

Dennis Schenborn



I am a Wisconsinite by choice – not accident of birth – but then what else would I say given that I grew up in Chicago! The reason for my choice was simple – hormones! In 1975, I returned from a year in Antarctica as a research biologist with DePaul University, met a girl and chased her to the UW-Madison where we both pursued graduate degrees.

I figured that having an actual job with a paycheck would impress my father-in-law so the week before our wedding I walked into the DNR with a resume. Back in 1977, you could show up at the Pyare Square building and get a job that way. My job title in the Bureau of Planning was as unimpressive as the \$3.00 per

hour salary. I was transferred to Fisheries in 1978 and what was intended to be a temporary job turned into a 34-year career (not counting the years I spent as an LTE).

I credit my longevity at DNR to change resistance and the flexibility to adapt to a very diverse set of supervisors.

I worked for Dave Ives. Dave was good supervisor who let me use my skills while he taught me about how things actually worked in the field. Dave is still a common sense, forthright guy who always speaks his mind. He was easy to work with.

Jim Addis was my next supervisor. (Remember what I said about flexibility and adapting?) Jim challenged me intellectually



Ross Ice Shelf, Antarctica
1974

and always demanded my best. He knew which training courses to send me to and is the supervisor most responsible for my professional development. He encouraged me to engage in national conservation issues and I went on to become President of the national Organization of Wildlife Planners. Jim was promoted to Division Administrator and Doug Morrisette replaced him as Fisheries Chief – bit of a change.

Doug respected my opinion on many issues, took my advice on budget matters, and allowed me to continue writing and speaking at professional meetings throughout North America.

Next came Lee Kernan. Bit of personality change from Doug. Lee's ability to balance intuitive decision-making coupled to an understanding of people makes him a natural leader. Fisheries folks still call Lee "The Chief". He taught me to shoot pheasants, drink two beers at lunch and still work through the afternoon!



A successful hunt - 1974

After the intuitive leadership style of Lee came the objective logic of Mike Staggs.

Working with Staggs reminded me of the intellectual debates of graduate school – your facts and logic had to be right-on because he always found any weakness in your position. He sharpened my intellectual skills. When Susan Sylvester hired Mike as Lee's replacement, she asked what I thought because Mike spent several years on my staff. I told her that if I'd been a good boss to him, then I'd get exactly what I deserved and vice versa. He was a great boss who sometimes repeated to me lessons that I had passed on to him – now that required adaptability!

Oh, I still do fish from time to time.



Costa Rica - 2005



Hawaii

In my non-DNR moments, I've managed to set foot on 6 continents, sailed around Cape Horn, seen reefs in Hawaii and Belize, taught ecosystem management to more than 600 senior managers at the National Conservation Training Center, co-authored a college text book on ecosystem management, and helped my wife raise our two daughters.

I enjoy photography, gardening, travel, woodworking, and writing. I'm co-chair of the prairie restoration committee for the Pope Farm Park Conservancy in Middleton.



Serengeti Plain, Tanzania
2010

I serve on DePaul University's College of Science and Health Advisory Council, and on UW-Madison's Integrated Graduate Education and Research Training Advisory Board.