



WETLAND'S GAZETTE

Volume 8, Issue 2

July 2012

Mead's New Property Supervisor

Article by Kris Belling-West Central District Wildlife Supervisor



I am pleased to announce the appointment of **Brian Peters** as the Mead/McMillan Wildlife Work Unit Supervisor.

A love of the outdoors and Leopold's "Sand County Almanac" were the inspiration for Brian's choice of a life and career pursuit in conservation. Brian graduated from UW-Stevens Point in 1979 with double majors in Wildlife Management and Biology. He obtained his first permanent position with the WDNR as a Wisconsin Conservation Warden in 1980 and transferred into wildlife management shortly after that, though he maintained his Special Warden credentials until 2002. Brian held a technician position at the state game farm in Poynette before transferring to the Mead Wildlife Area in 1984 where he served as an integral member of the

Mead team for the next 28 years (and counting). Brian was honored by being chosen as the Wildlife Technician of the Year for 2008 in recognition of his knowledge and experience in the management of the Mead and McMillan Wildlife Areas.

Brian is an avid hunter and he is dedicated to providing quality hunting experiences and preserving our hunting heritage into the future. He has several other personal interests including history-related activities such as honoring American Civil War Veterans through the Sons of Union Veterans organization and reenacting Civil War Artillery, reading, singing in church choir, wood-working, recreational shooting, and tinkering with whatever needs repair or improvement. Brian and his wife Lucy have been married 28 years and have a son, Ian, and a daughter Angela. Lucy and Brian's home is a small farmstead west of Stevens Point with about 15 acres of marsh near the Wisconsin River where they enjoy watching the wildlife, including an active osprey nest within view of their yard.

Land management is Brian's passion, and he is very excited by the opportunity to take on the leadership role in all aspects of wildlife and property management at the Mead/McMillan Work Unit. Congratulations Brian!

Photos by Pam Resech

I would like to thank the Friends of the Mead/McMillan Association Board of Directors (Friends BOD) for your support and encouragement during my long quest in seeking the Mead/McMillan supervisor position. I've had a close and successful working relationship with the Friends group since its inception. My goal is to continue this positive relationship. We are certainly thankful for all the assistance and support provided by the Friends. The Mead and McMillan properties are enhanced because of your involvement and dedication. Thank you for all you do!

Tom Meier congratulating Brian on his promotion.



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Summaries of their Mead Fieldtrip
written by P.J. Jacobs' Seventh Grade Students
Article Compiled & Photos by Pam Resech

The seventh grade students from P.J. Jacobs Junior High school visited the Mead Wildlife Area over a 3 day period in May. The students took part in three learning sessions; Wetlands, Heritage, & Renewable Energy. The students were given the assignment to write an essay about their fieldtrip. The following paragraphs are the summaries from a few of their essays of their visit:



Wetland Hike via Ephemeral Boardwalk Trail led by Bill Seybold

"During the Mead, my eyes actually saw the world around me and made me realize what I am doing from a day to day basis to the Earth. I realized that I am leaving a huge ecological footprint in the Earth just

by riding the bus to school every day! I'm not saying that I am going to be all Earth friendly or anything but what I am saying is that I am going to try and be more conscious about the things that I am doing, maybe every now and then I could ride my bike to school instead of taking the bus. I am very glad that I could have this experience because for most of my life I have been in the dark about all of these things that I may be doing to the Earth on just common things that I do every day of my daily life."

"Mead is a great learning experience, if only we had more places that saved energy like that. They taught me things in a creative way so it caught my attention."

"I loved the Mead but I thought it could have a lot more hands-on activities at each station instead of just sitting there and learning. Otherwise the Mead was awesome! I love that we are outside all day instead being cooped up in school. It was fun to explore and learn new things at the Mead. There is so much to learn there. That's what I think is fun, learning new things outside. P.J. Jacobs should definitely do this next year and years to come."

"Now that we finished our journey through the Mead lets, wrap it up. After going to the Mead I learned a lot, and I would like to go back to the Mead again. One thing that I liked about the Mead is that the stations had games that were fun but you still got information from. One thing that I thought could improve on is the leaders in the groups could tell more information and make it more fun. I liked the Mead a lot but they could improve on a little of things."

(continued on next page)



P.J. Jacobs Fieldtrip Summaries (continued from page 2)

"Overall my experience at the Mead Wildlife was very fun, and educational. My favorite part of the trip was when we got to examine all the different types of animal furs. I learned a lot and am looking forward to going back sometime very soon."

"We had a great time at the Mead and we learned a lot. It's a great place for people to go to learn about nature. The wildlife here is amazing. They even have some endangered animals. The state of Wisconsin is really lucky to have a place that people can go and see the habitats of Wisconsin."

"The Mead was a fun trip, but not the most exciting trip I've taken. I learned a lot of interesting facts about the Mead, but I'm not sure when I will use it in life. I've only written about two stations of the three, so I didn't write about the renewable energy station. The Mead is very important to our environment and I hope everyone keeps it alive."

"One last thing that I learned about is prescribed burns. These are burns used to kill all woody vegetation and invasive plants in grasslands. Without prescribed burns, all grasslands could turn into forests, or lose all its natural plants and wildlife due to invasive species. I had a lot of fun at the Mead this year. I am lucky enough to come from a school where we got to go out there twice before; other kids had never been out there. I really hope we get to go out there next year, or other years to come. Mead provides such a fun and interesting learning environment. It would have been way more boring having to sit at school and write an essay about stuff we found on the internet, that's for sure."



Prescribed prairie burn, located southeast of the Visitor Center

"Overall the Mead fieldtrip was a success, but the bus ride was a little cramped. Throughout the entire trip I can say that I have learned many things about nature and how to treat it right and how to keep our Earth clean. Mead Wildlife Area has been a great experience in my life so far and now I know that there are different and better ways to go through life without all the bad chemicals, toxins, or other wasting things. Thank you Mr. Grabski for putting this learning experience together for us."

View videos created by John Weisbrod, P.J. Jacobs science teacher, of students enjoying their visits on May 9th & 10th by following the links provided:

<http://animoto.com/play/C02pxiEJhEwXu4b2xx6rw>

<http://animoto.com/play/tYjVI1TNDrf5ZgC0PuvayQ>



Nature's Niches

Article by Kaylee Zalewski

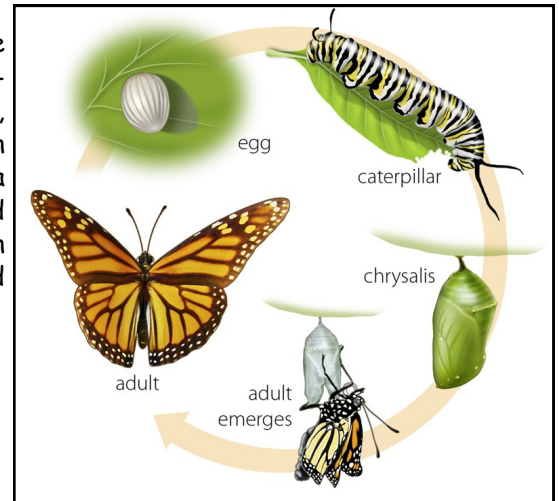
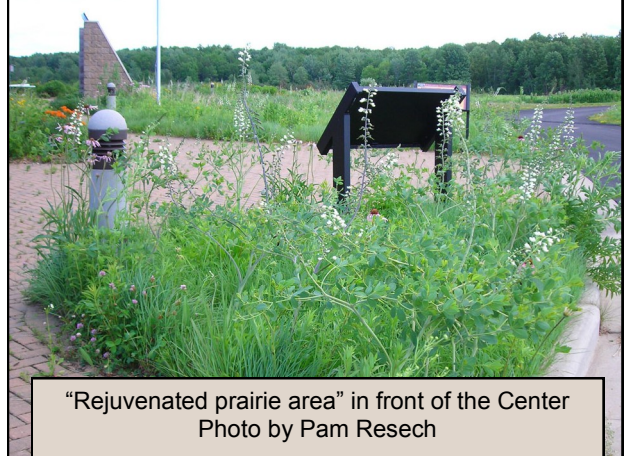
Prairies are wonderful places that need to be maintained in order for them to survive. Here at the Mead, we preserve our prairies by periodically burning them, even the prairie areas around the Center. By doing this, we are setting back the advancement of the forests on the prairies, removing the higher vegetation, and releasing nutrients back into the ground to be

re-absorbed by the new developing prairie plants. This is the best way to make sure prairies are healthy.

With the rejuvenation of prairies, the first animals to arrive are the insects which feed many animal species. After the prairie has grown, Monarch butterfly young (caterpillars) take advantage of the new milkweed and feast away. When the caterpillars eat the milkweed, the milkweed sap actually makes the monarch caterpillar taste bad. So birds learn quickly not to eat that type of caterpillar otherwise they will be sick. That is how the Monarch learned to avoid predators.

The Monarch's whole lifecycle happens in one month. The caterpillars hatch and have yellow, white, and black stripes. When they form a chrysalis, it is a shiny green color with gold speckles on the outside. Then they emerge in the orange and black butterfly we know.

People sometimes get butterflies and moths mixed up and it is easy to see why because at a distance they look quite similar. Next time you see a butterfly or moth try to get real close and see if you can spot the differences.



Butterflies:

- *Fly by day
- *Club like antennae
- *Wings stand above their back
- *Thin body with little fur

Moths:

- *Fly at night
- *Furry antennae or no club shape
- *Wings fold over their body
- *Plump body and furry



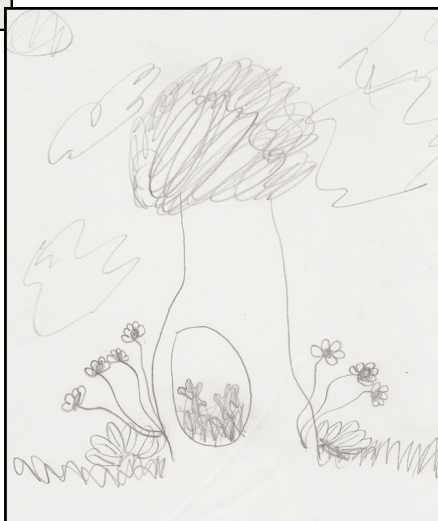
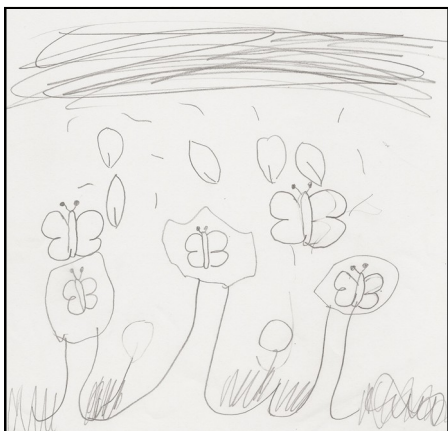
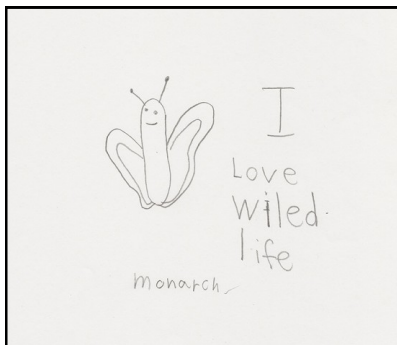
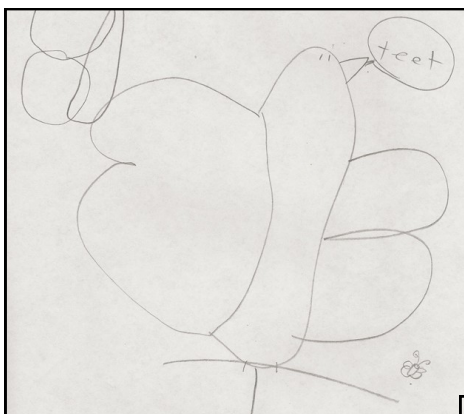
Junior Naturalist-the Art of Nature Journaling

Article by Kaylee Zalewski & Pam Resech

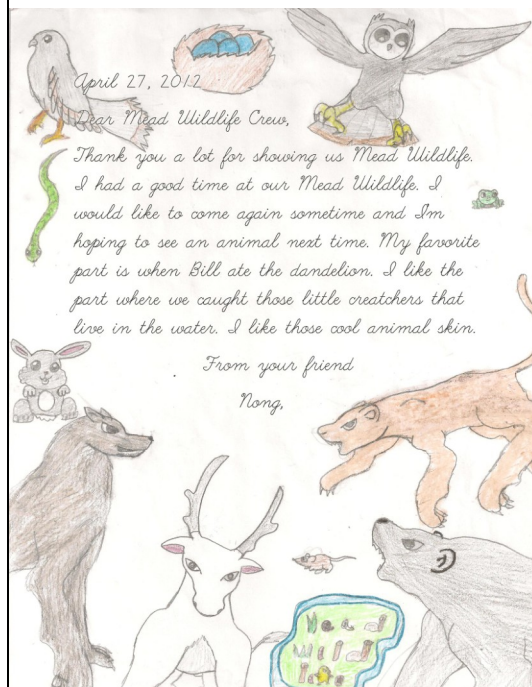
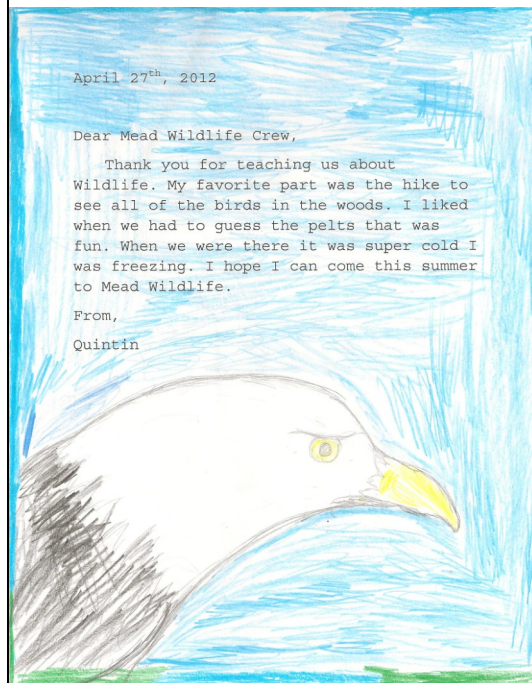
This page is dedicated to the many students & children "junior naturalists" who visit the Mead Wildlife Area.

Nature Journaling is just what it sounds like, going out into nature and documenting the sights and sounds around you. It is an expressive way that our ancestors used to describe and document what they saw. They did not have the resources that we have today in terms of electronics and the digital media. Early naturalists like Aldo Leopold, the father of Wildlife Management, would go out into the woods, find a spot, and use their senses to write or draw about what they saw, heard, and experienced. Without these early recordings of nature we would not have the basic information on the many species we have around us today.

Woodside Elementary Wisconsin Rapids came out this Spring and tried their hand at Nature Journaling. Below are some examples of their Nature Journaling experience.



Thank you letters from Howe Elementary students:





Spring Education-DC Everest Middle School

Article by Krissy Wojner and Photos by Pam Resech



Students make their way through an obstacle course to learn about some of the dangers that wild birds face.

Students from DC Everest middle school visited the Mead May 22nd, 23rd, and 24th. Approximately 450 sixth grade students learned about aquatic invertebrates, bird migration, and Wisconsin heritage in sessions during their visit. Each day the students were divided into two groups of 75 students, one group went down to the wetlands while the other group stayed by the Center. The Center group was then divided again into two groups of about 37 students. Students attended all three of different sessions during the course of the day.

During one session, students hiked to Pool 2 where they discussed the importance and benefits of wetlands. The DC Everest science teachers, Mrs. Tammy Koenig, Mr. Paul Rheinschmidt, and Mr. Pete Schmidt, taught the wetland sessions. After instructions, the students took samples from the pool using D-Nets. The aquatic invertebrates in the samples were identified using a dichotomous key. It was then discussed how the water quality can be determined by the presence of certain invertebrates.

The dangers that wild birds face were explored in another new session. The lessons "Bird Hurdles" & "Jeop-Birdy" from the teacher's Guide Flying WILD were used for this session. Students answered jeopardy questions to organize themselves into teams. The teams then raced through an elaborate obstacle course that simulated the hazards birds face during their lifetime.



Visit "Mead Wildlife Area" on Facebook to view more photos.

(continued on page 7)



DC Everest Middle School (continued from page 6)

Students "walked" a tight rope to simulate how native birds must compete with exotic bird species for their basic needs. They "leaped" over tall buildings, "jumped" over toxic waste areas, "weaved" through cones that simulated the bright lights of cities, "visited" each shrinking hula-hoop habitat, "avoided" the heavy guy wires & power lines, "crawled" under the window to avoid impact. While going through the course, the students also had to "duck" to avoid being eaten by a feral cat. The course was a smashing success.



Walking the tight rope for survival.



Watch out for the Cat!!

During the Heritage session the kids learned a short history of Native Americans and early settlers. Animal pelts were used to discuss hunting and trapping history as well as how trapping is used today for recreation and wildlife management. The students examined the pelts and identified the native animal species it came from.

Pam, Kaylee, Marlene, Bill, and I all worked hard to make the week a success. A huge thank you goes out to Sue Hall, Donna Martens, Harriet Broom, and Ellie Kafka, who staffed the Souvenir Showcase. The week was busy and went by quickly. The feedback from teachers, staff, and the students proved the week of learning was a great accomplishment.



Diving to avoid window collisions.



News Briefs

Articles & Photos by Pam Resech & Patrice Eyers



New LTE:

Bill Seybold joined the Mead Staff in May as an Assistant Naturalist LTE (limited term employee). Bill has worked as a Naturalist for 20 years at Nature Centers in Indiana and Wisconsin. He now lives in Plover with his wife Janice. Bill's favorite activities include birding and canoe. He enjoys nature and sharing it with others. Bill is also a member of the Audubon Society, Wild Ones and Wildlife Federation. Welcome Aboard!



New Face:

Erika Taylor is a student at UWSP in the Environmental Law Enforcement Program. Erika will be job-shadowing Patrice once a week during the summer and will be working on a project creating a "Hunter's Safety/Law Enforcement Education Trunk". In addition, she will be participating in our Learn to Hunt and up-coming hunter's safety programs.



New Donations:

Six Aldo Leopold benches were donated by the John Hollar family in memory of Bernard Bruening. These benches will be located in the new Geology teaching area. The Geology teaching area is a new project under development along the Audubon Prairie walking trail.



New Addition:

Paul Czaikowski delivered the fire ring that will be placed within the Geology Area project site. The fire ring is an old rock crusher donated in part by the 3M Company from Wausau.



New Display:

The Aldo Leopold Audubon Society awarded a grant to the Mead Education Center. This grant went towards the funding of a Snowy Owl display, located in the classroom. Display created by taxidermist Duncan Price.



New Program:

The program, "Project Life Jacket" is sponsored by the Big Eau Pleine Citizen Organization (BEPCO) and Wisconsin Valley Improvement Corporation (WVIC). Project Life Jacket is a loaner program, providing boaters who may have forgotten their own personal flotation device (PFD) or who may not have enough PFD's for all occupants of the boat, the option of borrowing a life jacket for the day. Currently two kiosks are in operation. If you have a life jacket (in good working condition), consider donating it to the program. Warden Barry Fetting is helping with the program.



From the Field

Article & Photos by Patrice Eyers

The field crew has been hard at work this spring on a variety of projects.

Prescribed Burns: While we were never able to pull off the Berkahn Sedge Meadow burn due to a spring filled with east winds, we were able to complete two small burns. Both burns went off without a hitch and produced the desired results. We are hoping to complete some additional burns this fall. Prescribed burning is one of many tools used in wildlife management. It is an efficient and cost effective way to manage grassland and wetland habitats.



Helicopter Spraying: Always battling succession, we are planning to spray around 100 acres later this summer. Spraying is just another tool used in habitat management to aid in setting back encroaching woody vegetation in our wetland and grassland habitats.

Brood Surveys: We began conducting weekly waterfowl brood surveys in May. Brood surveys give us an idea on our waterfowl production, nest success, and survival. Nesting started early this year and believe it or not, we are seeing the results of a second nesting attempt already (June 20th).

Wetland Management: Four flowages are in a full drawdown this summer; North Smokey Hill, Fisher, North Townline, and Little Birch. Rangeline and

Rice Lake Refuge are in the 2nd year of drawdown and are at half pool levels. Many flowages are below their average water-level, due in part to the lack of snowfall this winter and the lack of rain thus far. In addition, the crew is working on a few Waterfowl Stamp projects, including the restoration of the Rice Lake West Dike and the installation of a pumping pad for our portable water pumps on North Townline Flowage.

General Maintenance: The crew has also been busy spraying to control invasive species, fixing rodent holes, preparing to move into the new shop building, and mowing dikes.





Ephemeral Trail and Boardwalk Update

Article by Patrice Eyers Photos by Pam Resech

As we move into summer, we begin our third and final phase of the boardwalk project. With the new trail and boardwalk connecting the Audubon Prairie Trail and the Berkhahn Bike Trail complete, volunteers worked diligently this spring to complete the observation platforms overlooking the Berkhahn Sedge Meadow and the Wildlife Scrape Demonstration Area. While there are a few odds and ends to wrap up, the construction process is near completion.

The third and final phase of the project includes ordering the recognition plaques for those that so generously adopted boardwalk sections and memorial benches, and the creation and installation of interpretive information.

Ellie Kafka relaxing on one of the Aldo Leopold memorial benches designed by Don Fox



Don Ebbers, Tim Kaiser, & Don Fox working on the Wildlife Scrape observation deck



Thanks to a grant from the Friends of Wisconsin State Parks 2012 Affinity Card Naturalist Grant Program, the Friends of the Mead/McMillan Association have been able to provide additional funding for part-time naturalist Kaylee Zalewski to develop the interpretive media for this site while

Don Ebbers, Bill Hirt, Don Furo & Don Fox constructing the deck overlooking the Berkhahn Sedge Meadow

continuing to provide educational programs to the public.

Interpretive information that is currently in the works includes educational panels on Mead Waterfowl, Ephemeral Wetlands, Wetland Management, Prescribed Burning, Snags and Downed Trees, Ferns, and Funding for Wisconsin Wildlife. In addition, a series of panels and educational information will be produced that focuses on the creation of wildlife scrapes for the private landowner.

Boardwalk Fun Facts!!! A total of 16 volunteers (Doug Aziz, Paul Adler, Mike Brehm, Don Ebbers, Don Fox, Don Furo, Jerry Harvey, Kyle Holtz, Wayne Johnson, Tim Kaiser, Dick Shepherd, Alex Linton, John Shippy, Evan Lejman, Bill Seybold, & Steve Meyer) have documented over 900 hours in Boardwalk construction and staining. A grand total of 135-5 foot by 8 foot frame assembly sections were installed to support 5,400 square feet of treated decking boards. Over 22,950 decking screws were used to attach 2,295 decking boards.





Living near the Mead: "God's Country"

Article by Marlene Furo

When Pam asked me to write an article about growing up near the Mead I thought to myself, the Mead wasn't even here when I grew up. The land was here, but I believe much of it belonged to farmers and the marshes were bought by Consolidate for the back taxes owned on them. Anyway I grew up in the Blenker/Sherry area but I was familiar with the area, as my Aunt Mary Kollross and her two sons lived near here. I can remember my Mother and Aunt Mary talking about how Mead wanted to buy up different properties and then flood the area, and how opposed many of the people were to the idea.

I have lived on the edge of the Mead for about thirty-four years. When I retired from teaching my friends ask me "If I was going to move by a lake up north?" My reply was, "Why should I move, I already live in God's Country?" And I truly believe I live in "God's Country". There are very few days that we do not see some sort of wild-



Prairie Chicken photo by Patrice Evers

life from our windows in the house or when we are out in the yard. On my walk today I saw where a rabbit had been killed by a coyote or a wolf and where the deer are crossing the road. The turkeys are beginning to venture out into Mary Ann's corn field. It won't be too long and the Sandhill Cranes, ducks and geese will be migrating.

Something I really miss are the prairie chickens that used to do their mating dance in the field behind our barn or across the road in the field. We had a lonely prairie chicken here in the fall of 2010 but, unfortunately an owl had it for lunch during the winter. This past summer two pairs of fox had dens behind our barn. It was fun to hear the males tease our two beagles by yipping at them. One of our beagles is too fat to chase anything and the other one too old.

Where but on the edge of the Mead would I have the privilege of feeding the raccoons sweet corn and any other goodies they find in my garden. And where else would you see a deer pulling up your carrots and looking at the house to see if they are being watched. One summer I decided I should try to grow a big, big pumpkin to maybe enter into the contest at the Nekoosa Pumpkin Festival. Guess what happened to that plan? Well, deer like the insides of pumpkins and those big ones have a very soft shell. Ask George what happened to his six apples he was counting on to have an apple pie from.

The summer of 2011, was the first summer I did not observe a bear or two crossing the road just to the east of our house. I know they are out there as we have pictures of them on the trail camera. Even though the deer, raccoons, and other animals love my garden and my bird feeders it is still a joy to watch them.



Deer in the pumpkin patch, trail cam photo by Ron Furo



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Wetland's Gazette

Thank you!! To all the great volunteers who helped the Mead Staff during the two Spring Clean-up days; Wednesday March 28th, inside the Center and Saturday April 30th, the Mead's grounds.

Photos by Pam Resech



Pictured L to R, Front row: Arne & Gladys Ruha, Don Ebbers, Ryan Nutter, Taylor Hennlich. Back row: John Callahan, Doug Aziz, Brian Peters, Bill Hirt, Mike Kietlinski, & Deb Cogwell. Not pictured Randy Draeger.



Randy Falstad's Boy Scout crew; Jeremy Falstad, Ryan Inman, Anthony Gesick and Josh Inman picked up 17 tires plus garbage on Smokey Hill Road.