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Water program permit streamlining will benefit applicants and DNR employees

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For permit streamlining to be successful, DNR has to adapt to new approaches

Permit streamlining means a whole lot more than paperwork reduction. With more than 80 general permits and another approximately 50 permits spanning programs in the bureaus of Drinking and Ground Water, Watershed Management and Fisheries Management, and virtually everyone with its own complex process, Division of Water staff and permit applicants traditionally have expended considerable time and money producing, filing, noticing and approving these forms with the underlying goal of protecting the environment and managing our natural resources.

"We think that changes to the permitting process will not only benefit the customer, but help our staff by eliminating work that isn't necessary to the environment or resource management," said Water Division administrator Bruce Baker.

Baker; **Ken Johnson**, Permit Streamlining Project lead and South Central Region's water leader; and **Margie Damgaard**, Water Division information and technology specialist, are energized and enthusiastic about engaging program staff in developing process and tools that will make managing their workload less complex and more efficient. By way of simplicity and efficiencies, the requirements placed on the regulated community also will be reduced.

Some of the ways in which the trio sees streamlining water permits include:

- Using the web and other technology, e.g. GovDelivery, to improve communications; integrate online forms with databases and integrate databases with an online tracking system; expedite public notices; reduce time and cost; offer electronic signatures and payments; collect data; and manage a system of permits.
- Consolidating and manage all of an applicant's permits, reducing overlap and duplication of effort, time and expense. Providing and tracking online fillable pdf forms to accomplish above benefits and eliminate need to store large quantities of paperwork.
- Eliminating some permits that may not be necessary to protect the environment and manage natural resources.

"While inventorying our permits, we may even determine that some aren't necessary to protect the environment and manage our natural resources," Baker noted. "Where there are environmental issues, streamlining and automating will allow us to address those issues in a more timely fashion."

Engaging employees in new approaches the only way to succeed

Department employees will see some changes. It isn't the first time DNR employees have had to deal with change, but streamlining the way they do their daily work will require their buy-in to succeed.

Driving this undertaking is the reality that the program no longer has the staff to continue to do permitting in the traditional, manual manner. Along with making the process simpler and shorter for the applicant, Baker expects it to bring more efficiency to the employee's workload, freeing them up to move along the application process and manage the state's natural resources.

Collaboration will be key to making system work

Damgaard explains they'll use the software tool Share Point for project management and to provide online tracking of a permit application through the process. Both the employee and the applicant will be able to check the status of a permit, as well as determine whether additional information or interaction is necessary.

An organizational efficiency will be realized as staff from various programs and areas of the state are able to access the database and permit via Share Point. Like many companies that already use Share Point, the department would use it to transmit project plans.

"Share Point will integrate forms with data, with the goal of generating more hits on our website, thereby reducing telephone calls and leaving staff with the time they need to focus on arriving at the point that a permit is issued," said Damgaard.
"Reports will be generated by using a query tool."

First phase of streamlining project is well underway

Among the first steps to be taken on this project is inventorying existing permits. Looking at needs, costs, time spent, processes, workflow and customer satisfaction, the division's managers will set priorities. A primary consideration will be aligning the elements of the process with those that already are done on the web.

A team has been formed, a moratorium has been imposed on several existing processes, options have been identified, and the division is working with our division liaison and the Bureau of Technology Services, said Baker.

Check out this draft proof-of-concept for Phase I of the ["Streamlined Water Permit Process"](#) for a picture of the work underway in the Water Division.

"We're harnessing staff's enthusiasm and energy to include all regulatory and permit activities within Water in a way that will allow us to address all decisions in a coordinated way," Baker explained. "The outcome will serve our program's goals, as well as those of Wisconsin businesses and private citizens."



Employee Assistance Program offers stress reduction Mediasite tool

By: Jeff Carroll, Bureau of Human Resources

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This past month has been a stressful one for public employees. The reduction in take home pay due to increased contributions to benefits could hit the family budget hard. In an attempt to assist employees, DNR's Employee Assistance Program is sponsoring a Mediasite presentation for staff on learning how to ["Use Budgeting Tools to Relieve Stress."](#)

This presentation, scheduled for Friday, March 25 at 11:45 a.m., isn't a "magic pill" for money challenges that employees may face in coming months, but it may help. Ellen Bernards, from the non-profit GreenPath Debt Solutions, will share some budgeting tools and tips with staff. In this brown bag lunch discussion, she'll cover:

- understanding your money motivation;
- how to set goals and prioritize;
- how to budget;
- the warning signs of financial difficulties;
- and where to get help.

There are three ways that you can catch this important session:

- Attend in person in room G09 from 11:45 a.m. until 12:45 p.m. There will be seating for about 60 people at tables, so bring your lunch
- Attend by joining the live Webcast at ["Stressed Out About Your Bills?"](#) If you attend via the Webcast, you may ask questions by clicking-on the speech bubble located just above the video window on the media viewer. Most questions will be held until the end of the webcast. Questions not answered during the hour will be answered in a follow-up recording.
- View the on-demand Webcast at a later time, when the Mediasite recording will be available on the [EAP](#) website along with other EAP titles.

Footnote: *Jeff Carroll is the director of DNR's Employee Assistance Program.*



Andy Paulios recognized for his strategic conservation work

By: Alan Crossley, Bureau of Wildlife Management

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Andy Paulios, wildlife biologist in the Bureau of Wildlife Management and coordinator of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, recently received the Region 3 Award for Strategic Conservation from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



Seen here cradling a shrike in his hands, Andy Paulios recently received the USFWS's Strategic Conservation Award.

WDNR Photo

Paulios, along with 11 others, was selected as a 2011 winner in the Notable Projects/Team Achievement Category for contributions to landscape-scale Golden-winged Warbler conservation in the upper Midwest.

In addition to a certificate, Paulios received a letter from USFWS Region 3, and a Strategic Habitat Conservation Challenge Coin. The Challenge Coin is presented to individuals who have made a significant contribution to advance strategic conservation for the benefit of the Midwest Region's natural resources.

"This award really reinforces the idea that bird conservation works best when a diverse group of people and organizations come together to agree upon priorities and actions and then work collectively to make them happen," said Paulios. "These sorts of partnerships are happening throughout the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI), as it works with partners throughout Wisconsin, the upper Midwest and with countries as far away as Costa Rica and Ecuador."

We all know that Andy is big on Strategic Habitat Conservation planning - as we've seen countless PowerPoint presentations from him promoting the importance of such strategic thinking. It's good to know that our partners also appreciate Andy's approach to strategic conservation.

Footnote: Alan Crossley is a public lands wildlife management specialist.



Secretary Stepp's was "hands-on" with hibernating bear and her young

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On the frigid morning of March 9 in the midst of a snowstorm, Secretary Cathy Stepp accompanied researchers, members of the Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association and others to the Clark County den of a hibernating black bear sow and her young. The business end of this outing was the removal of a radio collar from the mother bear that had been part of a research study on black bear dispersal.

"Holding a cub in my arms while I learned about the challenges we face in managing

our bear population allowed me to connect with the science and the spirit of the wonderful work our wildlife biologists perform each day," said Sec. Stepp. Read more of her personal account in the ["Secretary's Corner."](#)



Secretary Cathy Stepp helped keep a bear cub warm during a research visit to its den located on private property in Clark County, not far from Thorp.

WDNR Photo

"This sow provided yearlings for a study on bear dispersal in central Wisconsin," said DNR research scientist **David Macfarland**, Bureau of Science Services, stationed in Rhinelander. "Our bear population is expanding southward, as the [2010 Zone C Bear Sightings](#) map of recent southern sightings depicts.

The Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association provided money and time to collar and track the sows. "They've been a key partner in several research projects with DNR over the last five years," said **Jack Sullivan**, director of the Bureau of Science Services.

Funded by the Association and DNR, the study was conducted by UW-Madison professor Tim Van Deelen and UW-Madison Forest and Wildlife Ecology PhD student Karl Malcolm, whose project collared the bear.

The study was designed to improve researchers' understanding of how bears move through the fragmented agricultural areas in the central part of Wisconsin. In conjunction with concurrent studies of bear population and habitat use, the results of this study will be used to inform those involved on the likely mechanisms of bear expansion into southern Wisconsin.



DNR research scientist David MacFarland held two cubs temporarily removed from their mother's side while the collar was removed and data collected on her condition. WDNR Photo

According to MacFarland, over the last five years yearling bears were fitted with GPS collars for a year, during which time they dispersed from their maternal dens. The collars recorded locations on a regular basis before they were recovered the following winter and data was downloaded.

To provide a source of yearlings, the study maintained traditional radio telemetry collars on a number of sows throughout the study. The bear visited in Clark County was one of those sows. With the end of the study this year, the collars were taken from all animals. This bear was the last to have its collar removed, ending the field component of the research.

In addition to Malcolm, non-DNR participants in the field trip included Sec. Stepp's husband, Paul; Rhonda and Mike Gappa, representing the Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association as partners in the bear research.



Fisheries Management staffs receive Special Recognition Award for applying research

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On Thursday, March 3, fisheries staff **Kurt Welke**, fisheries biologist in Fitchburg; **Gary Lindenberger**, fisheries supervisor in Spooner; **Bruce Underwood**, fisheries supervisor in Woodruff; and the **staff at Governor Tommy Thompson and Art Oehmke State Hatcheries** were presented with the Bureau of Science Services 2010 Special Recognition Award for Fisheries Management. **Jen Hauxwell**, chief of the Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences Research Section, presented the awards at the Fisheries Management Statewide Meeting in the Wisconsin Dells.

In her solicitation for nominations from research program staff, Jen Hauxwell wrote about the new award: "As part of the Fisheries Management Statewide meeting, we would like to recognize a partner who has worked with us in our mission to advance science-based management of Wisconsin's fisheries. Without the managers to carry our work forward, scientifically-sound resource management and protection would simply not happen."



Kurt Welke (left) diving in Lake Wingra to help set up the carp barrier.
WDNR Photo

Research scientist **Dick Lathrop**, Madison, nominated Welke for his long-term interest in promoting better water quality, improved habitat and a quality fishery in the Madison lakes, noting specifically the following:

- Kurt was a key partner with Science Services in the Lake Wingra In-Lake Restoration Project that included the carp exclosure experiment, promoting the benefits of the overall project to the fishing public, garnering support from DNR fish management and regional staff, and obtaining funding from Madison Fishing Expo to conduct the radio-telemetry tracking of carp movements in Lake Wingra. After two years of tracking, Kurt concluded that carp were vulnerable to removal by seining during winter. As a result of his work, Lake Wingra's water clarity has significantly increased during the summer months since 2008.
- Kurt also joined forces with Science Services to conduct a restoration evaluation of the upstream Cherokee Marsh system to Lake Mendota. The goal of the overall restoration project is to stabilize sediments that would lead to improved water clarity for enhanced macrophyte growth and also a reduction in nutrient transport to downstream Lake Mendota.

Spooner research scientists **Martin Jennings** and **Jeff Kampa** nominated Lindenberger, Underwood and their hatchery staff for implementing muskie genetic conservation guidelines, including the following work:



Gary Lindenberger (left) and Bruce Underwood (right) displayed their Bureau of Science Services Special Recognition Award for Fisheries Management.
WDNR Photo

- Gary, Bruce, and their staff worked as part of a larger team, including DNR fisheries research, Northern Region fisheries management, and the Wisconsin Cooperative Fishery Research Unit on a project to conserve genetic variation of Wisconsin's native muskellunge. The team identified changes in production that could be made to meet project goals, and were responsible for implementation of the new guidelines.
- The Tommy Thompson Hatchery and Art Oehmke Hatchery staffs made significant changes to egg take and rearing procedures. This successful effort to revise coolwater production practices to improve genetic conservation is unprecedented, and wouldn't have been possible without their efforts.

This work led to the publication last August of "[Implementation of Genetic Conservation Practices in a Muskellunge Propagation and Stocking Program](#)" in the journal "Fisheries."



A (snowy) day in the life of West Central Region's public affairs manager

By: Ed Culhane, West Central Region

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We can't complain about the weather in southern Wisconsin, but couldn't help but want to share this account of one DNR employee's morning.

It's Wednesday, March 23. I was supposed to be on the WEAU TV sunrise show at 6:30 a.m. for monthly chat on DNR happenings with anchor Meghan Kuhlig. Woke up at 4:30 a.m., looked out window and saw trouble. Threw on gear to shovel out but front screen door wouldn't open. Frozen shut with pile of sleet-snow blocking it. Took several minutes of kicking and pounding so I could squeeze out.

Spent 45 minutes shoveling a path down long driveway to County Road Q, which had not been plowed but looked kind of OK as early a.m. pickups and 4-wheel drives had packed it down. Snow was heavy. Had to stop a few times to let heart beat cool down. Back inside, still time to make the show, 10-minute shower, in the car, blast out onto the road and slip siding along, but on long uphill stretch became stuck sideways in middle of road, blocking both lanes.



Ed Culhane, likely looking less stressed, gives perspective to the snow that fell the day before.
WDNR Photo

So I put the car in reverse, with the back tires spinning, got out and pushed and it took off faster than I expected, and I couldn't get back to the steering wheel in time, and it drove itself backwards off the side of the road. At least I wasn't blocking traffic. Called for a tow truck.

Now I notice a message on my work cell phone. Call must have come in while I was shoveling. It was Mark Holley from the sunrise show saying their tower went down in the storm, and they weren't on the air so I needn't come in. Perfect. While I'm waiting, I help a guy push his car out of his long driveway. Unbelievably, in the midst of the continuing snow-sleet storm, three bright flashes of lightning and a deep roar of thunder overhead.

In the meantime, I must have bumped the windshield lever while I was warming up the car and shoveling, and with the wipers frozen, the motor ground off all the little teeth in the gear, and I've got no wipers.

Tow truck comes, yanks me out and I start slip siding my way to work, only now I need to get my 26-year-old car to J&B auto repair. I have to drive with my window all the way down, sleet caking the left side of my body while I reach out with my scraper every two minutes and manually shove the wiper blade back and forth a few inches so I can see.

I get to J&B's and become stuck in their parking lot. They're not in yet. I leave a note, zip up, sling my heavy computer and camera bags over my shoulder, bend into the storm and hike uphill through heavy snow for 3/4 of a mile to the DNR office.

Got to work at 8:30 a.m.

No problem.

Can't wait to get the call from Jim at J&B. He yells at me on a good day for bringing him my "piece of *!%#!* foreign car," and now he's going to find it frozen in the snow, blocking his garage door. It's going to be rich.

Footnote: *Ed Culhane is the public affairs manager for the West Central Region.*



Forestry's pilots come together to assure an effective and safe fire season

By: Bev Paulan, West Central Region

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When a group of pilots gets together there is always a lot of talk about aircraft, regulations, missions flown and a very liberal amount of tall tales of daring-do. Make this a group of DNR pilots and a healthy dose of fire, wildlife tracking and law enforcement support round out the discussions. The annual winter DNR pilot meeting held in Madison March 1-3 contained all this and more, preparing the Division of Forestry's Aeronautics Section for the spring fire season.

These meetings, held at a different pilot base every year, are the Bureau of Forest Protection Aeronautics Section's pre-fire season training and preparation. This year, section chief **John Jorgensen** and Madison pilot **Jeff Oimoen** hosted the entire section of pilots and members of the Dodgeville forestry staff at GEF2 for pertinent and critical training and workshops.



A single-engine air tanker (S.E.A.T.) dropped thermo-gel on the left flank of a fire west of Spooner last spring, reducing the fire's intensity and preventing it from possibly spotting across the road.

WDNR Photo

The focus of this meeting is to ensure the proverbial rust is knocked off for the coming fire season. Phil Miller, pilot stationed at Siren, has developed a realistic fire simulation, using U.S. Forest Service software. The simulations are set up to allow for three stations: one for the pilot with an aerial view; one for the rangers and technicians with a view from the ground; and a third station that can be changed from a tower view to another aerial view for a SEAT (Single-Engine Air Tanker) view.

A virtual, three dimensional fire is simulated and, through radio communication, all resources engage in an exercise including size-up, tactical discussions and fire suppression. After the simulation is ended, the area forestry leader heads up an evaluation of the simulation critiquing each participant's performance.

Division of Forestry deputy administrator **Darrell Zastrow** explained the importance of simulation and practicing response to emergency situations, such as a wildfire.

"The ability to realistically simulate emergency situations is at the heart of this type of training. It allows trainees to practice skills in communication and decision making

preparing them for a real life response. Wisconsin DNR Forestry has a long history in the use of simulation as a valuable training tool."

This simulation exercise, used for a second year, has proved invaluable for not only the pilots, but also the ground crew. Having different views from either the ground or the air allows each person a better picture of the operation. Speaking as a pilot, sometimes we take for granted the overall view that we have. Through the simulation, we all now have a better regard for how difficult it is for those on the ground to visualize just what we see. We're all better communicators on a fire, as a result.

The remaining hours of the training were put to good use with discussions on everything from fire to risk management. **Jim Barnier**, fire suppression specialist in the Wisconsin Dells, presented a review of the 2010 fire season, offering any criticisms from the field and a PowerPoint on Large Fire Operations.

Jeff Taylor from the Department of Transportation presented a program on runway safety and accident prevention. Representatives from Technisonic radios brought us up to speed on new multi-band radios, installed in the planes and allowing pilots greater flexibility than was available with the older Kenwood models.

It was widely agreed that the highlight of the meeting was a presentation on Risk Management by John Chmiel. John is the manager of the Wausau, WI airport FBO, holds a number of certificates and awards, and speaks widely on this subject.

As pilots, we've consciously chosen an inherently risky profession. It does become just a job, sometimes crossing over into the rote, unconscious performance that any oft-repeated job does.

John shook us all out of our tendency toward complacency and reminded us to keep sharp by always evaluating ourselves and the situation before we get into the plane. We all know we should do this, but it was a timely and essential reminder to actually do that. The fire season can get stressful with pressure to get somewhere quickly. John's lesson is indeed one each pilot must heed. Our fire season will be better because of it.

Footnote: Bev Paulan is an aircraft pilot stationed in Eau Claire.



Around the state...DNR employees shine

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Central office success story

- Just after leaving MacKenzie Center yesterday (3/17/11), an adult male chaperone experienced a heart attack while on the school bus. One of our staff, **Dan Lee**, heard the call on his pager and immediately responded. Dan is an EMT with the Poynette fire department. He grabbed one of the AED's donated by the Friends of MacKenzie and arrived at the bus within 5 minutes of the page. The bus driver, also an EMT, was performing CPR when Dan arrived with the AED. Dan connected the AED and shocked the patient, bringing him back to normal heart rhythm. Just after that the ambulance arrived and called flight-for-life. Dan also assisted with securing the area for the helicopter. Even though in serious condition, the patient is alive and expected to recover. Great job, Dan! And a big "Thank You" to the Friends of MacKenzie Center for donating the AED's. **Derek**

A. Duane, director, MacKenzie Environmental Education Center

- From **Susan Cook**, chief of the Business and Outreach Section in the Bureau of Customer Service & Licensing: customer service's business Support specialists Joel Hartman (Green Bay), **Gina Howard** (Waukesha), **Charity Ricci** (Wisconsin Dells) and **Linda Winters** (Boulder Junction) have traveled throughout the state to train over 1,200 license agents and, most recently, started training business owners to serve as Full Service Vehicle Registration Agents. Over 160 businesses have enrolled into this new program and are now able to issue boat, snowmobile and ATV decals to the public. *This message is from Jeff Catlin, Business Manager of Appleton Powersports, and the first business in Wisconsin to be trained as a Vehicle Registration Agent.*

"We are very happy and fortunate that we were chosen to be your first (Vehicle Registration) station, and hope that we can continue to put our best foot forward as your delegate in the field, providing the services our customers demand today and in the future...I would like to put (Business Support Specialist) Joel Hartman on a pedestal for a moment; he has proven to be an excellent resource to us in the field, as well as a great trainer and communicator. You put the perfect person in that position and he deserves a well-earned pat on the back from your team, and, in this time of recession, if you are passing out raises, I would suggest he has earned one."

- From **Erin Crain**, chief of the Ecological Inventory and Monitoring Section in the Bureau of Endangered Resources: Well, its official. The bat rules have made it through the Legislature and are in the process of being submitted for publication.

While the "bat crew" may have been on the frontlines, their work would not have been possible without significant support from their colleagues in ER and WM, as well as our attorneys, legislative liaisons and administration. And while the fight to protect our cave bat population is far from over, I just wanted to take a moment to thank everyone for their dedication to the project. Its an absolute privilege to work with such wonderful and talented people.

Secretary **Cathy Stepp** followed up with "Nicely done, all."

- From **Scott Humrickhouse** (West Central Region director) to Lloyd Eagan (South Central Region director), **Shelly Young** (director of the Bureau of Finance), **Tim Sell** (Bureau of Finance supervisor), **Stacey Beattie** (financial specialist, Madison), **Derrek Heise** (financial specialist, Madison), **Jackie Frase** (supervisor, Eau Claire) and **Dorie Bell** (financial specialist, La Crosse): We really appreciate your contribution to our supervisors' workshop yesterday. The time we spent was worthwhile - thanks to you for helping make it possible.
- A message of appreciation from **Dan Schuller**, director of the Bureau of Parks & Recreation: The last few weeks have been extraordinary and as many have said, historic. With hundreds of thousands people visiting the capitol to voice their political opinions it has been a very interesting time in Madison.

Out of this event came another reason I am proud of our men and women in the Wisconsin State Park System. We asked and many of you came to help provide security at the state capitol building. For those of you who joined the warden force, State Patrol, UW Police, Capitol Police, municipal and county officers, you know what it was like.

On behalf of the Wisconsin State Park System as well as the Park Management Team, I thank these supervisors and rangers for taking time out of their busy schedules and spending some very long days away from their properties.

Thanks to: **Ben Bergey, Dawn Bishop, Sarah Bolser, Dave Borsecnik, Jim Carter, Kimberly Currie, Kurt Dreger, Scott Erickson, Jason Fritz, Sara Gossfeld-Benzing, Becky Green, Kathy Gruentzel, Karl Heil, Terry Jensen, Anne Korman, Andrew Krueger, Jerry Leiterman, John Meyer, Tim Miller, Jason Quast, Steve Schmelzer, Matt Seguin, Ken Severn, Jim Thompson, Rusty Weise, Rob Wessberg and Paul Zajackowski. Paul Bruggink and Brian Hefty** from Facility & Lands joined in as well.

Others that signed up but did not get called are **Kathy Pospsychalla Oginiski, Lenore Schroeder and Joe Fieweger. Staff from many other DNR programs was also part of this operation.** It was a well coordinated effort on all fronts. Thanks to you all!

Northeast Region success stories

- On February 15th, I was out in the field and was presented with an opportunity to collect a statement from a couple witnesses on a possible illegal discharge of hazardous waste. The informants were willing to provide statements, and I did not want to lose the opportunity. Working in an area with a warden vacancy with many of our NER wardens covering the sturgeon season, and on a day when many of our warden supervisors were stationed at the Capitol, it was difficult to find an available warden. However, with the help of **Roxanne Chronert** (hydrogeologist, Green Bay), we reached warden **Mike Young** (Wautoma) on his day off. Going above and beyond for us once again, Mike offered to come out and take the statements. His familiarity with this kind of violation and experience in interacting with informants resulted in capturing very detailed and useful information. My sincere thanks to Roxanne and Mike for their professionalism and efforts. **Jennifer Borski, (hydrogeologist, Oshkosh)**
- Thank you to **Chris Lilek** (hydrogeologist, Plymouth), **Annette Weissbach** (land recycling lead, Green Bay) and **Michael Prager** (land recycling team leader, Bureau of Remediation & Redevelopment) for their help and quick turnaround in preparing the offsite General Liability *Clarification Letter for Elkart Lake (Former) Candy shop. From Brad Conley, president of Quality Environmental Management. Services, and Jessica Franklin, attorney for the site.*
- To **Wendy Anderson** (drinking water engineer, Green Bay) and **Amy Callis** (wastewater specialist, Green Bay): Thank you for your assistance, time, and willingness, especially under such short notice, in proctoring the Minnesota monitoring well contractor license exam taken by a Green Bay resident. I know that he is very appreciative of your effort and avoiding the trip to St. Paul, MN. Your actions reflect a real dedication to serving the public. *Michael Convery*
- To **Liz Heinen**, Drinking water and Groundwater Program, Appleton: Thanks to Liz for attending a meeting about the Lemberger Superfund site for the Friends of the Branch River. While not specifically on the agenda as a speaker Liz willingly stood up and addressed a contentious audience of 60 people to explain changes to a special well casing depth area. Liz is a superb example of a quality DNR employee who goes out of her way to work with people and help them understand the values of and requirements for groundwater quality protection. Thank you Liz

for being there!! **Annette Weissbach** (hydrogeologist, Green Bay)

• To **Chris Lilek** (hydrogeologist, Green Bay): The students and teachers at Oostburg Christian School want to thank you so very much for taking the time to be a part of our Science Day program (Feb 25, 2011). Your presentation was enjoyed by every student and staff member. I loved your personal connection with the students. You are a natural teacher. *Sincerely, Kris Hancock, Eighth Grade Teacher*

• To **Casey Jones** (wastewater specialist, Oshkosh): Thank you for taking the time, and making the effort, to read and respond to our continuing concerns regarding the Rosendale Dairy. We are sorry that the comments were submitted so late, and appreciate the fact that you addressed them even so. We are weary and discouraged. Loren has lived here on the farm all his life, as have his parents and grandparents before him, and I all my married life, and we never imagined a place such as Rosendale Dairy would be permitted to exist. Thank you for your respectful and considerate response. Sincerely, Nancy and Loren

• On November 29, 2010 officers from the Marinette Police Department were dispatched to the Marinette High School for a report of a subject holding a classroom of 20 plus students hostage with a firearm. There were reports of shots having been fired as well. We received immediate assistance from area departments, including conservation officers from your agency. This is certainly one of the most serious and dangerous calls for a law enforcement officer to be dispatched to, and can quickly exhaust the resources of an agency the size of Marinette PD. For this reason we often count on other agencies for help, and I cannot say enough about the willingness of your officers to respond to this hazardous situation to provide backup. On behalf of Chief Skorik and the rest of our department I want to express our appreciation to you for the help we received from the wardens **Mike Kitt** and **Bob Goerlinger**. *Sincerely, Captain John Mabry, Marinette Police Department*

• To **Mike Neal**, warden, Sister Bay: Following a minor bump to the mirror to an unoccupied car and his follow-up, warden Neal received the following note: I received the check today, and I want to thank you again for your honesty. You are truly a fine person. *Sincerely Mary Jane Nielson.*

• To **Amy Callis**, (wastewater specialist, Green Bay): Wisconsin public servants have been in the news a lot recently, so I wanted to share our appreciation of your work. We work with departments of Ecology/Environmental Quality/Natural Resources in many states, and all of our contacts with the Wisconsin DNR and you in particular have been exceptionally fast, efficient, fair and helpful – head and shoulders above what we experience in most other places. Obviously we're happy that we're able to continue delivering the material to the digester, but even if for some reason it had turned out that we couldn't, all of us at Evergreen would still be very grateful for your excellent service. Your continuing work on this industrial-ecology project will put green energy into the Wisconsin grid, reduce emissions from sludge burning, and give important economic support to dairies as well as to the pulp/paper industry (both of which need it). And it helps keep food on the table for a few of us out here in Seattle – so thanks! *Ben Rankin*

• From **Diane Johnson**, customer service representative, Green Bay: *Customer*

Joe Hrbacek, from Minnesota, extends a big thank-you to **Margaret Janovetz Casey** (customer service representative, Janesville) for all the help you gave him in the spring turkey draw. He misinterpreted wrong zone and you will so very helpful in getting it switched to the zone he wanted. He is so appreciative of your help and also extends a thank-you to the DNR for making it enjoyable for nonresidents to hunt in Wisconsin.

- Thank you for your much needed support on Ripon's Well 9 TCE removal project. The project to remove these VOC's was the biggest undertaking of my career as a water operator. I was extremely fortunate for the hard efforts of the DNR to make this project a success. Hydrogeologist **Jennifer Easterly** (waste management specialist, Oshkosh) should especially be commended for her efforts. Any project of this magnitude will include mistakes by contractors, and Jennifer was there every step of the way to see that those mistakes were identified and corrected. The biggest thing that was overlooked in the process was the air stripper used to remove the TCE's was outside, unprotected from Wisconsin's harsh winter weather. Thanks to Jennifer's determination to see the project completed successfully, the air stripper is now covered and protected. Her attention to detail and willingness to go the extra mile to see this project completed in the best possible manner was instrumental in the overall success it was. I would also like to thank **Jim Schedgick** (water supply specialist, Oshkosh) who was able to answer the many questions I had throughout the project. Kris Khatri (water supply engineer, Green Bay) also provided valuable insight and information. Thanks to your assistance, Well 9 is now delivering clean and uncontaminated water to the residents of Ripon, something everyone can surely appreciate! *Jim Jacobs*

- To **Roxanne Chronert**, (spills team leader, Green Bay): Thank you for presenting such an excellent presentation on March 10th, at the Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards (WALDAB) meeting. The information was very good and interesting. I appreciate your time to educate the health officers on the DNR's role in spills. *Dennis Hibray, MPA, Regional Director, Division of Public Health*

Southeast Region success stories

- Congratulations from area wildlife supervisor **Tim Lizotte** (Waukesha) to fisheries biologist **Ben Heussner** (Waukesha) and wildlife biologist **Brian Glenzinski** (Waukesha): Last night I watched two true resource professionals in action as Department Fisheries Biologist Ben Heussner and Wildlife Biologist Brian Glenzinski presented the "State of the Lake" report to residents of Big Muskego Lake and the Lake District Commissioners. Based on an analysis of biological, economic, and social parameters, they presented their recommendation for a temporary lowering of water levels in 2011 to benefit fish, wildlife, habitat, and water quality. After about two hours of presentation and discussion, the Lake Commissioners voted to recommend to the City Council the preferred option of lowering the lake 12" in spring, then 6" for the remainder of the growing season. This meeting was a culmination of several pre-meetings with lake partners, Department staff and city biologists to develop these recommendations. Ben and Brian did an excellent job at presenting the science to

sell their recommendation and keeping their cool when things got testy. It was a great example of community based natural resource management. The City Council will vote on the recommendation on March 22, they usually take the recommendation of the Lake Commissioners. Nice work Brian and Ben.

- Congratulations to hydrogeologist **Pamela Mylotta** (Milwaukee) from the Sigma Group: Thank you Pam for all your hard work for moving this project across the finish line. Hope to get the rest of the sites on this property through closure as well in the near future.

Reinhart Boerner Van Duren s.c. added their appreciation in an email: A big thank you goes out to you. You went the extra mile and I really appreciate it, and so does the consultant.

Pamela also received a special note of thanks from an individual, who inherited a drycleaner and its contamination from her late husband, she writes "can't thank you enough for all the help you've given me."

- Congratulations to hydrogeologist **Dave Volkert** (Waukesha): A thank you email was received from *Environmental Attorney Donald P. Gallo* for Dave's work verifying costs which allowed a loan to proceed. "Thank you David! You have helped a great deal on this loan process. Your efforts are appreciated very much."
- Congratulations to **all Southeast Region staff** who contributed to the success of the Milwaukee Journal Sports Show: The 71st Annual Milwaukee Journal Sports Show recently completed its five day run at the Wisconsin Exposition Center in West Allis. Traffic was steady at the Department of Natural Resources exhibit with brisk activity at the License counter and popular displays such as the Wildlife table with its assortment of pelts, interactive displays, and amphibians. New this year was the addition of an Aquatic Invasive Species display. Our wardens staffed the exhibit and spent time visiting with Sports Show exhibitors and stakeholders. The DNR exhibit was visited by the Secretary's office. **Cathy Stepp** talked with staff and dropped in at our always – popular kids' casting clinics. **Matt Coffaro** (fisheries biologist, Milwaukee) reports that 1,031 youngsters and their parents attended this year's clinics, up from last year's 1,004. Executive Assistant **Scott Gunderson** spent several hours selling licenses and permits to citizens. This year's License and permit sales totaled approximately \$162,389. Last year's amount was \$160,667. Special thanks to **Marcus Smith** (regional public affairs manager) and **Doug Hoskins** (lands manager, Milwaukee) for their overall leadership and management of the show.

West Central Region success story

- This project proceeded much faster than I thought it would in large part to the excellent work and persistence of **Tom Hvizdak** (hydrogeologist, Wisconsin Rapids) and **Loren Brumberg** (waste management specialist, Eau Claire). And also the cooperation we received from DOMTAR and their consultant. They were very responsive to our requests for further investigation and information. This is a very large site that had been in heavy industrial use for over 100 years. There were numerous contamination issues to address from a wide variety of sources. The word complex comes to mind. My thanks and appreciation to each of you as well. **Scott Humrickhouse**, *West Central Region director*

- From West Central Region forestry leader **Arvid Haugen** to **Shirley Bargander** (forestry team leader, Wausau) and **Mike Warnke** (forestry team leader, Necedah) for volunteering to cover next week (at the State Capitol), even though now they are no longer needed. Also, thanks to **Terry Boone** (ranger, Black River State Forest) who had volunteered for law enforcement duty, but as it turned out wasn't needed.

And thanks a bunch to those of you who volunteered and already did your stint **Mark Kubler** (forestry area supervisor, Baldwin), **Pat Murphy** (forestry staff supervisor, Eau Claire), **Jim Storandt** (nursery supervisor, Wisconsin Rapids), **Steve Edge** (forestry team leader, Eau Claire), **Greg Edge** (forestry area supervisor, La Crosse), **Gary Schluter** (forestry team leader, Black River Falls), and **Steve Courtney** (area forestry leader, Wisconsin Rapids). I and **Trent (Marty)**, director of the Bureau of Forest Protection appreciated it very much and from my time down there, I know that everyone we worked with was very appreciative of our contributions and professionalism. Thanks for rising to the challenge once again!



Ecological assessment of Dane County Ice Age reserve now available

By: Christina Isenring, Bureau of Endangered Resources

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The Bureau of Endangered Resources' Natural Heritage Inventory Program recently published online its inventory report "[Rapid Ecological Assessment for the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve at Cross Plains, Dane County, WI.](#)" The report addresses issues specifically related to the conservation of biological diversity for this property. The Ice Age National Scientific Reserve at Cross Plains is located in west-central Dane County, about two miles southeast of the village of Cross Plains and about three miles west of the cities of Madison and Middleton.



Prairie restoration can be viewed alongside Shoveler's Sink, on County Hwy S/Mineral Point Rd.

WDNR Photo

Established in 1964 to protect glacial landforms and landscapes in Wisconsin, the Cross Plains unit of the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve is part of a nine-unit system affiliated with the National Park Service, including lands owned by DNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Highlights of the report include descriptions of steep gorges containing ephemeral streams surrounded by oak woodland or sugar maple forest, along with scattered

areas of bedrock outcrops.

Field surveys also identified two other unique, biodiversity conservation opportunities on this property for: Shoveler's Sink and grassland bird habitat restoration.

Shoveler's Sink is a small, remnant glacial depression that provides excellent habitat for such migratory birds as waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds and waterbirds seeking a freshwater pond, marsh or grassland.

Observers have spotted at least 17 species of waterfowl using the Shoveler's Sink pond.

Grassland bird species are exhibiting one of the most significant declines of any suite of bird species in Wisconsin, with the major cause being alteration and loss of breeding habitat. This property presents opportunities to continue restoration efforts to benefit these birds by addressing the needs of several bird species that require large grassland habitat patches.

For more information on the Ice Age Scientific Reserve and the current planning process, visit the ["Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains General Management Plan"](#) webpage.

Footnote: *Christina Isenring is a Natural Heritage Inventory ecologist.*



Links of interest...don't miss them

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- **Titles:** (DNR) "Spokespersons" and "News Media Protocols for DNR Staff"

Description: The DNR Office of Communications has updated its "MyDNR" Intranet page to include a list of department spokespersons and the protocol employees should use when working with the media.

Links: ["Spokespersons"](#) (Select "Spokespersons" under "Contacts")
["News Media Protocols for DNR Staff"](#)

- **Title:** "Horicon Marsh International Education Center (HMIEC) Seminar Series - - Media Catalogue"

Description: A Mediasite catalog viewable by the public which includes a majority of the lecture series held at Horicon Marsh, plus speakers from the center's bird club and archeological society.

Link: ["Horicon Marsh Seminar Series Catalogue"](#)

- **Title:** "Open Season"

Description: In Sawyer County in November 2004, Hmong hunter Chai Vang shot and killed six white hunters. This short film shares the views of both sides of those involved and includes interviews with family members of the six slain hunters, the sister of Chai Vang, Chai Vang himself and DNR wardens, including chief warden Randy Stark. DNR's "Harmony in the Woods" initiative stems in part from this hunting incident.

"Open Season" is part of the "Shorts Saturday @ Monona Terrace" program, showing on April 2 during the Wisconsin Film Festival. Program begins at 1 p.m. and admission is \$8

Link: ["Open Season"](#) Select "O"

- **Title:** "2010 Management Assistance Team Helping State Fish and Wildlife Agencies to Achieve Excellence"

Description: The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' report on services and products developed and delivered in three principal program areas: State-focused leadership development, the National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI), and consulting services on organization development and agency administrative topics.

Link: ["2010 Management Assistance Team" report](#)



Purchasing agent Wayne Behrens, Tomahawk, recently passed away

By: Bob Manwell, Office of Communications

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As you already may know, Division of Forestry purchasing agent **Wayne Behrens**, age 57, passed away on March 12. Stationed at the LeMay Center, Behrens spent his entire 23-year career at the center.

"Wayne's entire time with the DNR was at the LeMay Center," said **Wendy McCown**, Bureau of Forestry Business Services director and Behrens' supervisor for the period immediately preceding his death. "He was a really nice, humble man, who was well-liked by his peers. He had a calm demeanor and a great sense of humor. Wayne loved to read, with a passion for history, and had an amazing memory for historical facts. His friends at the LeMay Center are donating books to the Tomahawk Library in his memory."

As an Army veteran, Behrens was buried with military honors on March 16 at the Oak Hill Cemetery in Irma. A full obituary is available at the [Krueger Family Funeral Home](#) website.

Footnote: *Bob Manwell is a public affairs manager, working with the divisions of Forestry and Land.*



Legislators introduce new DNR-related bills

By: Paul Heinen, Secretary's Office

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Recently, a senator and representative introduced bills in their respective house that will impact our agency's work. For information on the status of other DNR-related legislative proposals and laws, check out the most recent "[Bill Tracker](#)."

- **SB 36**, (Sen. Jim Holperin) would make changes to the Shoreland Zoning law.
- **AB 48**, (Rep. Jim Ott) would require DNR to make a written directory of all Stewardship-funded lands available to the public for a fee.

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



2011 Winnebago Lakes sturgeon spearing season one for the record books

By: Ron Bruch, Northeast Region

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Each year since 1999, DNR has set a cap that will keep the sturgeon harvest at or

below five percent of the harvestable population in the Winnebago System. The 2011 sturgeon spearing season on the Winnebago Lakes will go into the books as the fourth 16-day season since the department implemented the cap. The other seasons were in 2002, 2006 and 2007.

Under current rule, the season lasts until 16 days or until the take hits one of the harvest cap closure triggers. Triggers that close the fishery occur the day after 90 percent of the harvest cap is reached or the same day if the 100 percent harvest cap is reached. Since 2003, when the 6:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. spearing day was implemented, the average season length has been 11 days. The shortest season since 2003 was four days, in 2008.

Although spearers generally were excited about the success of the fishery, they were specifically excited about the increasing numbers of trophy-sized sturgeon, up over the last 15 to 20 years.



On February 16, Winneconne angler Keith Coats landed this 80.7 inches, 169.3 pounds sturgeon on Lake Butte des Morts, the largest ever registered from the upriver lakes.

WDNR Photo

There also may be some demographic changes contributing to increased spearing license sales, as the next generation of spearers is stepping up to the spearing holes. More will be known about these trends after the department looks at and analyzes demographic data collected during the annual spearing harvests since 1991.

The numbers tell the real story

Effort as measured by total spearing licenses sold definitely was up this year at 12,423, 1,563 more than in 2010, also the largest increase at 46 percent more since 2007.

Also, the total harvest this year of 1,426 sturgeon was close to the average annual harvest of 1,405, since 1999.

Effort as measured by shanty counts on the lake told the real story of the 2011 season. On opening day, there were 4,321 fishing huts on Lake Winnebago and another 372 on the Upriver Lakes. Warm weather, snow melt and deteriorating travel conditions on the ice the first week of the season forced a majority of spearers to pull

their shacks off the lakes, dropping the count by the second Saturday of the season 59 percent on Lake Winnebago and 81 percent on the Upriver Lakes. The number on Upriver Lakes usually drops off anyway, because as a lottery fishery, once tags are filled, spearers often pull their shacks off.

Biggest change was the big fish snagged

The biggest change we've seen over the last ten years is the percentage of large fish in the harvest. This year, the percentage of fish 100 pounds or larger was 7.5 percent on Lake Winnebago and 3.6 percent on the Upriver Lakes. The percentage of these "century mark" fish has steadily increased the last 15 years, causing spearers to ask about this phenomenon "Are we taking too many 100 pounders" and "Why?"

When DNR started down the path of updating regulations to better control the harvest and stabilize the adult spawning stock of sturgeon in the Winnebago System, our colloquial goal was: "We want to grow more old ladies."

In other words, we saw that our adult female stock was being overharvested, primarily due to a high size limit of 45 inches, along with the lack of a safe harvest cap system. We realized that we needed to reduce that harvest and increase survival of females.

All of the 22 new regulations and laws implemented since 1993 appear to have done their job quite well. The other part of the success equation was luck: sometimes you just have to get lucky.

The timing of implementation of the new regulations and laws couldn't have been better. As the new regulations began to have an impact on the sturgeon harvest, the size and age structure of the Winnebago sturgeon population was poised to include older and larger fish with each passing year. This phenomenon was due to the fact that by the mid 1990s we finally were on the back side of a hole in the sturgeon population that had been created by excessive legal and illegal overharvest during the 1930s through the 1950s.

Although some ask whether spearers are taking too many "100 pounders," and close evaluation of the harvest data will tell, preliminary analysis has shown that the percentage of 100 pound-plus fish in the harvest appears to reflect a true increase in the number of these large fish in the population.

Another thing to remember is how "skinny" sturgeon were five to six years ago. Between 2004 and 2006, sturgeon food resources were at a low point. Lakefly larvae were at the lowest point ever measured, going back to the 1960s. And, the gizzard shad hatches in the early 2000s also were low. Sturgeon depend on these two food resources for 86 percent of their nutrition.

Since 2006, both of these food resources have bounced back, and we've seen the condition of the sturgeon bounce back to give us the fish "with shoulders" that we've been seeing the last few years.

The department has been watching the trend of more trophy-size fish growing not only in our harvest, but also in the spawning stock of both females and males, for over the past 15 years.

The truth will be in the details

We're thoroughly debriefing this season, aging all the sturgeon spines, taking a look at the data, crunching all the numbers, and determining what we need to do to continue to improve the sturgeon program as we move forward.

All of this will take time to complete. In the meantime, I've included the [Daily](#)

[Sturgeon Tally Sheet](#)" from the February 27, 2011 post-season synopsis, along with a number of initial data summaries, the "[Lake Winnebago Totals](#)" and the "[Upriver Totals.](#)" for you to peruse. Have fun looking these over, and thanks to those of you throughout the agency for your support and involvement in this fantastic fishery.

Footnote: Ron Bruch is the Upper Fox-Wolf Fisheries Work Unit supervisor, stationed in Oshkosh.



This year's Maple Syrup Festival sure to be a sweet time

By: Ruth Ann Lee, MacKenzie Environmental Education Center

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Mark your calendar for 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on April 2, for a day of fun and learning about the [MacKenzie Center's](#) sugar bush and how Native Americans, pioneers and today's volunteers make maple syrup. Enjoy a pancake breakfast scheduled for 8 a.m. to noon, horse drawn wagon rides and more!



Hitch a ride on a horse drawn wagon during the Maple Syrup Festival.
WDNR Photo

This event will run from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. and is free, with added costs for the concession stand, breakfast and raffles. The MacKenzie Center is located two miles east of Poynette on County Road CS, just 25 miles north of Madison. Call (608)635-8105 for more information.

Footnote: Ruth Ann Lee is the lead educator at the MacKenzie Center.



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