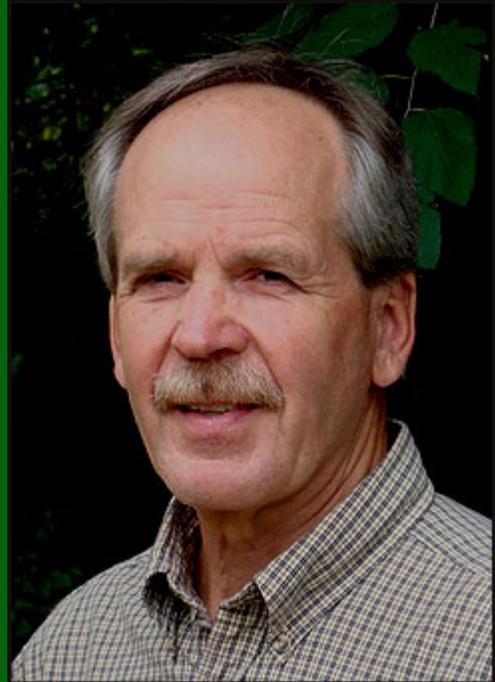


Kermit Traska

Kermit was born Wausau, Wisconsin, and raised just east of Schofield in the Town of Weston. He grew up living in the country and working on farms for relatives and neighbors. His interest in the field of conservation came from the farm work and as a sophomore at D.C. Everest High School, he was selected to attend the Trees for Tomorrow Camp at Eagle River.



For one summer he worked for the Crestline window factory in Wausau. That experience instilled in him a great interest to complete college and pursue a career in the natural resource field.

During his sophomore year, he applied for and was accepted into the Wisconsin Youth Conservation Camp Program as a camp counselor at the Statehouse Lake Youth Conservation Camp in Manitowish Waters. One of the first tasks in 1968 was placing on department trucks, the new DNR logo stickers, over the painted Wisconsin Conservation Department logos.

Kermit graduated from high school in 1966 and entered UW-Stevens Point majoring in Natural Resources and minoring in biology. While in college, he started a 30+ year career in officiating high school football, basketball, baseball and softball.



Coaching Little League

1986

He also took course work for teaching high school. His final course, in the fall of 1970, was student teaching biology and conservation at Rhinelander High School.

Kermit graduated from Stevens Point in January 1971.

In October 1970, Randolph School District, Randolph, Wisconsin had an opening for a biology teacher beginning the second quarter. Kermit applied and was hired to teach biology and was also head baseball coach and assistant football coach.

At the age of 23, and with three years experience as a camp counselor at Statehouse Lake, Kermit was selected to be the Camp Director of the Ernie Swift Youth Conservation Camp, in Minong, serving in that position for the summers of 1971 and 1972. The camp had a staff of 15 and two six-week sessions of 100 high school students working on conservation projects in Northwest Wisconsin.

By June 1973, the DNR had completed the construction of the Kettle Moraine Youth Conservation Camp in the Northern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest near Kewaskum.

Kermit was transferred from the Ernie Swift Camp to be the summer director of the Kettle Moraine Youth Camp. A permanent position was created for the Youth Camp program. He interviewed and was selected to be the full-time director of the camp. As director, he was responsible for the summer YCC conservation work program and to develop a school year program that included outdoor and environmental education programs at the camp. One of the programs developed was a demonstration plot for making maple syrup. In the spring of 1977, the camp tapped 100 trees, made 25 gallons of syrup and had about 2,500 students come through the display. The summer YCC program included 14 staff and 100 high school aged youth. Significant program developments included overseeing the first all-girl YCC camp in Wisconsin in 1975 and the first co-ed YCC camp in Wisconsin in 1976.

In September of 1974, Kermit married Beth Zondag of Randolph, Wisconsin. They lived in the camp residence within the Northern Kettle Moraine State Forest until 1976 when Kermit promoted to manager of the Perrot Work Unit and they moved to Galesville. By 1980, he had developed the Friend's of



**Kermit & Beth Wedding
September 1974**

Park Perrot State Park, one of the first friend's groups in the state park system. The Friend's group raised funds primarily for the park interpretive program.

In 1982, he was promoted to Southern District Park Supervisor and the Traska's moved to Oregon, Wisconsin. As District State Park Supervisor he was responsible for all aspects of the state park and recreation program. Kermit was instrumental in assisting with the restoration of the Seth Peterson Cottage, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and located in Mirror Lake State Park. He helped raise over \$300,000 of private funding for this project.



**Seth Peterson Cottage
Mirror Lake State Park**

From July of 1991 to May of 1998, Kermit was Chief of the Bureau of State Parks and Recreation, Operations Policy Section. In May of 1998, he transferred to the Bureau of Property Management where he was responsible for



Interview on the Military Ridge

1984

developing a master plan for the 16,000 acre Willow Flowage property.

In May of 2001 Kermit took a leave of absence from the department. He officially retired from the state in May of 2003. At that time, he Association of Retired Conservationists and has served terms as secretary/treasurer, vice-president and president.

He served from 1995 to June of 2001 as a member of the Board of Directors of Thoughts of Faith. In 1998, he became president of the Board until 2001 when he was selected as the Executive Director. Thoughts of Faith Lutheran Mission Society is a nonprofit mission society dedicated to spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ to Ukraine, Czech Republic, Latvia and Moldova through printed materials and personal ministry. Kermit's duties included managing the home office in Oregon, supervising the fund raising employees, managing the budget and developing a newsletter. This position allowed him to visit the countries several times a year providing an opportunity to learn their culture and develop an eye-opening insight to the realities of post-Soviet economies and politics.



Kermit and Beth wearing traditional Ukrainian shirts

Kermit currently works part time at the Oregon Cable Access television station where his duties involve video recording Oregon community local interest programs, providing play-by-play commentary for high school sports and developing documentaries for area activities.

Kermit and Beth have four children, two girls and two boys, who all graduated from Oregon High School. Their older daughter Amy, is a lab technician for Strandex Corp, located in Madison, working to develop composite materials. She lives in Verona and has two daughters. Their older son Chris, has worked his way up to become an underwriter for Rural Insurance Company in Madison. Maryanne, the younger daughter, is married and teaches music near Sacramento, California, and has one son. Kyle, the Traska's younger son, has studied music, has suited up Sundays for the Packer's Tundra Drum line and is currently playing drums with several bands in the Madison area.

Kermit and Beth and enjoy traveling and look forward to much more during their retirement years.