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[Badger Army Ammunition Plant on way to becoming recreation area](#)

By: Joanne Haas, Office of Communication, and Greg Matthews, South Central Region

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Guests of a July 9 land transfer ceremony traveled a road of 1940s memories before gathering atop a scenic overlook to remember who had lived, worked and fought the war years of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant (BAAP) - and imagined the biking, birding and camping in the years to come as the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area. The ceremony was a pivotal moment in the transformation of this sprawling ammunition plant where 10,000 worked during World War II making gunpowder and rocket propellant.



From a scenic overlook, Secretary Matt Frank addressed the land transfer ceremony at the former Badger Army Ammunitions Plant, now named the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area. In the foreground are members of the various unions working on the massive dismantling of buildings and remediation.

WDNR Photo

"Opening this land for public recreation brings to fruition the shared vision of many dedicated stakeholders who devoted their energies to this project for two decades," DNR

Secretary **Matt Frank** said as host of the Friday morning outdoor ceremony to mark the transfer of about 1,800 acres of the idled military plant to the state of Wisconsin.

"The transferred land will connect Devil's Lake State Park to the Wisconsin River – from this scenic bluff through the prairie and terminal moraine to the former ammunition plant," he said, adding he hoped to have some signs up by the fall marking future public use.

Governor Jim Doyle, U.S. Representative Tammy Baldwin of the Second District, deputy assistant secretary of the U.S. Army Addison D. Davis and National Park Service trails superintendent Tom Gilbert also participated in the ceremony.

Guests were told to leave their personal vehicles at the lot near the plant's Highway 12 entrance, where a tank still rests, and board a bus to make the five-mile or so trip across the grounds and up a hill to the overlook. Sighted along the route were piles of jagged cement chunks that marked places where some of the 1,000 buildings once stood along now-weed-covered remnants of roads well-traveled. The bus traveled by one of the three cemeteries where relatives and friends of the 80 farm families ordered off the land in the early 1940s are buried.

Once atop the bluff, the guests were able to envision the many outdoor recreational possibilities and wildlife habitat the land could offer from a restored native prairie and oak savannah .

Retired Bureau of Customer and Licensing director Craig Karr returned in 2005 to work on the BAAP project. "When you look down the road 20 years from now, this is going to be a fantastic property," Karr told the "Milwaukee Journal Sentinel."

Army continues to rid site of old, contaminated facilities

In addition to buildings, the Army has removed known cancer-causing contaminants.

Eileen Pierce, Air and Waste leader in the South Central Region, said the Army has been responsive in its massive cleanup efforts. Thousands and millions of pounds of heavy steel, wood and copper have been recycled along the way.

But, more remains to be done as workers were about to begin the removal of more explosives and contaminants from remaining buildings and sewers. "The Army is responsible for this (site remediation) in perpetuity," Pierce said.

The plant was decommissioned in 1997. Since then, the Army has been clearing away unsafe infrastructure and environmental contamination to make the parcels suitable for transfer. From 1998 to 2008, the Army spent \$144 million on environmental clean-up at the plant. The Army expects to spend millions more as the site remediation continues. Built in 1942, the U.S. Army operated the Badger Army Ammunition Plant during World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. It stopped operations in March 1975 and was decommissioned in 1997, but maintained on standby since 1976. Located on 7,354 acres in Sauk County, the plant rests between Devil's Lake State Park on the north, State Highway 78 and the Wisconsin River to the south, farmland on the east and U.S. Highway 12 on the west.

DNR eventually will receive 3,386 acres from the National Park Service after the Army completes the cleanup of environmental contamination at the Badger plant.

The Natural Resources Board approved creation of the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area in December 2002. It will encompass the current and future land transfers to DNR. No DNR

acquisition funds will be needed for the land transfers, and the department will make payment to local government in lieu of taxes based on an appraised value. The payment will be the appraised value times the local property tax rate.

After the transfer is complete, DNR will begin a public process to write a Joint Management Master Plan for the property. Integral to this plan is a commitment to collaborative land management with the other BAAP property owners, the Ho-Chunk Nation, U.S. Department of Agriculture Dairy Forage Research Center and the Bluffview Sanitary District.

Footnote: *Joanne M. Haas is a public affairs manager in the Secretary's Office. Greg Matthews is the public affairs manager for the South Central Region.*



DNR reaches out to create more inclusive and diverse conservation community

By: Eileen Hocker, Bureau of Law Enforcement

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Law Enforcement outreach taps into new, diverse audiences

The Bureau of Law Enforcement (LE) reached new audiences with DNR safety and conservation messages this June and early July by branching out to several ethnic minority venues in DNR's South Central Region and some of the Milwaukee metropolitan area in the Southeast Region.

DNR initiates outreach at annual Juneteenth celebration



Warden Jeremy Plautz with Juneteenth visitor at Law Enforcement exhibit.

WDNR Photo

For the first time, LE sponsored an exhibit at Madison's African-American celebration, "Juneteenth." Held this year on June 19, the event annually celebrates the moment the last of the African-American slaves in Texas and other parts of the southwestern U.S. got the news that they had been freed. At that time in history, area slave owners didn't inform the slaves of the Emancipation Proclamation signed by President Lincoln in 1863, which freed them. It wasn't until June 19, 1865 that these communities got the official news. The term "Juneteenth" is a combination of the month and day, **June nineteenth**.

Karl Brooks, deputy chief warden, and **Jeremy Plautz**, warden supervisor, staffed LE's "Juneteenth" exhibit with information on [aquatic invasives](#), VHS [fish disease](#), and other topics pertaining to fishing. Read about the event held on Madison's south side in The Madison Times story ["Festival promotes education, culture."](#)

LE also reaches out to ethnic minority media

Law Enforcement also made new advances into ethnic minority media outlets with its aquatic invasives media campaign. It ran 30 second radio ads on WMCS 1290 AM Black talk radio in Milwaukee (the Earl Ingram show); WLMV 1480 AM LaMovida Spanish radio in Madison; and WTDY 1670 AM "Let's Go to Church" Black gospel talk variety show in Madison.

In addition, wardens did radio interviews about the new aquatic invasives law and VHS on two stations: South Central Region warden **Nate Kroepflin**, Fitchburg, was on LaMovida Spanish radio on June 24; and Brooks, with region deputy warden water guard **Greg Stacey**, Fitchburg, aired on the "Let's Go to Church" Black gospel talk variety radio show on July 4.

LE also is running a full-page ad about the new aquatic invasives law on the back cover of the July issue of "[HmongHello!](#)" a statewide publication.

Warden promoted career in law enforcement to middle schoolers

Warden **Gervis Myles**, Milwaukee, gave a career presentation on being a conservation warden to a group of middle schoolers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison's "[PEOPLE Program](#)."



Warden Gervis Myles with "PEOPLE Program" students, demonstrating how handcuffs work. Photo courtesy of Jonathan Gramling of the Capital City Hues newspaper.

WDNR Photo

Held at Gov. Nelson State Park on June 28, the "PEOPLE Program" annually gathers urban youth into short-term summer programs and prepares them for college and future careers. This year, the program focuses on science careers. State park ranger **Bob Ramsey**, Waunakee, also was on hand to speak to the group about invasive gypsy moths.

Link to the "[The Diversity Times](#)" website to see what students had to say about Gervis and their day at Gov Nelson State Park:

Footnote: *Eileen Hocker is the diversity outreach coordinator in the Bureau of Law Enforcement.*

Around the state, DNR employees shine

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Success stories from the Division of Air and Waste

The Division of Air and Waste launched its regulatory improvement effort "Smart Regulation" in December of 2003. As a part of this effort, managers and staff are accountable for assuring that the following attributes are reflected in their programs:

Responsiveness, Efficiency, Timeliness, Effectiveness and Consistency. One measure of success in implementing "Smart Regulation" is feedback received from customers. Take a look at successes achieved during April through June of this year at ["Air & Waste Division Success Stories."](#)

Success stories from the Northeast Region

- **To Don McKinnon**, park manager at Potawatomi State Park: Just wanted to thank you again for the enjoyable and very complete tour of Potawatomi yesterday. I enjoyed seeing the park through fresh eyes, finding out more about features I didn't know of, and of course, seeing that majestic barn owl. My deadline is the end of the month and the article will be appearing in the September issue of "Door County Living." Thanks again! *Katie Schnorr, author*
- **To Jeff Pritzl**, regional wildlife manager: Thank you for taking time to come and speak at our UWSP SAF (University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Society of American Foresters) meeting last week (in May)! Your talk was very interesting and your "first deer" story was great. We were glad to have a Point alumni return to share your work with us! *UWSP-Society of American Foresters*
- **To Wendy McCown**, director of the Bureau of Forestry Business Services: I understand the burden placed on many DNR foresters in helping school forests, but I also know that without our DNR foresters, the school forest program would not be as successful as it is. I know that educators are very grateful to have local resource professionals available to help with school forest management. I thought you might like some good news on this front. Several foresters in Marinette County have been working hard to update management plans for the school forests in their area. The neat thing about that is that each district has registered multiple school forest properties. **Steve Kaufman, Jeff Bonikowske**, (forestry technician in Wausaukee) and **Bruce Djupstrom** (forester ranger in Pembine) deserve recognition for taking the initiative in working with these districts to not only update their management plans, but they also serve as a great local resource for school forest questions. Thank you again for continuing to push for the DNR's involvement in school forest management. *Gretchen Marshall*

Success stories from the Northern Region

- To **Gary Sarauer**, forestry technician in Ladysmith: Thank you for the Forestry Stewardship Management Plan you drafted for our family property in the town of Grant in Rusk County. I appreciate your listening carefully to my description of the property and to objectives for managing the parcel. I also appreciate your prompt response to my inquiry (especially in the midst of your busy season), your helpful suggestions and references, and the comprehensive detail of the plan you developed. Your excellent customer service far exceeded anything I might have imagined.the plan you drafted will be used as an important resource as family members collaborate to move forward with decisions about ongoing and long-term care of the property. *Susan C., Madison*
- To warden **Dave Swanson**, Minong: I would like to thank you for taking time to attend the recent Open Forum; as we gather opinions and share information regarding whether to seek a local ordinance restricting water skiing and tubing on our lakes....You have always been very responsive to our efforts to educate and get the word out on topics relating to boating and the water. *Bill Owens*
- To **Travis Holte**, Cumberland: On behalf of the Shell Lake Protection Advisory Committee, we wish to thank you for having **Travis Holte**, (water regulation and zoning specialist in Cumberland) at the Shell Lake District Meeting. He certainly is a nice young man who arrived early, and was available to answer questions of the people that were in attendance on Saturday morning. A good representative for the Wisconsin DNR.
- To **Curt Wilson**, regional forestry leader; **Mike Folgert**, area forestry leader; **Phil Theiler**, area

forestry leader; **Blair Anderson**, chief of the Fire Control Section; and **Trent Marty**, director the Bureau of Forest Protection: I thought I would take a moment, before I leave, to reflect back on the last three months working here at Florence. First I would like to thank all the DNR folks who "made it happen." I am truly happy everything worked out and that I was able to come back and assist with the shortage of forestry personnel and also the drought situation that is occurring throughout the northern part of Wisconsin. Second, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the staff at Florence for the way they took in a stranger and made me feel right at home. It was like I never missed a beat transitioning from Ladysmith to Florence. The management style used here was a great asset in my ability to merge into the daily workings of all the functions that make up the Florence office. From having all county resource functions under one roof to the weekly Monday morning "Cedar Room" planning session, everyone pulls together as a team, to accomplish the work goals. *Bob W.*

• **Facilities and Lands recognizes NOR staff:** Earlier in June, the Facilities and Lands Bureau held a statewide meeting where staff was recognized for accomplishments. NOR staff received recognition in three areas:



Bill Smith, (left) regional land leader, and Paul Bruggink, (right) land program supervisor joined Joel Weinert in celebrating his "Land Management Field Person of the Year Award."

WDNR Photo

Joel Weinert, lands technician in Hayward: "Land Management Field Person of the Year" (This award recognizes the hard work, dedication and creative thinking of a field person who works on the fish lands, flowages and/or river ways.) Joel currently manages 23 individual properties in Sawyer, Price, Douglas, Washburn and Burnett counties. Capital development projects take real team work and coordination on all fronts, many times with the property manager on the front line. Through Joel's hard work and dedication, he has earned the respect and admiration of not only all who visit and use the sites he manages, but those who work closely with him. He readily gives of himself to other programs and is a model for total integrated management.

Jeremy Holtz, wildlife biologist in Florence: "Special Recognition Award " (This award recognizes staff who have demonstrated exceptional work on behalf of the Facilities and Land program.) Jeremy was nominated for his continued professional management of the Pine and Popple Wild Rivers properties. He recognized that the management of the unique and valuable resources of these properties can be more effectively managed with a coordinated effort with the public sector. With that in mind, he has involved the Wild River's Advisory Committee on numerous occasions. This private support of our program activities has a direct cause and effect on both the environment and the social and economic needs of the people that live and work near Florence. He avidly fights to

protect the resources of these properties despite many controversial and conflicting use demands. Jeremy leads by example and displays a “can do” attitude in all aspects of his daily duties.



Jeremy Holtz (left) posed with Paul Bruggink upon receiving the “Special Recognition Award.”

WDNR Photo

Tom Dettle, natural resource engineer, in Spooner: Most Innovative Design Award (This award recognizes staff who think outside the box, create a better design for a traditional facility or plan an innovative way to create a new type of property.) Tom was nominated for initiating the design and overseeing the construction of a new cold storage building at Pattison State Park. He matched the new facility with the surrounding 1930s historic buildings by using the same stone from a local quarry that was used to construct the original buildings and also implemented energy saving and sustainable/green features.

Success stories from the Southeast Region

- Thanks to all Southeast Region employees who helped, volunteered or worked in Eagle after the tornado: **Jay Abts, Ken Anderson, Dave Beck, Nick Blankenheim, Brian Cieszynski, Roger Clark, Don Dane, Randy Dunkel, Rick Engelfried, Juan Gomez, Kevin Grant, Mitch Groenier, John Haase, Dave Halser, Mike Hirschboeck, Dave Hoffman, Bob Jagla, David Jeske, Brian Johnson, John Krahling, Jeff Lange, Jim McNelly, Kevin Mickelberg, Richard Miles, Jennifer Niemeyer, Timothy Peters, Ben Pfaff, Rick Reed, Jason Roberts, Paul Sandgren, Steve Sanidas, Russ Shepherd, Kevin Shurilla, Mike Sieger, Michael Spaight, Adam Stone, Craig Webster, Rob Wessberg, Doug Zeihen and Carl Zilke.**

- Congratulations to **Maureen McBroom** (wastewater specialist in Waukesha) and **Andy Hudak** (water regulation & zoning specialist in Waukesha) for their assistance with a Silver Lake project: Thank you! Everyone seems far more responsive when you guys are involved. Your contributions to protecting Silver Lake continue to be invaluable. Keep up the tireless efforts that you display on a daily basis. Thank you for your valued assistance.

- Thanks to (engineer) **Andre Ash; Tony Bowers** (air management specialist); **Fred Campbell** and **Tim Kennedy** (air management specialists); **Jerry Medinger** (environmental engineer supervisor); and (chemist) **Mary Mertes** for the experience they provided to Milwaukee Area Technical Environment Health program students: I appreciate your guidance and supervision during my internship. This project gave me the opportunity to reinforce the skills I learned in school. I was

especially interested to see the interactions between labs, data collection and field monitors. The internship has given me a better understanding of what a DNR air monitoring site operator can expect on a daily basis.



Record budget deficit means holding spending for agencies

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Governor Jim Doyle earlier this month sent a letter to state agency heads calling for most agencies to hold their overall fiscal years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 spending of general purpose revenue (tax) funds to the current fiscal year 2011 level.

In his letter, the governor points to the worldwide financial fallout as the cause of the state's largest deficit in Wisconsin history.

In the last biennial budget, state spending was cut by over \$3 billion, the largest cut in state history. Every state program was cut, state employee pay was scaled back, all state workers were furloughed, and over 3,400 positions were held unfilled.

Major Budget Policies and Budget instructions also call for holding to the fiscal year 2011 spending level for segregated administrative operations appropriations. These targets are necessary to ensure that state government lives within its means, said the governor.

For more information on the budget instructions, read [Governor Doyle's July 6, 2010 letter.](#)



Landowner Incentive Program awards go to rare species habitat

By: Greg Matthews, South Central Region

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More than 550 acres of overgrown prairie, savanna and oak woodland are getting some much needed attention through a partnership between private landowners and DNR that restores habitat for rare species.

The Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) provides cost-share grants to individuals and organizations to create and manage habitat on private lands for rare or declining species. "Some people might be amazed to learn about the high level of interest from landowners in managing their property for rare and at-risk species," said **Heidi Nelson**, Landowner Incentive Program coordinator in Madison. "The demand for this program shows that Wisconsin's conservation legacy continues, thanks in large part to the strong commitment by landowners to maintain our state's natural heritage for future generations."

Twenty-one proposals could receive as much as 75 percent funding

Up to 75 percent of the cost of the each project may be funded by LIP, with the landowner contributing the remaining cost either out-of-pocket or as in-kind labor. The annual grants are awarded based on set criteria, including number of rare species that

will benefit from the work and if the project will complement other restoration work occurring in the same area.



A restored prairie in the Town of Cross Plains, Dane County.

WDNR Photo

This spring, LIP received more than 50 proposals from private landowners, with 21 selected from across eight counties, all within this year's focus area, the Driftless Region. Encompassing southwest Wisconsin, southeast Minnesota, northeast Iowa and northwest Illinois, Wisconsin's [Driftless Region](#) has two ecologically important regions, the [southwest savanna](#) and [western coulee and ridges](#).

"Driftless" refers to the area that escaped coverage by glacial drifts which spread over much of the Upper Midwest roughly 10,000 to 26,000 years ago. The area is characterized by highly-dissected uplands with deep-cut valleys, and contains some of the highest quality remnants of oak savanna, prairies, forests and streams remaining in Upper Midwest states.

In Wisconsin, more than 97 percent of the 7.4 million acre Driftless Area is privately owned and so improving or restoring habitats depends overwhelmingly on the active engagement of private landowners, pointed out Nelson.

In addition to financial assistance, participating landowners receive DNR technical advice and assistance with management activities, including prescribed burns, planting native vegetation and removing invasive weeds and shrubs.

The benefits of private landowner and DNR partnerships reach beyond the financial, according to grant recipient Lee Swanson, Cross Plains, representing Swamplovers Foundation, Inc. The foundation arose from a desire by the owners of this approximately 460 acres of wetland, prairie, oak savanna and woodland to manage this land for future generations. Among the inhabitants are more than 60 species from the state's threatened or endangered lists.

Many reap benefits of government and property owners partnership

"It's a great program and gives us the opportunity to move a lot farther down the road with our restoration work. It opened the door for other conservation work, too. We love what we do and it's the right thing to do for the critters and plants," noted Swanson.

"We also recognize that government alone cannot protect and maintain properties like this by itself with the limited resources (government) has."

This year, LIP will include landowner recognition and promotion of the voluntary native restoration and habitat management work, with signs noting the voluntary restoration, funded through the Natural Resources Foundation's C.D. Besadny Conservation Grant Program.

"These signs will provide a visible symbol of the department's appreciation for their efforts," Nelson said. "We hope the signs will elicit curiosity among neighbors about native habitat management and interest in improving their land for the benefit of at-risk plant and animal species."

Go to the "[Landowner Incentive Program](#)" website to learn more about past projects, future grant cycles, or general habitat management information. You also can email [Heidi Nelson](#) or call her at (608)267-0797.

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



DNR ranks high in achieving state agency energy reduction goal

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Here's a test of your age: Remember back to the Middle East oil embargo of 1973? Remember the long lines at the gas pumps? Or, maybe you just read about them in your history books. Although the \$4/gallon cost of gasoline in recent years didn't make much of a dent in this country's addiction to oil, Wisconsin state government has steadily cutback on energy consumption by 22 percent over the 37 years since the first embargo.

Today, DNR ranks at the high end of the chart, indicating reductions in energy consumption at the department's largest (>20,000 square feet) state-owned facilities.

The DNR energy team, comprised of Bureau of Facilities and Lands' Sanjay Olson and Steve Schrage, as well as Patrick Kirsop, when he was with the bureau; and Art Przybyl, South Central Region, monitors and reports on DNR's progress towards reducing energy consumption.



Among other energy use features, the Navarino Wildlife Center has a closed loop heating and air conditioning system consisting of a series of tubing buried under ground at water

table level. This allows the fluids to circulate constantly to and from the building.

WDNR Photo

The team continues to follow sustainable guidelines established by the DNR's [Facilities Energy Efficiency Plan \(FEEP\)](#) rolled out by Secretary **Matt Frank** in February of this year.

By the end of 2009, DNR's largest buildings ranked number one among the 11 agencies reporting to the Department of Administration (DOA) for reducing its energy use by 6.7 percent over its 2008 use.

Since 1973, state facilities have cut back their annual energy use by 22 percent. Four years ago, Governor Jim Doyle issued Executive Order 145 challenging all state agencies to reduce their rate of energy consumption from the 2005 baseline by 10 percent in fiscal year 2008 and double that in FY2010.

DOA's annual report on energy efficiency refers to the 2005 baseline comparison year, adjusted for weather to reflect renewed energy conservation efforts as part of the governor's "Conserve Wisconsin" initiative. The FY2009 rate of energy use by state facilities was approximately eight percent less than in 2005, two percentage points behind the executive order's "aggressive goals and schedule, but very significant positive results."

DOA's report notes that "The success of the state's energy management efforts is directly dependent on efforts of the many people who operate and maintain the central plants and distribution systems, and those managers and occupants of individual buildings. The Division of State Facilities has the lead role in developing and overseeing these efforts."

DNR's rate of change for second half of decade a positive trend

DNR's reduction of energy consumption over the first year following establishment of the baseline in 2005 was 7.1 percent. The rate of reduction decreased and remained flat for 2007 and 2008 at about four percent. For 2009 the rate of decrease in energy use reflected a 5.7 percent decrease over 2008--a positive trend.

The increased cutback after FY07's and FY08's "relatively stable decreases," and a decline in use of thermal and electrical energy in 2009, may mean that it will be more challenging to exceed last year's 5.1 percent reduction in 2010. That means the department will need to work harder and be more committed to make the 2010 improvements greater than those made last year, explained Przybyl.

DNR compares well to other state agencies' and State Fair's facilities

The DNR's Energy team found that: "Overall DNR ranks in the top four in all categories, and first overall in 2009 improvements (compared to 2008). On the longer term basis the department is second behind State Fair Park." When the baseline was set in 2005, DNR ranked as the fourth lowest agency when it came to energy consumption.

You can see how DNR compares with the other agencies and State Fair Park at the "Conserve Wisconsin Report, Fiscal Year 2009" ["Energy Use in State Facilities."](#) DNR's section of the report is on pages 43-44.



Note early deadline for August 12 "MyDNR Digest"

By: Diane Brinson, Office of Communication

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The deadline for submitting stories for the August 12 "MyDNR Digest" will be July 28. Stories for this issue should be "time sensitive," with information that will be out-of-date if published in the August 26 "Digest," or contain a deadline between August 12 and the August 26 issue.

Indicate on your submittal that it's for the August 12 "Digest." If you have any questions about this deadline change, email me, [Diane Brinson](#) or call me at (608)266-5215.



[Board climate change webinar now available on Mediasite](#)

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If the number of requests is any indication, you'll want to take a look at the online seminar "[NRB Climate Change Seminar](#)" presentation made to the Natural Resources Board at its June 22 meeting.

The hour and 50 minute presentation features members of DNR's staff and University of Wisconsin-Madison professor Tracey Holloway briefing the NRB on climate change developments. [Holloway](#) is the director of the Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment (SAGE) at the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies.

Click on the grid icon or "slide list" on the toolbar above the video and image windows to view chapters added to the PowerPoint presentation which enable you to quickly navigate the presentation segments.



[USDA announces effort to improve access to private lands](#)

By: USDA Office of Communications

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A new voluntary public access and habitat incentive program could expand recreation opportunities through state and tribal programs in Wisconsin. U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced an effort to encourage owners and operators of privately-held farm, ranch and forest lands to voluntarily provide public access for the enjoyment of wildlife-dependent recreation, including hunting and fishing.

"This administration is committed to preserving and enhancing the great conservation legacy of our nation's hunters and anglers to benefit current and future generations," said Vilsack.

"Wisconsin already has a program that pays for access for hunting and fishing on private lands, primarily in southeast Wisconsin," said **Bill Vander Zouwen**, chief of the Wildlife and Landscape Ecology Section in the Bureau of Wildlife Management. "The USDA VPA-HIP is a great opportunity to expand our program with the help of federal funds. We will apply for a grant to implement the VPA in Wisconsin. If we are successful in getting the grant, the first landowner contracts will occur in 2011."

Up to \$50 million is available through VPA-HIP (Voluntary Public Access and Habitat

Incentive Program) through fiscal year 2012. The VPA-HIP is a competitive grants program that's only available for state and tribal governments. Applications for grant funding may be made through the federal government's [Grants.gov](#) portal.

These programs provide rental payments and other incentives, such as technical or conservation services to landowners who, in return, allow the public to hunt, fish or otherwise recreate on their land.

Funding priority will be given to proposals that will use the grant money in a public access program to address these objectives:

- Maximize participation by landowners;
- Ensure that land enrolled in the program has appropriate wildlife habitat;
- Provide incentives to strengthen wildlife habitat improvement efforts;
- Supplement funding and services from other federal, state, tribal government or private resources; and
- Provide information to the public about the location of public access land.

Get more information on the federal VPA-HIP at the [Farm Service Agency](#) website.



Information now available on state's investments and retirement benefits

By: State of Wisconsin Investment Board

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The State of Wisconsin Investment Board's (SWIB) new publication "[Investing for your retirement](#)" explains how the board makes its decisions on investments, and how those investments affect the retirement funds of more than 557,000 state employees participating in the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) managed by the [Department of Employee Trust Funds](#).

Topics covered in SWIB's publication:

- Long-term Focus
- WRS Trust Funds
- Diligence Process
- Investment Impact
- Managing for Success

Retirement and the investments made to secure a comfortable lifestyle are on the minds of a lot of people. If you're a member of the WRS, take this opportunity to learn how the money invested on your behalf is managed.



Wildlife exhibit series scheduled for MacKenzie Center

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If you haven't booked anything from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Wednesdays July 21, August 25 and September 22, consider a drive to the MacKenzie Environmental Education Center outside Poynette for a series of hands-on wildlife exhibit learning opportunities.



A great horned owl resides at the MacKenzie Center's wildlife exhibit and is on the lookout for visitors.

WDNR Photo

Explore unique adaptations, tracks, scat and so much more while observing life in the wildlife exhibit. You can learn what makes these animals so amazing by participating in hands-on activities for all ages.

- **July 21:** "A Bird's Eye View"
- **August 25:** "Weasely Wanderers"
- **September 22:** "Unbelievable Ungulates" (aka animals with paws or hoofs)

Park in the upper parking lots near the Badger Den Conference Room, cross the main road and hike the trail past the fire tower and down around the deer pen. Meet at the Teaching Station in the wildlife exhibit, located near the wolf and deer pen, just inside the gate.

[The MacKenzie Center](#) is located just two miles east of Poynette and 25 miles north of Madison. Call (608)635-8105 for answers to your questions.



Urban Lakeshore State Park schedules fun for all ages

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[Lakeshore State Park](#) has scheduled a series of fun summer events for everyone, whether three years old or 93 years old. Located in the heart of Milwaukee, the park is accessible to those with strollers or wheelchairs.

Find a fun time and date that works for you:

- **Tales for Tots:** A nature story and a hike for children 3 to 5 years old, with an adult. Held on Fridays July 16, 23 and 30; and, Fridays on August 6, 13 and 20, from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
- **Park Tour Program:** Learn about the park, the plants and animals, as well as educational programs. Scheduled for Saturday, July 17, beginning at 9:30 a.m. and Wednesday, July 21 at 7 p.m., the tour lasts about 90 minutes.



Visitors lined up on June 12 for free kayaking during the annual Gathering Waters Festival. This is just one of many urban outdoor opportunities available at Lakeshore Park.

WDNR Photo

- **Meet the Naturalist:** Explore and discover new things about the natural world on every Tuesday and Friday in July and August, from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Meet near the north entrance of the park by the picnic table. Call North Shore Park manager **Tom Kroeger** at (414)274-4281 for more information.



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