

Lee Kernen

Lee was born in Sheboygan on November 19, 1940, and grew up in that area. He credits his interest in natural resources to the summers he spent at his Grandfather's cottage on Crystal Lake near Plymouth where he fished almost daily and even learned to SCUBA dive as early as 1955.

He attended the University of Montana at Missoula his freshman year of college majoring in Wildlife Technology and then transferred to the UW at Madison after marrying his high school sweetheart. While in Madison he began working for Ron Poff analyzing water samples in 1963 at the Nevin Fish Hatchery. He was hired permanently in 1964 and was eventually stationed at Horicon as the District Fish Manager as they were called in those days. In 1968, following the untimely death of 47-year old Larry Wiegert, the fish manager at Green Bay, Lee transferred to that station to head up the then brand new trout and salmon program in Lake Michigan.

Lee has always adhered to the importance of timing and how the direction of our lives often hinges on outside forces. Here he was, a 28-year old young biologist, who got to stock the first coho salmon and Chinook salmon on the Wisconsin side of Lake Michigan and play a role in perhaps the greatest fishery management success story in the US and perhaps the world. That same decade the water quality of the Fox River and Lower Green Bay improved drastically due to State pollution enforcement, allowing Lee to make the first introductions of walleye and muskellunge in the 1970's and create fishing where there had been almost none the previous 20 years. It was just timing again, Lee says, "If I hadn't been there I am sure that the next fellow would have done the same."

In 1979 then Fisheries Director, Jim Addis, brought Lee to the Madison office as the Great Lakes Section Chief in his newly organized bureau. Eleven years later he was named the Director of the Bureau of Fisheries Management which at that time had around 275



permanent employees, 14 fish hatcheries and a budget of about \$19 million annually.

Under his leadership Lee is most proud of the stricter fishing regulations he was able to pass to protect fish from over-harvest by sport, commercial, and tribal anglers. He retired after 33 years of service in March, 1997.

Lee had two children with his first wife, Gretchen, his daughter Kelly is now 49 years old and lives in Middletown, Connecticut where her husband Ken is the tennis coach at Wesleyan University. Lee's oldest granddaughter Rikki, is working on her PhD at Yale and is currently employed by the UN as an interpreter - she speaks five languages. His grandson Graham, is 16 and a top junior tennis player.

Lee's son, Shad, age 46, provided him with three grandchildren and lives in Sun Prairie. Briana is a senior at SP and will attend the UW Eau Claire next year. Jordan is a 9th grader at junior high and son, Travis, is ten. Lee guided him to his first buck in November of which both Gramps and the kid are extremely proud.

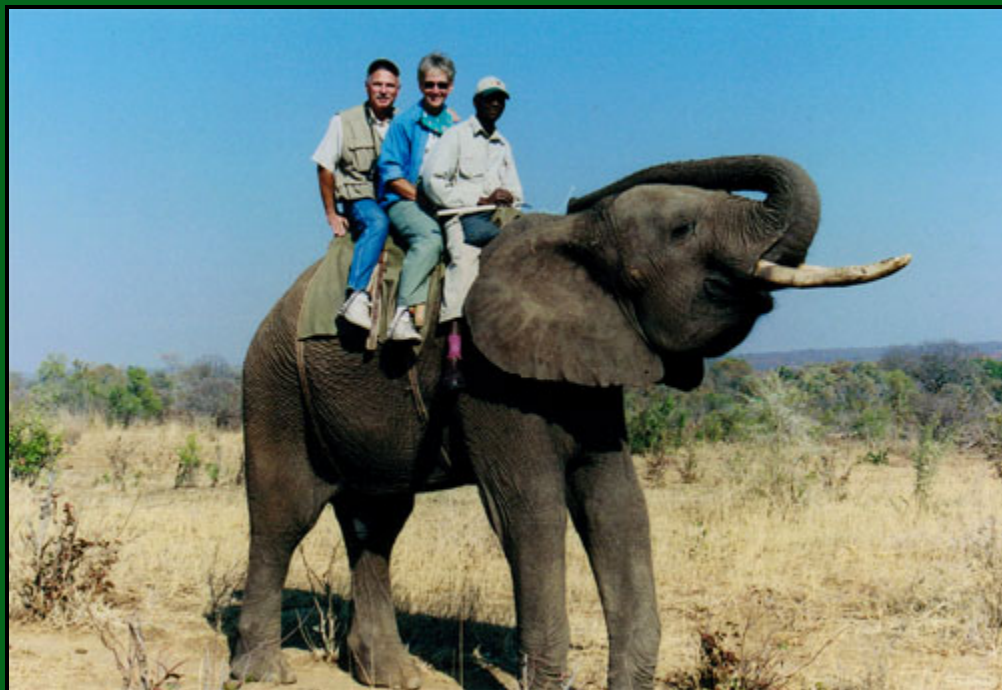


**First Row: Travis and Jordan who live in Sun Prairie.
Second Row: Briana, Graham and Rikki**



Ten year old grandson, Travis, who under Lee's guidance shot this fork-horn buck on his very first morning of a mentored deer hunt. November of 2010.

Lee was divorced from his first wife in 1984 and met Janet Buechner ("JB") while both worked at GEF II. The two of them have just celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary and now reside between Portage and Montello on 37 acres of mostly wooded land. They have traveled extensively to Australia, Africa, South America, Canada, Central America, Europe and many more.



Africa was one of the Kernens's favorite trips. Here they ride an African elephant near Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe in 2003. Lee took advantage of the trip to go on a shooting safari that he dreamed of as a child, and shot a trophy sized kudu.

On these trips Lee has managed to get Janet on a variety of boats with a fishing rod in her hand and both of them have been fortunate to land many exotic fish, from Peacock bass in the Amazon to bonefish in the Bahamas.



In 2004 Lee and Janet took a cruise on the Rio Negro, a tributary of the Amazon River in Brazil. They each caught numerous exotic species such as this peacock bass that Lee caught while just 20 miles south of the Equator.

Lee and Janet are in the stages of planning a trip to fish the wilds of Bolivia in October of 2011, with perhaps a side trip to the Galapagos or similar natural wonder.

Lee on his ATV with his dog, English Setter Kassie, and a friend's Labrador, Elly.

Both Lee and Janet enjoy using the ATV for both yard work and touring their property.

