

Sheila Mittelstaedt

Sheila grew up on the Wienkes' family farm located on Willow Springs Road, north of Cobb, Wisconsin. She is the oldest child in the family of six, having four brothers and one sister. Growing up on the farm was a great life. It was a lot of hard work along with some great outdoor fun. Many hours were spent fishing, hiking, horseback riding, and camping in the valley with the other farm kids. Housework was not Sheila's favorite thing. Her father insisted the girls were to do more than housework. The girls had to milk cows, take care of the animals, field work, maintenance of buildings/machinery and all the many other duties associated with living on a farm. Sheila and her sister, Cindy kept up with their brothers. It wasn't easy living with four brothers.



Sheila and her family on the Wienkes' Farm

After graduating from Iowa Grant High School, she moved to Madison. Her first job was working as a bookkeeper for Badger Medical Supply, a company that supplied medical equipment and supplies to hospitals and clinics. After working there for seven years, she decided to try for a government job.

Sheila started her career with the DNR in October, 1980, at Camp Wakanda, Southern District. She worked there for a couple of weeks, and then the office moved back to the Nevin Fish Hatchery location. The old district office was destroyed by fire and was replaced with a new building. In 1983, she promoted to GEF 2 working in the Bureaus of Community and Financial Assistance, Finance, Customer Service and Licensing, and Information Technology. In 1999, Sheila transferred back to South Central Region as the lead Information Systems Specialist. She loved working with all program staff and helping find solutions for their computer problems. Learning their program needs and working to keep the network alive was a great challenge! In March 2011, Sheila retired after 30 years of service.



Sheila and the statewide IT staff



Barb, Ken and Sheila
Sheila's favorite field station, the Dodgeville Service Center.

Sheila and her husband Alan live west of Verona in the country. They have one child, Erik who works in landscaping. Eight years ago they purchased a piece of land that was in horrible condition. A friend told them they were nuts to buy the land which really was an ugly junk yard! Many hours were spent cleaning the land and their hard work shows. Each year they spend many hours tending the land and trees and working to create their woodland garden.

Alan is co-owner of PAR Concrete, Oregon, Wisconsin. PAR Concrete does flat concrete work for business and private construction projects. Alan hopes to retire within five years.

Sheila has been quilting for about ten years and enjoys making foundation pieced quilts. Foundation pieced quilts give her great art challenges. She enjoys quilting with four other women who, last year, all decided it was time for them to start traveling. St Thomas was the destination. The quilting ladies spend many hours at Fern Hill quilt retreat. The first quilt she made was a wall hanging of a Knight fighting the Dragon. One of Sheila's quilting goals is to make one for every family member. She gets great satisfaction sharing her talents

with others. Her last quilt titled, "The Woodland Path", was created for her nephew. He didn't want just any quilt, it had to be special. She created "The Woodland Path" quilt with a story that has all the block names incorporated into it.



Elk Quilt
subject of the Woodland Path

The Woodland Path As Derek and Brittany walk along "The Woodland Path", they hope to see lots of animals in the woods. When they look up to the sky, they see the "Hovering Hawk" over head. They wonder what other animals will be in the woods. There, ahead, on the "Woodland Path" at the edge of the woods they see an "Elk" in the distance. Derek tells Brittany, he hopes they come across an elk up close. They continue to walk the "Woodland Path" and they find "Bear Paws". Brittany wonders "Where is the bear!" Looking farther down the edge of the woods, they see a "Moose". As they enter deeper into the woods, they see "Fox and Geese", and then some "Turkey Tracks". A little further, they come across some "Ducks and Ducklings". Brittany is excited. She asks Derek if there could be a pond in the woods. Derek stops! Shh, there is a huge "Elk". How Exciting! Brittany look up to the sky, "Flying Geese" are over head. As they continue on their walk in the woods, they come to a pond. The pond has "Ducks Paddling". Along the pond's edge, there is a "Bear" in the "Pines". And look, over head there are more "Flying Geese" over the "Pines". As Brittany and Derek leave the woods, they see the "Moose" which is entering the woods. And yes, the "Hovering Hawk" is still there. What a lovely walk along "The Woodland Path".

When she is not making quilts, Sheila is busy making curtain valances, totes and handbags or designing embroidery designs and she continues to help family and friends with their computer problems.

Alan and Sheila hope to do some traveling when Alan retires. For the time being, they both enjoy fishing and hiking in Wisconsin.

As for retirement, "I'm still trying to decide what I want to do. I miss my DNR friends and I really enjoyed working at the DNR. How fortunate I was to work with great people who have such a passion for our world."