

Kathy Kahler

I grew up in Crystal Lake, Ill., with a brother and three sisters. In 1964, Dad took an early retirement from Proctor & Gamble and the 50-mile daily commute to Chicago and started a poultry farm north of Wisconsin Dells at the base of what locals call Blue Mound off Highway 13. After living in the Chicago suburbs, farm life was a new experience for me and I fell in love with the Adams County sand! When I wasn't gathering eggs -- and 40,000 hens lay a lot of eggs -- I hiked the back woods and roads and explored the streams and ravines in the Upper Dells area. I attended WD High School where I met my husband, Bill, though we didn't start dating until after college graduation.



My newfound love of the outdoors led to my decision to major in Wildlife Ecology at UW-Madison and I graduated with a B.S. degree in 1972. Bill and I married in 1974 and have lived in Madison ever since. We have two children -- Jill and Peter. Jill is married with two beautiful children -- Dylan, 6, and Ashlyn, 3. I have had the joy and pleasure of babysitting for them every Friday since Dylan was 3 months old. I love it and will miss it when Ashlyn enters 4-K next year.

Bill and I enjoy golfing, hunting and hiking. I've been a member of the DNR Golf League for about 20 years. Since both of us are still working, we haven't done much traveling, but there's still time!

I started my career with DNR in the typing pool, doing verbatim transcripts of public hearings. After several months, I was overjoyed to learn I was re-assigned to work for the Natural Resources Board -- doing what else but verbatim transcripts of monthly meetings! I eventually became one of the Board secretaries -- along with Judy Scullion and Peggy O'Donnell -- until my son was born in 1981. After that, I held program assistant positions in Environmental Impact, Legal Services and Solid Waste, then took a promotion at the Department of Health and Social Services.

After about a year there, I jumped at the chance to come back to DNR and have worked in Information & Education (and all its iterations) ever since. My last and most enjoyable position was as the Circulation Manager for Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine. I love the job so much that after retiring in August 2007, I returned two months later as a staff writer and am still working today. There is something special about being part of a team that gets to produce a new, different and beautiful product every two months and I'm truly proud to still be part of it.

By the way, if you're looking for a thoughtful and inexpensive gift for family or friends, a one-year subscription is still a bargain at \$8.97!