

Rube Reddeman



My career with the Wisconsin Conservation Department(WCD) began with an interview in May 1957 for a summer job in the Mail and Supply section. The Department was in the State Office Building, located on Wilson Street in Madison. Would you believe all the State offices were in that location? The summer job lasted until 1997, just about 40 years. Time does fly when you are having fun! The WCD name

was even changed to the Department of Natural Resources due to marriage with other agencies.

In those days, office supplies were delivered to our field stations, all over the state, by truck. As a young recruit, I had a good time traveling! Some might remember manual typewriters and forms for everything, including supplies. Fire Control at Tomahawk got loads of supplies. I guess if they didn't have it, Fire Control didn't need it.

The Conservation Bulletin (now the e-digest) was addressed using addressograph machines and mailed from the Southern District, located on the grounds of Nevin Fish Hatchery. It was a real project to get them to the post office . . . many mail bags to load.

In the 1960s, I moved to License Section. It was a busy place. Processing new boating laws, deer party permits,

goose blind permits, all kept us busy during an interesting era.

I became Chief of Boating and worked with Harold Hettrick to train local law enforcement officers about the new boating rules. I also discovered what it was like to renew 300,000 boat licenses! The plastic credit card type certificates were embossed by addressograph machines. The process was slow and required a 24/7 operation. No overtime then for supervisors! We did get publicity from the press regarding a mailing delay. Nice to be noticed though!

Sale of early deer party permits was an experience. Four hunters got together to apply for a doe permit in specified game areas. The drawings in Madison were observed by concerned hunters, legislators and interested parties. Early drawings for permits using data processing were viewed suspiciously, particularly if you didn't get one. In order for local hunters to obtain one, a percentage of the licenses were sold at the County Clerks offices.

Wow, what an experience! On the day the licenses went on sale there were long lines, lots of vocal assessment of Department procedures and campaigning by local officials. Black River Falls even closed the schools for the day. Kids sold refreshments to the people in line. I only had my tires slashed once!



Rube and Cheryl

Our section held District auctions to dispose of surplus equipment. These were big events for the public and helped clear needed storage areas. Hunters could repurchase their firearms that had been confiscated due to hunting violations. For some, this was an annual event!

We sold everything from widgets to trucks, tractors and office equipment. It's amazing how many Later in my career, I supervised the Inventory, Insurance and Fleet programs. Updating our building inventory after the bombing at the UW and reviewing insurance coverage allowed me to visit all Department properties. Amazing, how many toilets WWII helmets you can sell when it's raining. Total annual auction revenues exceeded several \$100,000. Any funds that were confiscation went to the school fund. It was a great time and I enjoyed working with field personnel and the Forest Fire Control Section regarding equipment specifications.

My wife Cheryl and I enjoy traveling, the Packers and Badgers, visiting casinos (I rate them by their buffets) and visiting our kids.



Todd, Pam, grand-daughter Brianna, Tami and Mike Strang

Our daughter, Tami, (Mike) live in Prairie Du Sac. She is an office manager for Buttonwood & Associates. Our son, Todd, (Pam) and grand-daughter Brianna live in Georgia. He owns and operates Mocha My Day Coffee Company. Brianna attends Tulane University in New Orleans.

We recently moved to a mature community in Windsor, Wisconsin and enjoy it immensely. No more cleaning eaves or shoveling snow!

As the squirrel says, "The only thing that scares me more than Rube on a ladder is trying to cross the road."