

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.

October 8, 2009

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Enroll online in October for health insurance coverage

October 5-23 is the enrollment period for this year's "It's Your Choice 2010" health insurance. You'll receive an email in early October containing a link to the health insurance booklet and the application. Employee Trust Funds (ETF) has replaced the term "Dual Choice" with "It's Your Choice."

There are two "It's Your Choice" booklets available for 2010: a "Decision Guide" and a "Reference Guide." The first guide provides employees with information they need to make a health plan decision. The other guide contains technical information such as the full certificate of coverage and required federal notifications.

You can take an early look at the ["It's Your Choice 2010 Decision Guide"](#) plans and provisions on the ETF website. Once you're on this page, you'll see icons on the left side of the page. Click on the "bookmark" icon to see chapter headings and more easily navigate the booklet.

During this period, employees and retirees who as of October 1, 2009 are covered by a state health insurance plan may:

- enroll domestic partners and their domestic partners' eligible dependents;
- enroll eligible adult children for coverage up to the end of the month in which they turn age 27, as long as they aren't married and aren't eligible for coverage under a group health plan that is offered by their employer and for which the amount of the premium isn't greater than the premium amount as a dependent;
- change from one plan to another;
- change from single to family coverage.

Changes made during the "It's Your Choice" period will be effective January 1, 2010. **The January premium deduction will appear on your November 19 paycheck.**

More information is available on the ETF ["Group Health Insurance"](#) website. Even if you're satisfied with your current health plan, you should read carefully the "It's Your Choice 2010" booklet to learn whether there are major changes in your coverage. Employees wanting to continue in their current health plan should do the following:

- Verify that their current plans will be available in their area for 2010.
 - Verify tier 1, 2 or 3 placement for their plan. Plans may have changed tier placement from 2009 coverage, resulting in a higher or lower employee contribution toward the premium.
 - Verify that selected physicians, clinics and/or hospitals still are available under their plans in 2010.
 - Review changes in benefits by reading the ["Important Changes for 2010,"](#) as well as the individual plan descriptions found in the "It's Your Choice" 2010 booklet.
 - Call the health plan directly with specific benefit or provider questions.
- 2010 premiums for non-represented, project and LTE employees will be as listed below. Represented employees with unsettled contracts will see their premium continue at their current rate.

- **Tier 1** Single Rate is \$35 and the Family Rate is \$85
- **Tier 2** Single Rate is \$75 and the Family Rate is \$188
- **Tier 3** Single Rate is \$179 and the Family Rate is \$448

If you wish to make health insurance changes during the "It's Your Choice" period:

- First, complete the ["Group Health Insurance Application/Change"](#) form.
- Then print, sign and return the application to Betty McWilliams in HR/8 or your regional payroll specialist **by 4:30 p.m. on October 23.**

No action is necessary if you don't want to change plans or change coverage. If you'd prefer to have a paper copy of the 2010 "It's Your Choice," "Decision Guide" or "Reference Guide" booklet or application, email [Betty McWilliams](#) or call her at (608)266-0850. Regional staff should contact their regional [payroll and benefits specialist](#). HR also will send library copies of the booklets to many DNR offices for employee reference.

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Secretary unveils proposed endangered resources license designs

Voting begins on Friday, October 9

Secretary **Matt Frank** today, October 8, announced an online survey to help gauge opinions on a new license plate design to benefit Wisconsin's endangered resources. The selected design will be available in addition to the grey wolf featured on the Endangered Resources plate since 1995.

Online voting begins at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, October 9 and ends at midnight on Monday, October 19.

"We are excited about the opportunity to offer a new endangered resources license plate and this survey will help gauge opinions on the potential designs," said Sec. Frank. "The four plate designs depict native Wisconsin wildlife and their habitat in full color using the latest technology."



Just one of the four proposed, high-quality license plate designs.

WDNR Photo

Wisconsin's new endangered resources license plate will feature [one of four new designs](#) in high photographic quality using flat plate, digital technology that allows more detail and color.

The four plate options were designed by Nan Rudd of Rudd Designs at no cost to the DNR or the state. They include:

- Badger, tiger swallowtail butterfly and Eastern Meadowlark in a Wisconsin savanna and prairie;
- Eastern Bluebird and monarch butterfly in a threatened Wisconsin prairie ecosystem;
- Great Blue Heron perched on a log with sunlit waters and lily pads framed by coniferous forest; and

- Red-headed Woodpecker set against a background of gently rolling savanna, wild lupine plants and the rare Karner blue butterfly.

The final design will be available to Wisconsin motorists for a \$25 contribution. One hundred percent of the \$25 will be used to support the Endangered Resources conservation fund.

“Funds from this program help protect habitat and provide some of the last refuges for colorful and diverse plants and animals that call Wisconsin home like those featured on the new license plate designs,” said Sec. Frank. “Since 1995, the endangered resources license plate has been very popular, and we are happy to provide another option to the current wolf plate.”

To vote for your favorite plate design, visit the [DNR Internet homepage](#) and click on the license plate feature button.



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Submit those deer observations from summer months

By: Brian Dhuey, Bureau of Science Services

If you haven't already done so, now is the time to submit deer observations you collected during the Summer Deer Observation period, which ended at dusk on September 30.



An observer would delight in adding this “spike” buck to their count.

WDNR Photo

If you collected deer observations during July, August and September and have yet to report them, you have two choices for getting them in: 1) mail your observation form to Brian Dhuey, 2801 Progress Ave, Madison, WI 53716, or 2) report your observations online at [“Summer Deer Observations.”](#)

Your observations play an important role in estimating deer population levels throughout the state. Knowing the productivity of the herd plays a role in making fall hunting predictions and in assessing herd health.

Yearly since 1960, DNR employees have been asked to report the location, deer type and number of fawns seen from

dawn to dusk for three summer months. The department then compiles these data and makes them available to the public and researchers for planning upcoming hunting-to-population modeling. Find last year's survey report at "[Summer Deer Observations 2008.](#)"

The Wildlife and Forestry Section of Science Services thanks all who participated in this year's survey. Any questions or comments about this survey should be emailed to me, [Brian Dhuey](#), or call me at (608)221-6342.

Footnote: *Brian Dhuey is a wildlife surveys and database manager in the Wildlife & Forestry Research Section.*



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Anthem Dental Insurance open enrollment closes on November 13

Between October 5 and November 13 all employees, including LTEs, are eligible to enroll in Anthem (DentalBlue) Dental Insurance during this open enrollment period if they also are enrolled in the state's Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS). LTEs who are collecting an annuity from the WRS aren't eligible for Anthem Dental.

During open enrollment, eligible employees may elect to:

- Enroll in Anthem for single coverage, two-person coverage or family coverage.
- Change from single, two-person or family coverage to another level of coverage.
- Change from one of the three offered plans (described below) to a different plan.
- Enroll domestic partners and children of domestic partners.
- Enroll unmarried adult children to age 27 as long as they aren't eligible for coverage under a group health plan that is offered by their employer and for which the amount of the premium isn't greater than the premium amount as a dependent.

New for 2010 is the requirement that once enrolled, the employee must stay enrolled in the dental plan for the entire calendar year. Notification to your regional [payroll and benefit specialist](#) or central office Bureau of Human Resources (HR/8) is required by December 1 to end coverage for the following calendar year.

All changes made during this open enrollment period will be effective January 1, 2010.

You can review all Anthem Dental information and enrollment materials electronically at: Employee Trust Funds "[Anthem's DentalBlue and Other Dental Coverage](#)" webpage. Simply click on the first link "Plan summary and Premium rates" to review the plans offered. Monthly rates for 2010 haven't increased. Click on the "Group dental application form" and complete it to enroll in one of the plans or to make changes.

Employees must complete, print and sign all applications and return them to central office payroll and benefits specialist **Betty McWilliams**, HR/8 or your regional payroll office. No action is necessary if you don't want to change plans or change existing coverage.

Pay particular attention to the differences between the three plan options:

- With the **Dentacare HMO** option, you must use your selected Dentacare HMO dental provider to receive benefits. You may change Dentacare centers twice per calendar year if you desire. The Dentacare HMO option doesn't include any waiting periods for coverage.
- The **Preferred PPO** option allows you to see the dentist of your choice; however, your out-of-pocket costs will be lower if you visit a dental provider who is affiliated with Anthem, where you'll receive a higher level of coverage. **Note:** There is a three-month waiting period for coverage of basic and major services.
- The **Supplemental Plan** specifically is designed to wrap around a health plan's dental benefits. To be eligible for the Supplemental Plan, your health plan must provide routine diagnostic and preventive coverage. If you change health plans and your new health plan doesn't cover diagnostic and preventive dental services, you must submit an application to cancel your coverage or change to the Dentacare HMO or Preferred PPO. **Note:** There is a three-month waiting period for coverage of basic and major services.

If you wish to enroll, change plans or add eligible dependents:

- First, complete the "[Group DentalBlue Application](#)"
- Then, print and sign the completed application.
- Finally, return the signed application to Betty McWilliams, HR/8, or your regional payroll office no later than 4:30 p.m. on November 14.

If you want to review or obtain a paper copy of these materials, contact [Betty McWilliams](#), HR/8, (608)266-0850 or your regional [payroll and benefit specialist](#).



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Renovated Wild Rose Hatchery and staff garner international award

By: Lisa Gaumnitz, Office of Communication

The \$15.9 million renovation of Wild Rose State Hatchery's coldwater facilities has won the highest award possible from an international engineering association, an honor due in large part to the hatchery and central office staff who worked on the project.

The project, which developed new coldwater fish rearing facilities on the grounds of the century-old hatchery, won the Award of Excellence in Engineering from the Association of Conservation Engineers.

"When we started this project, we were committing to build a facility that used the most modern design based on the best fish propagation science available that would serve our needs well into this century," says Bureau of Fisheries director **Mike Staggs**. "This award shows we accomplished that."



Wild Rose Hatchery employees on hand for the grand opening were : (front row) Dave Swansby, Steve Fajfer, Randy Larson and Amanda Alexander; (middle row) Ben Heimbach, Jake Seifert, Todd Rice, Tom Van Effen, Steve Devitt, Rich Klett and Joan Voigt; (back row) Terry Carpenter, Dennis Kropp , Jon Hoffman and Joe Mankowski

WDNR Photo

"The thing that was different about the design of this facility was the close involvement of the hatchery supervisor **Steve Fajfer** and the whole staff from the very beginning. It was built to work and the people who were going to be running it already knew how to do it because they played such a major role in designing it. Both Steve Fajfer and **Al Kaas**, statewide fish propagation coordinator, were key in making that happen," added Staggs.

Bob Roads, the HDR/FishPro project manager who led the Illinois firm's team that designed most of the project and was the consultant throughout, echoed this assessment.

"DNR staff worked very closely on the design and the construction portion of this project," he said. "Obviously we couldn't have done this without their cooperation and initiation. A lot of unique features incorporated in the project were suggested or improved upon by DNR staff."

Fajfer launched the effort to renovate the hatchery more than 20 years ago with a report detailing the hatchery's problems, but also its critical role in the state hatchery system. This was particularly the case for sustaining fishing opportunities for Lake Michigan trout and salmon. Fajfer served as the DNR's onsite project manager.

Kaas was the department's main contact with HDR/FishPro, the firm that designed the majority of the project and served as consultant throughout, along with Isthmus Architects and Liesch Environmental Services, both Wisconsin firms. Here are just a few examples of the innovations in the project:

- using the sun to break down chemical levels in the treated water before it goes back into the hatchery system or is released to the Pine River;
- reducing water use by laying out the raceways so that water could be reused in different raceways;
- adding an oxygen injection system to allow the hatchery to raise more fish without increasing water demand.

Roads and **John Hagman**, DNR's chief of Facilities Management in the Bureau of Facilities and Land, accepted the award at a ceremony in Cody WY, in August. Hagman shepherded the project through the state building commission.

The award was for the first phase of the project, which was completed in 2008 and created all new coldwater facilities that allow the DNR to continue producing Chinook, coho and brown trout. In the future, it will enable Wild Rose to start raising rainbow trout, eventually increasing by 15 percent the total amount of trout and salmon produced for Lake Michigan.

Work started earlier this year to build new coolwater facilities for musky, walleye, lake sturgeon and northern pike, and is expected to be completed in 2010. That expansion will allow Wild Rose to double its production of these species. A third phase will restore the wetland, springs and stream disturbed when the hatchery was originally built in the early 1900s by a private fish farmer.

For more information about the renovation, including video of the grand opening ceremony in August 2008, go to the [Wild](#)

[Rose Hatchery](#) webpage. Also, see the "DNR Digest" story "[Wild Rose Hatchery grand opening signals increased fishing opportunities.](#)"

Footnote: *Lisa Gaumnitz is a public affairs manager working with the Bureau of Fisheries Management.*

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Enroll in VSP vision insurance by November 13

This fall, VSP vision insurance will become the state's new vision provider. As a result, because coverage for employees currently enrolled in OptumHealth Vision (formerly Spectera) will end December 13, they **must re-enroll with VSP to continue coverage.**

Employees and retirees will receive VSP materials at their home addresses. To review these materials online, go to "[VSP Vision Care for Life](#)" and click on "Eyecare Info."

Employees eligible to enroll in the state's health insurance, regardless of whether or not you elected to enroll, are eligible to enroll in Vision Insurance during this open enrollment period. LTEs not yet enrolled in the WRS aren't eligible to enroll in VSP vision insurance.

During open enrollment, eligible employees may elect to:

- Enroll in VSP for employee, employee plus spouse, employee plus children, or employee plus family coverage

You must take action if you want to continue your existing coverage.

All changes made during the October 5-November 13 open enrollment period will be effective January 1, 2010. Once enrolled, you must remain enrolled the entire calendar year.

You may enroll online, by telephone, fax or mail direct with VSP. Don't send the application to your payroll representative. If you wish to obtain a paper copy of these materials, call VSP at (800)400-4569.

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Board accepts \$1.9 million for Horicon Education Center

By: Greg Matthews, South Central Region

The Natural Resources Board (NRB) recently accepted a \$1.9 million donation from the Friends of Horicon Marsh International Education Center to help pay for the new center. The board accepted the donation at its September meeting held in Sturgeon Bay.



NRB chair Christine Thomas thanks Jerry Voy, president of the Friends of Horicon Marsh International Education Center for the group's generous contribution to the center. Deputy secretary Pat Henderson stands to Voy's right.

WDNR Photo

A project first visualized 18 years ago has now reached fruition thanks in large part to the friends group. Formed in 1994, it has worked tirelessly since to raise \$1,910,000 to help fund the education center's final project budget of \$5 million.

The new facility features an auditorium and high-tech audio visual center, two classrooms with lab space for hands-on experiences, a gift shop and a traveling exhibit. A large public viewing area allows for a spectacular overlook of the

32,000-acre Horicon Marsh, recognized as "A Wetland of International Importance." NRB chair Christine Thomas expressed the board's appreciation on behalf of Wisconsin's citizens for the friends group's "generous contribution" to help construct the Horicon Marsh education center. Seven citizen members make up the NRB policy-setting body for the DNR. Board members, appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state Senate, are: Christine Thomas chair, Stevens Point; Jonathan Ela, vice chair, Madison; John Welter, secretary, Eau Claire; David Clausen, Amery; Preston Cole, Milwaukee; Gary Rohde, River Falls; and Jane Wiley, Wausau.

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

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Employee Reimbursement Account enrollment open now

This fall the [Employee Trust Fund's](#) website includes an online version of the "[Employee Reimbursement Account \(ERA\) Program](#)" for plan year 2010. No hardcopies of the ERA booklet will be distributed to state employees. You may obtain a hardcopy of the booklet by contacting your [regional payroll and benefit specialist](#), emailing [Betty McWilliams](#) in the Bureau of Human Resources or calling her at (608)266-0850.

Also new this year is the "myFBMC Card" reimbursement option. Employees may use this debit card to pay for eligible medical expenses.

During the ERA open enrollment period employees may elect to:

- enroll to have between \$100 and \$7,500 deducted on a pre-tax basis for eligible medical expenses; and/or
- enroll to have a maximum of \$5,000 per family deducted on a pre-tax basis for eligible child care expenses.

You must re-enroll each year to continue to participate in the ERA program. Enrollment becomes effective January 1, 2010. LTEs aren't eligible to enroll in the ERA program.

Enroll online or by telephone between October 5 and 9 p.m. on November 13:

- Go to "[Welcome to myFBMC.com](#)" website to enroll online. After you've completed the enrollment process, print your confirmation for future reference.
- Call (800)847-8253 to enroll by telephone. Be sure to stay on the line until you've received your confirmation number.

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Governor proclaims October Employee Assistance Month

Also focuses on a Drug Free Workplace

Governor Jim Doyle has proclaimed October "[Employee Assistance and Drug Free Awareness Month.](#)"

The DNR Employee Assistance Program (EAP) has provided services to employees and their immediate families since 1983. All DNR employees and their families can voluntarily and anonymously access the [central office and regional EAP staff](#) for confidential support, consultation, problemsolving, information and referral for a wide range of personal and workplace problems including, but not limited to:

- stress and burnout
- interpersonal conflict
- alcohol and drug abuse
- physical health/wellness
- parenting concerns
- financial and legal issues
- physical/sexual abuse
- marital and relationship problems
- coping with loss and grief
- child/elder care
- psychological and emotional health

Program director [Jeff Carroll](#) provides EAP services from the Bureau of Human Resources Employee Assistance Office (608-266-2133) in Madison. Trained peer volunteers provide similar services, throughout the department. Services are available to every DNR employee (including LTE, project and seasonal) and members of their immediate family.

For handouts and resource information, contact EAP central office staff or find the name and phone number of a local DNR EAP volunteer by visiting the [DNR Employee Assistance](#) webpage.



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If you can't safely avoid a deer on the road, here's what to do

By: Tom Joestgen, Fleet & Risk Management Section

Imagine that it's nighttime and you're traveling down a rural highway. There are woods along one side of the road and a field along the other. At the edge of the woods, a set of eyes are illuminated in your headlights. A deer runs across the highway and stops in the field, looking back towards the woods. Suddenly, another deer follows out of the woods and you hit it with your vehicle. Instinctively, you apply the breaks and come to a stop in the middle of the highway. Unfortunately, you've just become one of the thousands of motorists who collide with deer in Wisconsin each year.

Millions of motorists commute within and travel through Wisconsin, which is home to approximately 1.6 million whitetail deer. The combination results in vehicle versus deer collisions that often cause injuries--some fatal--to motorists, tens of thousands of car-killed deer, and millions of dollars in property damage each year.



Last year, a reported 15,821 deer collided with motorized vehicles of all sorts.

WDNR Photo

It's possible to prevent some of these collisions. By driving defensively, maintaining awareness of your surroundings, driving at a speed appropriate for road conditions give you the best chance to stop safely.

If you see a deer, immediately apply the brakes, while staying in your lane of traffic, and maintain control of the vehicle. According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, lay on the horn if you can do so safely while keeping control of your vehicle. Honking the horn likely will scare away that deer and others.

Most likely, consider that where there's one deer, there usually are more. When confronted with colliding with a deer, a motorist should never choose between hitting the deer or swerving, potentially losing control and colliding with an approaching vehicle or obstruction along the roadway. **It's safer to hit the deer.**

You've hit the deer, now here's what you do

After colliding with a deer, park safely out of traffic with hazard lights on. If your vehicle no longer works, stay out of traffic until help arrives.

If neither you or your passenger(s) suffers any injuries, and there's no significant damage to your vehicle, you're not required to submit a report. If there are injuries, and/or damages that you estimate could exceed \$1,000, you must report the incident to law enforcement.

A motorist can request a free tag to keep a deer that is accidentally killed on a highway by a motor vehicle, and the officer can tag it for them. If the operator of the vehicle that struck the deer does not want to claim it, others at the scene also can request a free tag to possess the deer. It isn't legal to take the deer before it's tagged, unless first authorized by a law enforcement officer. Only law enforcement officers should shoot an injured deer, though.

In the event that you collide with a deer while driving a DNR vehicle that results in damage to that vehicle, you can find the specific information on what to do at the department's "[Fleet Management](#)" website.

Editor's Note: Although the chances are that you can hit a deer in Wisconsin at any time of year, fall is typically the time of the highest chance for vehicle/deer collisions. State Farm Insurance published the "[Likelihood of Deer-Vehicle Collision](#)" map depicting the likelihood of a deer collision within the next 12 months broken down by state. Wisconsin

ranks up there with several other high-risk states. **Karen Kreger**, property & liability manager in the DNR's Risk Management Section.

Footnote: Tom Joestgen is chief of the DNR's Fleet & Risk Management Section in the Division of Customer and Employee Services.



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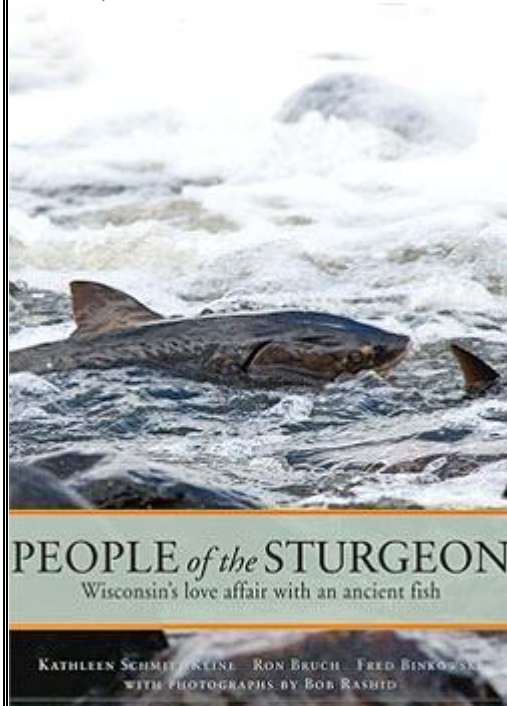
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October 10 event celebrates "People of the Sturgeon" book

By: Lisa Gaumnitz, Office of Communication

Wisconsin boasts the world's largest self-sustaining population of lake sturgeon, and the local authors of a new book about this ancient fish and the culture that's grown up around it will be featured October 10 in a book signing and discussion in Madison.

The event for "People of the Sturgeon: Wisconsin's Love Affair with An Ancient Fish" is part of the Wisconsin Book Festival, which will start at 10 a.m. at the Brittingham Boathouse, 601 North Shore Dr., Madison.



"People of the Sturgeon" book cover

WDNR Photo

Sturgeon enthusiasts will get the chance to hear the authors, including **Ron Bruch**, the lead DNR biologist managing the sturgeon population, and Kathleen Schmidt Kline, a Madison resident and UW-Madison Sea Grant Institute science writer. The authors will talk about their favorite stories featured in the book.

The book also contains comments made by DNR's **Kendall Kamke**, Winnebago fisheries biologist, and **Dan Folz**, retired Winnebago sturgeon biologist. Sturgeon for Tomorrow donated \$25,000 to underwrite publication costs for the book.

"People of the Sturgeon," published by the Wisconsin Historical Society Press, features dozens of sturgeon stories and historic photographs collected from spearers; decoy carvers; poachers; retired game wardens and sturgeon biologists; Menominee Tribal elders; and others from throughout the Winnebago-Fox-Wolf River System. It also features the images of the late photographer Bob Rashid.

Other events highlighting the book and its authors are set for October 20 in Madison and October 22 in Appleton. More information about these events and how to buy the book is available online through DNR's "[People of the Sturgeon](#)" multimedia page. Be sure to click here on "[Take a look at these photos taken during sturgeon spawning season.](#)" or while on the webpage, to view photos taken during sturgeon spawning,

Footnote: Lisa Gaumnitz is a public affairs manager working with the Bureau of Fisheries Management.



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Comment on Chequamegon Forest “Motor Vehicle Use Map”

In January 2009, the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF) released its first annual [“Motor Vehicle Use Map” \(MVUM\)](#), which displays roads and trails designated as open to public motorized travel in the forest. The forest is seeking public requests for adding or removing roads and trails.

A hardcopy of the map also is available free of charge at any of the forest’s offices.



All terrain vehicle (ATV) riders enjoy a sunny day along a trail in the Chequamegon Forest.

CNNF Photo

The CNNF anticipates publishing the next MVUM in March 2010. The deadline to submit comments/requests is November 30, 2009.

The public is asked to be specific in making their comments/requests, including: road number (if possible); whether they want highway legal vehicles (HLV) and/or all terrain vehicles (ATV), or no use designated; and a brief rationale for the request.

Submit requests by downloading the [“Road Request Form”](#) from the website or by mailing the request in any form to CNNF, Attn: MVUM, 1170 4th Ave. S., Park Falls, WI 54552.

The U.S. Forest Service published the “Travel Management Rule” (TMR) in the Federal Register in 2005 as a way to address unmanaged motorized recreation. This national rule requires the designation of those roads and trails open to public motor vehicle use. The MVUM is a tool that national forests nationwide are using to display the designated network of roads and trails available for public motorized use.



Chequamegon Forest staff expect to finish installing signs like this one to number all roads and trails sometime this fall.

CNNF Photo

The CNNF made a commitment to sign on-the-ground with a road or trail number all of the roads and trails displayed on the 2009 MVUM. This work has been ongoing and is expected to be completed this fall. These signs, along with the map, will provide the public with the tools necessary to follow and stay on designated roads and trails. The MVUM is updated annually. To date, the forest has received requests on approximately 300 roads. If you have any questions, email project coordinator [Joan Marburger](#), or call her at (715)762-5178.



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