, the bureau invites employees to serve as expert speakers during local workshops, or join the facilitator network and train teachers to use Project WET, Project Learning Tree and Project WILD.



Amalia Baldwin demonstrates the “A Drop in the Bucket” activity which helps student make the connection between the amount of water on earth and the amount of that water that can be consumed.

WDNR Photo

Joan Wilkie, naturalist guide at Newport State Park; **Carolyn Rock**, educator at White Fish Dunes State Park; **Mandy Knox**, assistant naturalist at the CD Besadny Fish Facility; and Wendy Wagner, summer naturalist at Potawatomi State Park (funded by the park’s friends group) joined twelve other educators on May 1 in Sturgeon Bay to receive training and materials at a Great Lakes Focused Project WET Workshop.

Workshop participants received the activity guides and a packet of Great Lakes resources for use in their classrooms and nature centers. In addition to the materials, workshop participants had time to share ideas and network with each other.

At the end of the “watery day,” Wilkie commented on her experiences. “This workshop gave educators confidence and created lots of interest.” Rock added that, “this was a great opportunity with tons of resources.”

Project WET is an environmental education curriculum with an activity guide filled with fun water-related, hands-on, easy-to-use activities related to atmospheric, surface and groundwater resources. At this workshop, I and Beth Carreno, Sheboygan-based volunteer facilitator, tweaked the activities to give them the Great Lakes focus.



Mandy Knox, naturalist at the CD Besadny Fish Facility performed the “H2Olympics” activity to learn the adhesive and cohesive properties of water.

WDNR Photo

All department employees may participate in future workshops for [Project WET](#), [Project WILD](#) and [Project Learning Tree](#) and can find the schedule of upcoming workshops on the [“Teacher Workshop & Events Calendar.”](#) Sign up to receive workshop alerts by subscribing to “Educator Workshops and Events” from the DNR home page.

Employees interested in becoming facilitators to train teachers for Project WET and/or Project Learning Tree Early Childhood should attend a workshop first and use the materials, then plan to attend the upcoming training on September 24 and/or 25. To register, contact **Annie Kalson**, program operations associate in the Bureau of Education and Information at 608/264-6280.

Footnote: *Amalia Baldwin is the DNR’s Project WET assistant coordinator in the Bureau of Education and Information.*



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Organizers remind bikers of Bike to Work Week, June 8-12

By: Mitch Nussbaum, Bureau of Technology Services

Bike to Work Week is almost upon us. In Madison, the week starts with an “Art Bike Rally” at the Farmers' Market on the Square on Saturday, June 6, and concludes with a “Final Party” at Vilas Park on Friday, June 12. In Milwaukee, the week starts with “Social Bike Rides” on June 6 and concludes with a “Bike-in Movie” on June 12. For details, and information about other statewide events, see the [Bike Federation of Wisconsin](#) website.

In central office, the highlight of the week is the “DNR Bike to Work Day Ride” on Wednesday, June 10. Groups of DNR employees, including Secretary **Matt Frank**, will ride to work from five directions, converging on GEF II at 7:45 a.m. for refreshments (courtesy of the GEF 2 Good Day Coffee Shop) and free bike tune-ups (courtesy of Machinery Row Bicycles). For details and maps, check the DNR “[Bike to Work](#)” website or contact me, [Mitch Nussbaum](#).

Some of the other DNR offices will have their own events to celebrate biking. DNR's South Central Region headquarters staff in Fitchburg will bike into work from the westside on one day next week, then ride along the Capital City Trail to a picnic lunch. Contact [Percy Mather](#) for details.

Wherever you are in Wisconsin, you can participate by:

- Biking to work
- Sending to [Bonnie Gruber](#) photos of DNR employees biking to work, to be posted on the “[Bike to Work](#)” webpage.
- Registering on the [Bike Federation](#) webpage, so we can keep track of DNR participation in “Bike to Work Week.”

Footnote: *Mitch Nussbaum is an information systems specialist.*



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Southeast Region staff leads by example during “Air Quality Watch”

By: Gloria McCutcheon, Southeast Region

Air quality monitoring and notification are year-round, but added emphasis in the summer highlights the health impacts of high ozone and fine particulate pollution. That's why region staff are asked to “lead by example” by taking steps to reduce pollutant levels while on the job.

The “Air Quality Watch and Advisory” program developed in 2006 provides notification to the public when elevated levels of ozone or fine particles are predicted for the next day. The National Weather Service then issues “Air Quality Watch/Advisory” messages to the media. The Environmental Protection Agency recently strengthened both the fine particle and ozone standards, resulting in an increase in watches and advisories.

“Leading by Example” is an initiative that allows Southeast Region (SER) employees to keep track of their voluntary actions, reward points, and calculate the environmental impact of their actions. The region previously lead the way through campaigns like “Take A Break From Exhaust.” “Taking Back” is the initiative that keeps track of actions, points and environmental impact as a means of fulfilling the “Leading by Example” or effort.

DNR issues an “Air Quality Watch” when the weather service forecasts that pollutant levels will be unhealthy for sensitive groups at the “Air Quality Index” orange level. The department issues an “Air Quality Advisory” when levels reach the orange level. Individuals can receive notification from DNR through a listserv sign-up on the department's “[Sign up for Air Program E-mail Updates](#)” website, and via the “Air Quality Hotline” at 1-866/DAILY AIR (1-866/324-5924).

SER has seen improvement in its air quality and takes the opportunity to lead by example to continue actions to reduce emissions that affect public health.

The following guidelines are steps to reduce pollutant levels on “Air Quality Watch” days. Employees work with their supervisors to take voluntary steps in their work units. Law enforcement, rescue work and critical resource protection activities are exempt from these guidelines.

Air Quality Watch workplace guidelines: it all adds up to cleaner air

- **Minimize vehicle travel:** Consider meetings via conference call or videoconference. If travel is required, use public transit if practical, carpool and/or use Ethanol-85 fueled vehicles. Postpone field work requiring vehicle travel if possible.
- **Refuel vehicles the day before the watch,** or in late afternoon or early evening of the watch day.
- **Arrive at work before 7 a.m. or after 9 a.m.** to avoid peak rush hour to reduce the pollutants discharged during stop and go traffic. Written supervisory approval is required.
- **Delay the use of gas or diesel powered equipment** (i.e., lawn mowers, weed trimmers, chain saws, wood chippers and leaf blowers) until the following day. If work must be done, do it later in the afternoon or use electrically-powered equipment.
- **Postpone outboard motor use** for non-critical activities until the following day, if possible.
- **Delay use of oil-based paints and solvents** until later in the afternoon or the next day.
- **Postpone prescribed burns** to another day, if possible.
- **Avoid vehicle engine idling.** Turn off engine if idling for longer than 30 seconds.

For answers to questions on the "Air Quality Watch and Advisory" program or air quality, contact one of the Southeast Region's Air Monitoring Transportation Team employees listed below:

- Air Quality Watch Program: **Jessica Lawent**, 414/263-8653; **Peter McMullen**, 414/263-8751; or **Jerry Medinger**, 414/263-8659
- Air Monitoring: **Anthony Bowers**, 414/263-8553; or **Sherry Sanford**, 414/263-8712

Footnote: *Gloria McCutcheon is the director of the Southeast Region.*



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Wisconsin "Forests and Climate Change" webinar now available

By: Autumn Sabo, Bureau of Education and Information

Watch, listen and learn about how climate change is affecting Wisconsin's forests from your own computer! The "[Wisconsin Forests and Climate Change](#)" webinar now is available. The presentation includes slides and video of the brown bag session held in Madison on April 20.

The presenter is **Avery Dorland**, forest geneticist and nurseries specialist in the Bureau of Forest Sciences and leader of the "Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts Forestry Working Group." Dorland details the good, the bad and the ugly of climate change impacts in easy-to-understand language. Check out the webinar at your leisure.

Footnote: *Autumn Sabo is a natural resources educator working with the Bureau of Air Management.*



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Natural Resources Board roadtrip includes restored Lake Delton

By: Greg Matthews, South Central Region

The Natural Resources Board (NRB) viewed a restored Lake Delton and a deconstructed Badger Army Ammunition Plant (BAAP) during a tour last week prior to its regular monthly meeting, held at the Ho-Chunk Casino and Convention Center in Baraboo.



South Central Region dam safety engineer Meg Galloway (far right) points out features of the upgraded Dell Creek Dam to DNR board members and staff.

WDNR Photo

Board members and others saw the Lake Delton breach area along rebuilt County Highway A, now reconstructed up to dam safety standards. They also viewed the upgraded Dell Creek Dam, which forms the 267-acre impoundment in Sauk County.

Agency staff from several programs participated in the expedited reconstruction of Lake Delton, including employees from the bureaus of Environmental Analysis and Review, Water Regulation and Zoning, Fisheries Management and Floodplain Management.



Elliott Funmaker, a Bear Clan member of the Ho-Chunk Nation, welcomed the NRB at the beginning of its meeting at the Ho-Chunk Casino and Convention Center

WDNR Photo

The NRB then went on to tour part of the 7,354-acre Badger Army Ammunition Plant, focusing on the estimated 3,400 acres that will be turned over to the DNR, possibly late this year. Over 800 of the 1,688 buildings, some highly contaminated, have been removed by the contractor as part of the U.S. Army's clean-up of the property.

Workers manufactured explosives and propellants at the sprawling facility from World War II through the Vietnam War. The army "mothballed" it in 1975 and formally closed it in 1998.



The concrete broken-up at the BAAP facility is part of a recycling project, and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation will use the material during reconstruction of nearby State Highway 78.

WDNR Photo

DNR's long-term goal is to develop and manage its land at BAAP as the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area, which the NRB approved in December 2002. Other recipients of BAAP land are the Ho-Chunk Nation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Dairy Forage Research Center, which already has received about 2,000 acres.

Footnote: *Greg Matthews is the public affairs manager for the South Central Region and, with regional finance supervisor Renee Sanford, organized the NRB's May meeting.*



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Southeast Region's Eco-Driving training cuts fleets' mileage

By: Lindsay Haas, Bureau of Education and Information

On Friday, May 29, the City of Milwaukee's Department of Public Works became the first fleet to graduate 16 employees from the DNR's new "Fleet Training on Eco-Driving" project.

DNR received a federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant (CMAQ) to promote eco-driving in the [air quality non-attainment area](#) of Wisconsin in hopes of lowering vehicle emissions and, in-turn, improving air quality.

After receiving the CMAQ grant, DNR Southeast Region (SER) staff contracted with Wisconsin Clean Cities--Southeast Area to help create a curriculum for training two fleets in the non-attainment area. Clean Cities then partnered with Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) and Bradley Fons, of the Milwaukee Hybrid Group, to create the curriculum and behind-the-wheel training.



Southeast Region director Gloria McCutcheon addressed trainees from the City of Milwaukee's Department of Public Works during Fleet Training on the Eco-driving project.

WDNR Photo

A panel chose the ["City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works" \(DWP\)](#) and ["Veolia Water"](#) in Milwaukee to participate in the Fleet Training on Eco-Driving project.

The City of Milwaukee DWP just finished training last Friday, May 29, and was able to increase their fleet's average mile per gallon from 12.9 to 14.2, a 10.42% increase. It's important to note that these statistics were taken over the winter, when gas mileage tends to decrease due to weather conditions.

Veolia Water-Milwaukee currently is in the middle of training and already is showing signs of improvement for their fleet's average miles per gallon, too!

All of this fuel is saved by doing simple things, like no jack-rabbit starts from stop lights, no idling, trip-chaining and more. To learn more about eco-driving, visit ["Do a Little, Save a Lot."](#) website.

For more information on SER's Eco-Driving training contact me, [Lindsay Haas](#), or phone me at 262/574-2113.

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



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Afghanistan's natural resources managers learn role of public involvement

By: Matt Groppi, Bureau of Law Enforcement & U.S. Army Reserves

On May 12, with the support of my chain of command, I traveled out to the [Bamiyan Province](#) with the intent of visiting the national park at [Band-e-Amir](#) and giving a presentation to the park staff. Unfortunately my flight got delayed and I missed the ride out there. I knew, however, that there still was work I could do with local groups primarily concerned with increasing tourism.

In the city of Bamiyan, I visited [historic sites](#) that were once major tourist attractions. Many of the natural resource managers also had their offices in this city, because the national park is so remote. They work mainly at the provincial or local level, but in some cases work for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Aga Khan Foundation.



Matt Groppi (middle) posed for this shot with members of the Aga Khan Foundation (left to right) Eco-tourism officer Aga Khan Foundation Amir Foladi; deputy program management officer Ghualm Abbas; natural resources management coordinator and engineer Altaf; livestock manager Doctor Nasir; and natural resources management program officer Ghulam ABBAS Khoshal.

WDNR Photo

My chain of command was supportive of this mission to the Bamiyan Province because of my civilian background as a conservation warden and a University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point alumnus. I traveled with the New Zealand Army, a small contingent of which is the main International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in the province, with the primary mission of provincial reconstruction.

I'm interested in the historic sites because I'd done some research earlier on the U.S. National Park Services' "Reaching Out, Reaching In" ["Reaching Out, Reaching In"](#) website and found a guide on creating effective public participation programs. It contained a case study on the "Maryland Plan," which aimed to preserve state historic sites, so I tailored my presentation to apply to tourism officials and natural resource managers.

I gave the managers a presentation on how the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources uses community involvement to manage our natural resources. I thought that in their case, they'd be able to use the information to get their community more involved. With the historic sites and the national park in the same province, I think there's tremendous potential to use participation from the public and private sectors to improve tourism and the local economy.

Non-traditional governor strongly supports conservation and sets priorities

I attended a provincial council meeting my second day in Bamiyan. It was interesting to hear the local politicians discuss reconstruction in the province, at least what I could gather based on what was translated into English.

It was obvious, however, that there was a lot of disagreement on priorities. Governor Habiba Sarabi, the only female governor in Afghanistan, did have a strong command of the council meeting. This was encouraging to see, because I suspect that a female leader has to possess a strong personality in this role, particularly in this country where women have long been oppressed.

I had an opportunity to meet the governor after the meeting and told her that I was a conservation warden in the U.S. and was in Bamiyan to meet with her staff and others who manage the natural resources. Gov. Sarabi was excited to hear that. She thought that it would be a great for me to share my ideas with the different groups in the region, including a

protected area committee, park staff, tourism office staff, the Aga Khan Foundation, Bamiyan University students, and a local watershed committee.

Foundation helps rebuild agriculture, livestock and land management

It was an honor to meet the governor after reading about her in an issue of "Time Magazine." I was only able to meet with the director of the Tourism Office and five members of the Aga Khan Foundation, an international organization assisting with development and reconstruction. One of the ways they do this is through agricultural, livestock and land management projects.

Some of these projects include planting native grasses to rehabilitate the land damaged by decades of war; implementing erosion control measures along the hills and streams; planting vegetable and cereal crops in green houses, because of the arid climate; and planting fruit trees in areas where they're able to grow.

The Bamiyan government's Tourism Office focuses on building the capacity of the local government via projects such as advertising the region to the international community to promote tourism, and encouraging private sector development. Private sector development assists with business management plans for the local shops, and marketing restaurants and hotels. Bamiyan is the sister city of Scott's Bluff, Nebraska, which aids with cultural exchanges and tourism promotion.

Promoted notion that public participation sustains natural resources

Later in the afternoon, I met with the members of the [Aga Khan Development Network \(AKDN\)](#), a group of development agencies with mandates ranging from health and education to architecture, culture, microfinance, rural development, disaster reduction, promotion of private-sector enterprise, and the revitalization of historic cities.

I gave a presentation to the tourism director and the AKDN centered on the Wisconsin warden service and our use of community involvement as a strategy for conservation of natural resources.

I told the group that of Wisconsin's \$12 billion annual tourism revenue, a significant portion of that is associated with our state's natural resources. Just as important is sustainability of that revenue. I explained that active participation of communities in managing those resources enhances public support for a regulatory framework that promotes their sustainable use.

I think they were able to benefit from this message, because they're ultimately concerned with economic improvement and view their natural resources and historic sites as a means to that end. They came to realize that the best way to improve tourism and their economy is by involving the community in the natural resource management process.

I also used examples of how the DNR involves communities through specific programs with measurable goals. For example by organizing cleanups with community groups or teaching youth how to hunt and fish, the DNR is promoting a conservation ethic which serves to support sustainable use and voluntary compliance with regulations.

Those present agreed to incorporate some of these ideas into their programs. Specifically, they were most interested in forming partnerships with local schools to get students involved because of the benefits it will have over the long term.



Matt Groppi sat where statues of Buddha once stood, before the Taliban destroyed them in 2001.

WDNR Photo

Next visit: roadmap and training goals

When the presentation ended, I was invited to give it to others. The director of the Tourism Office wanted me to meet with his tour guides and a group of students from the local university. In addition, I was asked to meet with the Band-e-Amir Protected Area Committee. I was under time constraints for this trip, however, but told them that I would try to coordinate another visit.

During the next visit, I proposed doing a training session or a workshop where we would identify problems and stakeholders, and brainstorm potential solutions. The goal would be to develop a roadmap with which they could solve problems by coordinating among themselves and their communities.

Experiencing culture and history link tourism and conservation

The next day, I travelled to local historic sites such as the hollows where the two giant statues of Buddha stood for over 1500 years, until the Taliban destroyed them in March 2001.

I also visited the Sharh E. Ghulghula, a Mongol fortress where Genghis Khan lived. The majority of the Bamiyan residents descends from the Mongols and are ethnic Hazara, a minority people in the rest of Afghanistan. They're predominately Shiite Muslims who speak Farsi and have long been oppressed under the ethnic Pashtu Sunni Muslim majority.

After visiting these breathtaking sites, it's easy for me to understand why this region has tremendous tourism potential. With the national park, the area could once again be a popular destination for international tourists, as it was prior to the Soviet invasion in 1979 and the subsequent rise of the Taliban.

The success of Afghanistan's tourism industry always will be intrinsically linked to the area's political stability, and conversely the political situation always will be linked to the economic situation of the Afghan people. Hopefully by involving their communities in the management of their natural resources and historic sites, the people will increase tourism and in turn improve their economic situation.

Footnote: Read warden Matt Groppi's first "journal" entry in the May 7 "DNR Digest" story "[Conservation warden Matt Groppi is 'ambassador' to Afghanistan](#)" Future issues of the "Digest" will include journal entries from Groppi, as his duties permit.

Region honors land trust with Environmental Corridor Award

By: Mike Thompson, Southeast Region

The DNR's Southeast Region (SER), Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) and Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District (MMSD) presented the 2009 Phillip H. Lewis, Jr., Environmental Corridor Ovation (ECO) Award to The Ozaukee Washington Land Trust, Inc. on April 22 at the annual "Sustain, Reconnect, and Grow the Environmental Corridors" celebration at the Havenwoods State Forest and Environmental Awareness Center. "The Ozaukee Washington Land Trust exemplifies Professor Lewis' commitment to environmental stewardship," said Southeast Region director **Gloria McCutcheon**. "The Land Trust's preservation of the Donges Bay Gorge, a bald eagle nesting site on the Lake Michigan shoreline in Mequon, is just one example of its benefit to citizens, students and scientists who value environmental corridors."

(Sorry, can't display photo, here)

Posing with the 2009 Environmental Corridor Ovation (ECO) Award after the ceremony were (left to right) Gloria McCutcheon, SER director; Phillip H. Lewis, Jr., professor emeritus of Landscape Architecture at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; Shawn Graff, executive director of The Ozaukee Washington Land Trust, Inc.; Ken Yunker, director of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission; and Steve McCarthy, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District.

WDNR Photo

The ECO Award grew out of an initiative to "Sustain, Reconnect, and Grow the Environmental Corridors" and was established in 2006 through the efforts of the DNR, SEWRPC and MMSD. It's named for the first recipient, Philip E. Lewis, Jr., founder of the environmental corridor concept. Environmental corridors are defined as "areas in the landscape containing especially high value natural, scenic, historic, scientific and recreational features."

The Ozaukee Land Trust was founded in 1992 with the vision and goal of protecting the woodlands in the Ozaukee community. In its first two years, the organization completed two major land preservation projects: the 27-acre Sauk Creek Nature Preserve in Port Washington, and the 84-acre Highland Woods in Mequon.

The Ozaukee Washington Land Trust seeks to restore and manage environmental corridor properties with the goal of helping restore natural systems and improve public access. The organization has worked to establish valuable partnerships with educational, environmental, and government agencies and organizations to carry out its mission, focusing on four main areas of partnership: education and youth; higher education and internships; land protection, restoration and stewardship; and environmental and wildlife research.

By working in partnership with these organizations, The Ozaukee Washington Land Trust has conducted research projects, restored environmental corridors and preserved more than 4,100 acres in the two-county area through acquisitions and easements.

Footnote: Mike Thompson is the SER's Environmental Analysis and Review supervisor.

Drawdown of southwest pond and lake to improve wildlife habitat

By: Greg Matthews, South Central Region

By lowering the water levels at Bakkens Pond and Long Lake flowage in Sauk County this summer, wildlife habitat will begin to improve and the water levels of both impoundments will be raised in advance of the fall hunting season.

Last year DNR attempted a full drawdown, but spring flooding changed those plans.

“The primary management of these impoundments is to preserve and enhance wetland habitat types for waterfowl and other wildlife through seasonal water level control,” pointed out wildlife biologist **Becky Roth**, stationed at Tower Hill State Park.

The two impoundments, located south of State Highway 60-14 in Sauk County between Lone Rock and Spring Green, are part of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway. The Bakkens Pond impoundment encompasses about 80 acres of flowage and Long Lake about 200 acres.

Periodic drawdowns of the two flowages are necessary for several reasons:

to stabilize and consolidate accumulated bottom sediments;

to expose mudflats, allowing seeds to germinate and provide feeding sites for shorebirds;

to anchor floating bog mats to prevent blockage of spillways and water control structures; and

to allow for routine maintenance of dike slopes as required by Wisconsin Administrative Code.

Long earthen dikes impound each flowage. These dikes contain emergency spillways, which allow for flood waters to pass over the dikes without damaging them. Water levels are controlled by removing and adding stop logs within a control structure placed through the dikes.

Spring drawdowns on waterfowl impoundments are beneficial to the plants and wildlife in these wetlands. Soils settle and floating bog mats anchor to the flowage. Wetland plants such as smartweed and bulrushes quickly cover the exposed mudflats and provide a great food source for waterfowl, shorebirds and other wildlife species, Roth explained.

“While some folks might find these mudflats unappealing, these flowages are undergoing revitalization, and this will become apparent later in the year. Habitat will improve over the summer and create a good spot for fall hunting,” she added.

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