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Bowhunters tap warden Gervis Myles for annual statewide award

By: Joanne M. Haas, Office of Communications

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Inner-city kids learn archery, hunting skills thanks to warden

Hundreds of inner-city Milwaukee students have experienced the thrills of archery, scouting pheasants and simple fun outdoors thanks to the dedication and efforts of an honored state conservation warden.



Gervis Myles with his 2011 Bowhunters Association's Warden of the Year Award.
WDNR Photo

The Wisconsin Bowhunters Association on March 5 named **Gervis Myles**, Milwaukee, its Warden of the Year for 2011 during a ceremony at the group's weekend conference in Appleton.

"Gervis' service to the Milwaukee residents of all ages, but especially to the youth, has been outstanding," DNR chief warden **Randy Stark** said of Myles. "For his 12 years as a conservation warden, Gervis has worked hard to get the entire community interested and involved in natural resources issues, and that includes enjoying outdoor recreation."

Myles became a warden in 1998 and has served his career to date in Milwaukee County.

"Gervis went to work immediately addressing concerns about the illegal taking of big bucks in Milwaukee-area parks," said Stark. "He spent hours answering complaints from concerned citizens about baiting, illegal stands and the illegal harvest."

Myles added to his warden portfolio in 2006 by earning his certification in the National Archery in the Schools Program. Equipped with his instructor's credentials, Myles worked with the Milwaukee-area schools to introduce the sport to more than 700 students. When 60 middle school students wanted to give archery a try but didn't have an adequate space, Myles converted the main conference room in DNR's Southeast Region headquarters building into an archery range for an afternoon.

Myles also was key to helping 32 individuals earn their archery instructor credentials in recent years, increasing the potential exposure of children to the sport.

This past year, Myles also organized a Learn to Hunt Pheasant outing for several Milwaukee inner-city children, hosted at DNR's McKenzie Center in Poynette. And, with an eye on the future, Myles has spent time talking about natural resources careers with Milwaukee youth.

"We thank the Wisconsin Bowhunters for recognizing Gervis for his years of outstanding service to the community and the resources," Stark said.

Footnote: *Joanne M. Haas is the public affairs manager working with the Division of Enforcement and Science.*



Take a look at conserving biological diversity reports online

By: Christina Isenring, Bureau of Endangered Resources

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The Bureau of Endangered Resources' Natural History Inventory Program (NHI) recently released two new reports highlighting the ecological issues and opportunities to conserve biological diversity. Now available online, these reports synthesize the findings of field inventories that focus on groups of species such as birds, butterflies, aquatic invertebrates and plants.

The "[Rapid Ecological Assessment for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail for the Kettle Moraine Region](#)" report focuses on the unique resources found on Ice Age Trail segments within the Kettle Moraine State Forest. While working on field surveys for the report, NHI staff documented several new, rare species. They also noted other important features, such as ephemeral ponds that provide critical habitat to invertebrates and amphibians.



A view overlooking an ephemeral pond within the Polk Kames Segment of the Ice Age Trail.

WDNR Photo

The [“Rapid Ecological Assessment for the Lake Winnebago Wildlife Areas”](#) report provides ecological information on four DNR-managed wildlife properties: [Brillion](#), [Eldorado](#), [Collins Marsh](#) and [Killsnake](#) wildlife areas.

Exceptional characteristics of these properties are highlighted in the report and include the presence of 39 rare species, numerous large wetlands, and the critical role these properties play in providing important resources to thousands of migratory birds. Property managers with first-hand knowledge of their properties provided invaluable assistance and support during the field surveys.

Both of these reports have been revised for public distribution and don't include information on the locations of rare species. Click on and share the link to the [“Endangered Resources Reports by Topic”](#) webpage with anyone who might be interested in these properties and other biotic inventory projects.

Both reports will be used during the [master planning process](#) to help guide conservation efforts for these properties. You can take a look at the master plan recently done for the [Lower Chippewa Wildlife Area](#).

Footnote: *Christina Isenring, is a Natural Heritage Inventory ecologist. Photo taken by Rich Staffen, assistant zoologist and mapping specialist.*



Employee Trust Funds to survey health insurance satisfaction

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The Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) has contracted with Synovate, a consumer-based research firm, to conduct a health insurance satisfaction survey of a sample of insured participants. The survey results will be published in the health plan report card included in the 2012 “It’s Your Choice Decision Guide” booklets and will be considered during health plan premium negotiations.

Active State of Wisconsin employees for whom ETF has a worksite email address will receive an email invitation to complete the survey. Other selected employees will receive a survey letter in the mail inviting them to complete the survey on the Internet. Synovate will follow up with a printed mail version of the survey for non-respondents. Synovate expected to mail/email the first round of survey invitations by this week, beginning March 3.

The Office of State Employment Relations (OSER) has approved the use of a limited amount of work time for employees to complete the survey during scheduled work hours, without loss of pay. Employees need to choose a time to complete the survey that doesn’t interfere with work duties. Any time employees spend participating in the

survey beyond scheduled work hours will be on their own time. No overtime compensation is authorized. The survey should take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete.



Programs pull together on manure spill response campaign

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It takes a “community” to plan, produce and promote a media campaign. This year’s efforts to educate the agricultural public on reacting to a manure spill before it contaminates groundwater and streams is an example of what can happen when DNR programs and partners come together on behalf of the environment and the farming community.

Over the next several weeks, DNR and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) will push this story out to the agriculture media and others. Pam Jahnke, director at Wisconsin Farm Report Radio has worked with DNR staff and featured this issue prominently in recent weeks. DNR has purchased air time for a [60-second radio ad](#) to air on Jahnke’s broadcast in southern and western Wisconsin, along with similar programs by ag broadcasters Bob Bosold and Mike Austin in western and northeastern Wisconsin, respectively.

“**Thanks to Mary Farmiloe**, video producer in the Bureau of Customer Service and Licensing, for a great job fine tuning the script, directing and producing the spot,” said public affairs manager for the Water Division, Lisa Gaumnitz. “Also, **Tom Bauman**, runoff management water resource engineer in the Bureau of Watershed Management, for supplying some of the local voice talent, including his son.” Freelance videographer Paul Zwicker shot and did the initial editing of the [“Manure Spill Response Demonstration”](#) video. Again, Farmiloe, fine tuned and edited the final product. “We’ve uploaded a copy of this to DNR’s FTP site, which allows us to send large video files, and encourage our ag partners to download the video and post it to their own site,” said Gaumnitz.

Carlos Landeau, information systems specialist in the Bureau of Watershed Management, worked on a tight timeline to update the [“Prevent Manure Runoff”](#) webpage and created a new [“Respond to Manure Spills”](#) page. **Karl Scheidegger**, warmwater rivers management biologist in the Bureau of Fisheries Management, did the voice over. **Jessica Coda**, marketing specialist in the Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment, updated the [“DNR Spills Program”](#) webpage.

In advance of the manure spreading season, DNR and DATCP issued a [news release](#) on February 15 announcing that online maps are available to guide farmers away from those areas at risk from manure spreading.

“None of this communication campaign could have happened without the leadership and financial commitment made by **Steve Sisbach**, chief of the Environmental Enforcement and Emergency Management Section, and with those working behind the scenes. Funding was provided by the bureaus of Law Enforcement, Remediation and Redevelopment, Watershed Management, and Drinking Water and Groundwater,” said Gaumnitz. On behalf of these programs, **Drew Savagian**, Remediation and Redevelopment Outreach team leader, in the Brownfields and Outreach Section; **Roxanne Chronert**, hydrogeologist program coordinator/spills team leader, in the Remediation and Redevelopment Program; and Sisbach reviewed scripts and news releases, always on tight timelines. Web publisher **Margie Palmer**, Bureau of Technology Services, and **Paul Holtan**, editor of ‘DNR News,’ helped by posting information to DNR’s webpage.”



Around the state...DNR employees shine

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Central office success story

- A compliment from Secretary **Cathy Stepp** for DNR staff support during demonstrations on the capitol square: I want to express my gratitude to our **warden force** for going above and beyond at the capitol the last few weeks. I also want to recognize the contributions to both the law enforcement and support efforts by our **parks and forest rangers, Division of Customer and Employee Services staff, and dam safety employees**. I'm truly overwhelmed by the dedication of these men and women.
- I just wanted to say "thanks" for the wonderful packet (see below) you sent out to us facilitators. The pen drive and other materials were very nice. These are challenging times for public employees and we understand how your agency is perpetually asked to do more with less. Consequently, we greatly appreciate your support now more than ever. Please convey our best wishes and thanks to the entire WILD/PLT/WET team." *Howard, Wehr Nature Center, Franklin, WI*

Janet Hutchens, DNR Project WILD, WET and Learning Tree coordinator, sent this kudo to the "Digest" following the mailing of a packet to 62 volunteer facilitators who deliver Project WILD/WET/PLT as representatives of DNR. She indicated that the department had received a lot of supportive comments such as this one. Education staff works hard to support DNR-certified trainers. In addition to her, **Amalia Baldwin** and **Annie Kalson** of the Office of Communications, and **Chris Tall** with the Division of Forestry make up the team that manages these programs for Wisconsin.

Northern Region success story

- On Thursday, March 3, **Mike Meyer**, Bureau of Science Services research scientist in Rhinelander, presented an overview of "WDNR Research in Northern Wisconsin" to the Minocqua Kiwanis Club during their weekly breakfast meeting. Mike prefaced the presentation by providing the data demonstrating that natural resources provide the economic foundation for our northwood's communities. He then described the evolution of natural resource agencies as a societal need to insure that the resource base remains sustainable for use by future generations. Going through the DNR Mission Statement is a good way to teach these roles of our agency. Mike then went on to describe how DNR research has specific roles within the agency to foster sustainable use of forests, wildlife, fisheries and lakes. Mike concluded by going through the specific projects the department is conducting that are relevant to natural resource management in these areas. He received the following thank you note.

On behalf of the Kiwanis non profit organization, we wish to extend our thankfulness for your most informative program this morning at our breakfast meeting. You resolved a lot of misconceptions concerning issues vital to our economy and, more than that, you left a group of citizens feeling much closer and more supportive of the DNR's efforts. Thank you again for accepting my invitation to be my guest speaker! Your program was above excellent! *Sincerely, Susie Vehrs, Board Member of the*

Minocqua Kiwanis/Re/MAX LLC, Minocqua

That same afternoon, Mike presented an overview of all northern Wisconsin natural resource research at the 4th Annual Northwoods Research Summit at Treehaven. This research summit is geared towards the local business community, with an eye to promoting sustainable technologies and business practices.

Southeast Region success stories

- Congratulations to Southern Lake Michigan Fisheries supervisor **Brad Eggold**, Milwaukee, who received the “Outstanding Fisheries Program Professional for 2010 Award” and fisheries technician **Steve Gospodarek**, Waukesha, who received the “Outstanding Fisheries Program Technician for 2009 Award” at the Fisheries Management Statewide Training Conference held recently in Wisconsin Dells.
- Congratulations to fisheries biologist **Douglas Welch**, Sturdevant, from Walworth County Lake Association: I just wanted to tell you that I thought your presentation to the Walworth County Lake Association last Saturday was absolutely wonderful! Everyone enjoyed it so much, and it was great information. Thank you so much.



The Bureau of Science Services honors its own

By: Kim Ibrahim, Bureau of Science Services

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As part of the Bureau of Science Services' statewide meeting, on the evening of February 18 bureau director Jack Sullivan presented awards to a number of his staff in recognition of their accomplishments. Research scientists **David Sample**, in the Wildlife and Forestry Research Section, and **Brian Weigel**, in the Fish and Habitat Research Section both received the Steve Serns Excellence in Research Award.

In nominating Sample and Weigel for the Serns award, their colleagues singled out their individual contributions to the work of the agency.



Bureau director Jack Sullivan recognized the contributions of David Sample to the research program by presenting him the Steve Serns Excellence in Research Award. WDNR Photo

- “He (Sample) has worked with partners inside and outside of the agency over the last decade to implement important research findings into the Southwest Grassland and Stream Conservation Area. This included extensive work on the feasibility study, public meetings, and internal science support for implementation efforts.”
- “Twenty years from now, when we look back on the history of successful grassland bird conservation efforts in the Upper Midwest, Dave Sample’s work will be critical to our understanding of how things went right.”
- “In the end, what matters most to this nomination is that Dave Sample is consistently the first person that conservation professionals and citizens talk to when it comes to advice about grassland birds and the ecosystems that they depend on.”



Jack Sullivan presented the Steve Serns Excellence in Research Award to Brian Weigel in recognition of his work on the state’s rivers and streams.
WDNR Photo

Weigel's nomination read in part:

- “He (Weigel) has played a key role in the development of monitoring and assessment frameworks for streams and rivers for both the Fisheries Management and Watershed Management programs.”
- “The work of Brian Weigel has had important ramifications for the activities and effectiveness of the DNR management programs dealing with streams and rivers and has ultimately provided many benefits to the people of Wisconsin.”

Duran and Kanehl named Employees of the Year

The bureau’s Employee of the Year Awards went to **Sandy Duran**, bureau program specialist, and **Paul Kanehl**, research technician in the Fish and Habitat Research Section. Then person nominating Duran, noted the following:



Sandy Duran received her Employee of the Year Award from bureau director Jack Sullivan.

WDNR Photo

- “Since her hire in October 2007, Sandy has worked hard to ensure accurate planning, coordination, and monitoring of the bureau’s annual operating budgets, grants, contracting activities, and federal fish & wildlife restoration aid apportionments, i.e. SFR and PR. She tracks monthly expenditures against section allotments to ensure that budgets are not overspent, and prepares monthly summary reports for review by bureau managers.”
- “Sandy has extended considerable effort to develop trust and build strong collaborative relationships with bureau staff, her counterparts in the bureaus of Wildlife Management, Fisheries Management, Endangered Resources, Forestry, Waste Management, Remediation and Redevelopment, Law Enforcement, Watershed Management, and Drinking and Ground Water, as well as Finance. She has acquired a reputation as a leader among her department peers, and is often contacted for guidance, advice, and assistance navigating financial rules and bureaucratic processes.”



Paul Kanehl was named the Employee of the Year Award at the Science Services statewide meeting. Dan Walchak, a research technician who works with Paul, accepted the award on his behalf.

WDNR Photo

The nomination for Kanehl, stated:

- “In addition to his efforts managing and maintaining the field equipment and support staff of the Fish and Aquatic Research Section, Paul Kanehl’s leadership fostered an improved overall ‘climate’ at the work station, making everyone’s job easier and more enjoyable and further increasing effectiveness.”
- “Because of Paul’s competence and dedication, the section became substantially more efficient and effective despite a decrease in tech staff.”
- “The procedures he has initiated and the attitude he brings to his job insure that these trends will continue in the future. We are lucky to have a person of Paul’s caliber working for the department.”

Footnote: *Kim Ibrahim is a communications specialist for the Bureau of Science Services.*



Senate confirms Secretary Cathy Stepp, receives biennial budget proposal

By: Paul Heinen, Office of the Secretary

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The Wisconsin Senate unanimously confirmed **Cathy Stepp** as DNR’s newest secretary on Wednesday, March 2, by a vote of 18-0.

Governor Scott Walker introduced his proposed 2011-2013 Biennial Budget to a joint session of the Assembly and Senate on March 1. The companion [Assembly Bill 40](#) and [Senate Bill 27](#) now are with the Legislative Fiscal Bureau for analysis during the next couple of weeks. Agency hearings and public hearings are scheduled to begin in late March or early April.

SB 33 (Sen. Leibham) was introduced and referred to the Senate Natural Resources and Environment Committee. The bill makes changes to the procedures used to remove an abandoned dam in Wisconsin.

The non-fiscal portions of the Budget Repair Bill passed the Senate on Wednesday, March 9, and is awaiting an Assembly vote.

Check on the status of DNR-related legislation by going to the [“2011 Bill Tracker.”](#)

Footnote: *Paul Heinen is a policy initiative advisor in the Secretary’s Office.*



Links of interest...don’t miss them

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- **Title:** “Wolves in Wisconsin”

Description: An hour-long presentation produced by Wisconsin Public TV over a four-year period to chronicle the history, current status and interaction with humans of wolves living in Wisconsin. DNR wolf specialist **Adrian Wydeven** and the department’s work on wolves are featured. Wydeven compliments the production as doing “a terrific job explaining this complex and at times confusing story.”

Link: [“Wolves in Wisconsin”](#)

- **Title:** “Budget Briefing and Q/A with Secretary Cathy Stepp”

Description: On March 3, Secretary **Cathy Stepp**, Deputy Secretary **Matt Moroney**, director of the Office of Business Support and Sustainability **Al Shea**, and

Bureau of Human Resources director **Carrie Mickelson** provided information and took questions from employees attending a meeting in the central office. Staff statewide once again connected to the briefing via Live Meeting

Link: ["Budget Briefing and Q/A with Secretary Cathy Stepp"](#)

- **Title:** "Great Lakes Restoration Initiative"

Description: Get the latest information on the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), including current funding sources and projects from DNR's Office of the Great Lakes. Two new videos highlight GLRI projects underway in the Lake Michigan watershed: "Northern Pike Habitat Restoration" and "Invasive Plant Removal" (non-native Phragmites).

Link: ["Great Lakes Restoration Initiative"](#)

- **Title:** "DNR Division Administrators"

Description: Read about the six DNR division administrators' backgrounds and responsibilities on the "MyDNR" webpage featuring each one.

Links:

Air and Waste Division: [Pat Stevens](#)

Customer and Employee Services Division: [Julie Sauer](#)

Enforcement and Science Division: [Tim Lawhern](#)

Forestry Division: [Paul DeLong](#)

Land Division: [Kurt Thiede](#)

Water Division: [Bruce Baker](#)



First Black History Month brings calls for annual event

By: Rudy Bentley, Bureau of Human Resources

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Sylvester Henderson works mornings at SER headquarters as a contract security officer, and as a department employee provides custodial services during his afternoons.

WDNR Photo

DNR held its first Black History Month event on February 11 at the Southeast Region

headquarters in Milwaukee. The event was well attended and participants appeared to enjoy the gathering, so much so that they asked that an event recognizing the contributions of Black Americans become an annual occurrence for the department.



Frances Koonce, Remediation and Redevelopment sub team supervisor; regional environmental services supervisor May Vang; and Steve Mueller, Remediation and Redevelopment hydrogeologist joined one another for lunch during the celebration.
WDNR Photo

While partaking of a wide variety of tasty ethnic food provided by DNR employees, participants heard from three interesting and enlightening speakers. Marvin Pratt, current interim Milwaukee County Executive and former mayor of Milwaukee, spoke about his own experience with the DNR and his long political life in Milwaukee County government. DNR conservation warden **Gervis Myles**, commented on his life growing up in Milwaukee and the events that led him to become the first African American warden for the DNR. In keeping with the event's theme of "Reaching Out," interim Southeast Region director **John Hammen**, spoke about DNR's many community outreach efforts, such as the Bureau of Law Enforcement's Harmony in the Woods initiative to partner with the Hmong and conservation communities to create safe and inclusive access for all to Wisconsin's natural resources.



Heidi Jasso, Waste and Materials Management environmental program associate, has worked with warden Gervis Myles on external environmental issues and volunteering to give back to the community.
WDNR Photo

Students from Milwaukee's [Frances Starns Discovery Learning Center](#), one of DNR's adopted schools, participated in the day by reading poetry penned by their favorite African American poets. The students also learned about DNR jobs.



Frances Starns Students were dwarfed by the mounted bear in the lobby of SER headquarters.
WDNR Photo

As the first Black History Month celebration at DNR, it's likely to not be the last. Even better news is that it's anticipated that next year the event will be expanded beyond the Southeast Region to include the central office.

Footnote: *Rudy Bentley is the department's director of the Office of Diversity.*



Rick House, Bureau of Finance purchasing agent, came from Madison for the celebration, where he joined his colleague Annette Nelson, SER financial specialist.
WDNR Photo



Those who made DNR's Black History Month celebration a success included: (back, left to right) Gervis Myles, SER conservation warden; Marvin Pratt, interim Milwaukee Country executive; Pamela Kinnie, SER customer service representative; Frances

- visit a working farm;
- eat healthy and sustainable food;
- splash, swim and play in a clean Wisconsin lake or river;
- catch and release frogs, fireflies and insects;
- tap a maple tree;
- explore wild places close to home;
- eat a fish they catch;
- discover diverse wilderness prairies, forests, wetlands and beaches;
- share a hunting experience with a great mentor or teacher.

"At DNR, we work hard to provide the places and programs that help children connect with the natural world," said Carrie Morgan, DNR educator and "EEK! manager in the Office of Communication. "Go to the ['Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights'](#) website to learn more about why it's important that children spend time outdoors."



Events you may want to note

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Park System holding bicycle and pedestrian training for parks staffs

Bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists do a few things that, if corrected, could make a significant impact on the safety of visitors to Wisconsin's state parks. Visitors look to parks' staffs and signage for information on traveling within the park, whether on two feet or four wheels. For example, park rangers serve as frontline, on-duty educators, as well as law enforcement officers.

This course is tailored to reflect the unique needs for safety and protection of natural resources while on park properties. The training will help park staff identify common characteristics of bicycle and pedestrian-related accidents and the actions which typically lead to them. The sessions take into account the types of bicycle and pedestrian-related incidents reported over the past 10 years.

This training will be offered for the first time on May 9-10 at [Kettle Moraine-Northern Unit](#). Peter Flucke of ["We Bike"](#) and **Brigit Brown**, state trails coordinator, will give the training.

Parks employees can find more information about the training, including a list of [frequently asked questions](#). Sign up for the course and talk with [Brigit Brown](#).

Wetlands restoration workshop scheduled for mid May

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-Private Lands office in Madison is organizing a week-long wetland restoration workshop for May 16-20. The audience for this training will be practitioners in wetlands management. Guests will discuss various topics in wetlands management and restoration throughout the week in classroom sessions, while half of the workshop time will be devoted to field demonstrations. DNR wildlife supervisors will select two participants from each region.



Protect yourself during Wisconsin Flood Safety Awareness Week

By: Wisconsin Emergency Management News Release

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March 14-18, 2011 is "Flood Safety Awareness Week" in Wisconsin. DNR is one of the

partners supporting this campaign to highlight the dangers associated with flooding and encourage citizens to take protective safety measures, such as purchasing flood insurance.

Flooding has caused the most damage in Wisconsin's recorded history and "Flood Safety Awareness Week" reminds people that flooding can occur at any time. Since 2000, Wisconsin has experienced nine federally-declared flooding disasters. In June 2008, severe flooding throughout the state led to disaster declarations in 30 counties, with more than \$93 million distributed in disaster aid. More recently, summer flooding last July led to nearly \$28 million in total flood-insured losses and recognition of summer 2010 as the wettest on record.

Ten thousand of nearly 16,500 flood insurance policies currently in force in Wisconsin are in high-risk areas. Many residents remain at risk, however, as fewer than one percent of households in Wisconsin are covered by a flood insurance policy.

There's a real possibility of more flooding in 2011. Fast melting snow combined with severe storms and heavy rainfall has the potential to cause extensive flooding this spring, especially along the Mississippi River and the Black, St. Croix, Chippewa, Trempealeau and Wisconsin rivers' basins.

That's why DNR, the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance, Wisconsin Emergency Management and the National Weather Service have combined efforts to promote flood safety awareness and to encourage Wisconsin residents to evaluate their homeowners' policies, assess their risks and purchase flood insurance before the next flood.

A "[Flood Safety Awareness Week](#)" packet includes Wisconsin flooding history and events, flood myths and truths, flood insurance and flood safety tips.



Be ReadyWisconsin when you spring forward

By: Wisconsin Emergency Management

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Daylight Saving Time begins March 13, 2011

Along with moving the big hand on the clock up an hour to Daylight Saving Time this coming Sunday, March 13, this is a great time to check the things that keep us safe and ready for emergencies. ReadyWisconsin urges you to check the following safety items in your home:

- **Smoke Detectors:** This is a perfect time to check and replace batteries if needed and to make sure the detectors around your house are working properly. The U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission estimates that about 16 million American homes have smoke alarms that don't work. In most cases, the batteries are dead or missing. Nearly 2,700 people die and more than 15,000 are injured each year because of fires in their homes.
- **Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detectors:** Make sure you have working CO detectors. Effective February 1, 2011, state law requires that all homes and duplexes have carbon monoxide detectors. The measure requires detectors on every level of the home, including the basement, but not the attic or storage areas. Any dwelling that requires a building permit also is required to have CO detectors directly wired to the electrical service with a backup battery. Existing

buildings can use stand-alone battery-powered detectors. According to the Centers for Disease Control, carbon monoxide is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in the United States, with more than 20,000 people visiting the emergency room and nearly 500 killed each year from overexposure to the gas.

- **Emergency Kits:** Everyone should have a basic emergency kit in their home with supplies such as food and water to last you and your family for at least three days. Other items like a battery powered or crank radio, flashlights and first aid kit also should be included. Daylight Saving Time is a perfect time to get a kit and, if you already have a kit, check it to make sure food and other items are not near or past their expiration dates.

For more tips on how to prepare you and your family for an emergency, go to the ["Are you ReadyWisconsin"](#) website. You'll find great information on how to get a kit and make a plan for when disaster strikes.

For additional safety tips and information, visit the ["Are you ReadyWisconsin" Facebook](#) page or ["Twitter ReadyWisconsin."](#) "ReadyWisconsin" is a preparedness initiative from Wisconsin Emergency Management.



President Obama announces America's Great Outdoors Initiative

By: America's Great Outdoors Initiative News Release

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"A Promise to Future Generations"

President Barack Obama recently announced the administration's action plan, under the [America's Great Outdoors Initiative](#), to achieve lasting conservation of the nation's outdoor spaces that are vital to our economy, culture and outdoor traditions by reinvigorating the approach to conservation and reconnecting Americans, especially young people, with the country's lands and waters.

Recognizing that many of these resources are under intense pressure, the Obama administration established the America's Great Outdoors Initiative in April 2010 to work with citizens to develop a conservation and recreation agenda for the 21st century.

The ["America's Great Outdoors Report,"](#) released February 16, outlines ways in which the federal government will help local communities accomplish their conservation and recreation priorities.

Last summer, administration officials held 51 listening sessions across the country to gather input from Americans about the outdoor places and activities that they value most. These sessions drew more than 10,000 participants and more than 105,000 written comments, shaping an action plan which when implemented will result in:

- Accessible parks or green spaces for our children.
- A new generation of great urban parks and community green spaces.
- Newly-restored river and recreational "blueways" that power economic revitalization in communities.
- Stronger support for farmers, ranchers and private landowners that help protect rural landscapes and provide access for recreation.
- Reinvestment of revenues from oil and gas extraction into the permanent protection of parks, open spaces, wildlife habitat and access for recreational activities.

- A 21st century conservation ethic that builds on local ideas and solutions for environmental stewardship and connecting to our historic, cultural and natural heritage.

“With children spending half as much time outside as their parents did, and with many Americans living in urban areas without safe access to green space, connecting to the outdoors is more important than ever for the economic and physical health of our communities,” said Nancy Sutley, chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

“The America’s Great Outdoors Initiative is born out of a conversation with the American people about what matters most to them about the places where they live, work and play,” secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar said.

Among the measures the report specifically calls for are fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund; establishing a 21st century Conservation Service Corps to engage young Americans in public lands and water restoration; and extending the deduction for conservation easement donations on private lands beyond 2011.

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