



WETLAND'S GAZETTE

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Stratford Sign Company Installs New Kiosk Article by Don Fox



Craig Kirsch, employee of Stratford Sign Company, hands the keys to the all weather message center to Brian Peters, Mead/McMillan Wildlife Area Project Manager. Tim Kaiser, (far left), Friends Member and Wild life Assistant Volunteer and Don Ebbers, (far right), Board member and Special Projects Committee Chairperson look on.

A special thanks goes to Dan Drexler, President and Owner of Stratford Sign Company, for the design, construction, installation and donation of \$500 to complete the all weather kiosk project. His donation, as well as the generous \$1,270 grant received from the Marshfield Area Community Foundation, covered most of the cost of this project. The Friends funded the balance. We thank Wildlife Assistant volunteer Tim Kaiser, and Don Ebbers Friends Board member and Special Projects Committee Chairperson who erected the roof and kiosk frame and did the final finish work needed on the structure.

The kiosk installed on June 21, 2013, has two locking glass areas for property maps and special events posters and five large covered literature/brochure boxes. This kiosk will provide information to visitors about the wildlife area, rules and regulations, special events, hunting and trapping seasons, and educational and outdoor recreational opportunities at the Mead Wildlife Area. This information will be available to users seven days a week year around.

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Habitat Happenings & Facility Features

By Property Supervisor, Brian Peters

Forests: Winter and early spring saw several timber harvests completed by contracted loggers. Most of the acreage harvested was for aspen regeneration.

Wetlands: Mead wildlife technician Bill Hirt has spearheaded a lot of wetlands related work last winter. With the assistance of wildlife technician Patrice Eyers and LTE Luke Fara, dike repair work and spillway construction was accomplished on one of Mead's small flowages west of Rangeline Road. Winter low water levels on several flowages, enabled us to get out on the areas with our tractor and 15 foot wide mower to cut cattail. These mowed areas were flooded this spring and summer to kill some of the dominant cattail and open up areas to a more diverse mix of aquatic plants and open water. Winter work also included a contractor at work cutting encroaching brush on some of the dikes with a large boom mower. Late spring and summer rains have provided plentiful water for the flowages but required extensive monitoring of water levels in the wetlands.

Facilities: Winter-Patrice monitored the Big Eau Pleine aerator in cooperation with Wisconsin Valley Improvement Corporation. Spring-Volunteers Dennis Cihlar and Don Hartle worked to repair the sidewalks and amphitheater brick pavers. A wireless internet connection has been installed in the Visitor Center building. A new copier/fax/scanner unit will soon be installed.



Miscellaneous Happenings: Winter-Patrice, Bill and I assisted volunteer Dave Stanley with a hunter safety class held at the Visitor Center. The annual waterfowl hunter meeting was held, where the results of last fall's waterfowl season were presented. The new waterfowl regulations that have been in place on the Mead for the last 3 seasons seem to be having a positive effect. The hunters voted in favor of making these rules permanent. Wood duck boxes were checked and made ready for the upcoming nesting season. From last fall's deer season, one deer taken near the Mead in Portage County tested positive for chronic wasting disease (CWD). This is the first wild deer found with the disease in Portage County. Spring prairie chicken surveys yielded low numbers for the Mead population. Two whooping crane chicks hatched but succumbed to probable predation, a disappointing development.



A limited term (LTE) field technician, Alex Linton was hired. Alex is diligently working on invasive plant control along with other field duties. A vacant permanent position previously held by mechanic Tom Weber was taken from Mead and moved to another location. We will no longer have a mechanic position. We currently have one permanent wildlife technician position vacant. It is hoped this position will be filled by the end of the year.



Environmental Education at the Center

Articles & Photos by Pam & Kaylee

Spring Education:

Apart from the weird spring weather that hit Wisconsin, this year's Spring Education was another success. Wetland's Pond Dipping was another popular choice for almost all the visiting groups. However, a new lesson was successfully introduced and enjoyed by the students.

The new lesson was called Wolves and Deer. At the beginning of the lesson, students got to learn about Predator and Prey interactions by using these two animals as examples. After talking about each animal and their unique adaptation (what makes them special), students were then blindfolded and had to use their sense of touch to determine which animal's skull they had based off of the adaptations we discussed.



Students from St. Vincent DePaul's WI Rapids;
"smelling" for their pack members

Students went outside to get the experience of how a predator hunts through a scent game. First students were given a scent and told to find their other "pack" members with the same scent, but they were not allowed to talk. Once their "pack" was found, they then had to go on the hunt to find their prey with the same scent. Again they were not allowed to talk and they had to figure out ways in which to communicate. Just like the animals in the wild. Students and teachers alike enjoyed this smelly yet unique activity.

Summer Education:

New to the Mead this summer was Nature Niche's Story Time. Participants got to come out during a four week span on Thursdays for a story, craft, and an activity related to the topic that week. This summer's topics were Forests, Prairies, Wetlands, and Curious Critters. All participants got to walk away with something from their visits, as well as get the opportunity to learn a little more about the Mead Wildlife Area.

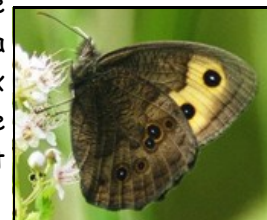


A Camper on the "hunt".

Another new lesson that was introduced this summer was Butterfly Identification. Students from the DC Everest Summer camp were the first to experience this exciting new lesson. The children were given butterfly nets and went "hunting" through the Audubon Prairie. If they were lucky enough to capture a butterfly they were assisted with putting it into a bug box for everyone to see. These boxes were then taken into the Center for identification of the butterflies. The most captured butterfly was the Common Wood Nymph.



Kaylee reading the book "Sparrow Girl"





Old School Bell gets New Life

Article by Mary Shippy & Photos by Pam Resech



My dad, Nunce Cina, was a dairy farmer, in Vernon County. Like many farmers he enjoyed going to auctions. Generally he came home with some piece of farm equipment, a tool, or a "novelty" item. In the early 1960's, he came home with a school bell. By this time, the one room schools were closing their doors and the school house items were auctioned off. He and my brother mounted the bell on a post, near the back door of our house. It was to be used as a "dinner bell". But most of the time it was rung by visiting cousins and neighbor kids, who just liked to hear the loud "clanging".

My parents retired from the farm, in 1989. Dad gave the bell to my husband, John, and I. The intent was to hang the bell, in our yard. But that never came to be. It is quite large and heavy and we just did not have a proper place for it. So, it sat in the garage for years.

John had the idea that perhaps it could be used, at the Mead. Sure enough, the Mead staff felt it would be a good way to call school groups indoors, if the weather would become stormy, or to move the students between sessions.

After 50 years, the bell is now "ringing" kids back into the classroom. My parents would be pleased to know that it is useful, once again!!



Friends' Cooperative Meeting

Article by Don Fox

On April 5 and 6, 2013 Friends of the Mead/McMillan Association, Inc. and Mead/McMillan DNR staff hosted the first State Wildlife Areas Friends Group Cooperative meeting. Friends Board of Directors and DNR Staff from Horicon Marsh, Crex and Sandhill Wildlife Areas participated. On Friday evening, April 5th a social hour was followed by a DNR sponsored dinner. The evening concluded with a tour of the Mead facility and the showing of the Mead 50th Anniversary DVD "A Journey Through The Mead".

On Saturday each Friends Group and DNR staff shared the history of their Friends group and their mission. They reviewed past and current projects and told how their work supports DNR staff efforts in their respective wildlife areas.

Informal discussions followed regarding funding efforts, increasing membership, liability issues, prioritizing projects, dealing with DNR staff cuts, work projects and activities in progress and being planned and other topics.

This initial Friends Group Cooperative meeting was a success. All attending saw it as a valued learning experience. Future meetings will be scheduled to continue networking opportunities between Wildlife Area Friends Groups and DNR Staff. Hosting sites will rotate between the four State Wildlife Areas.



Hunting Happenings

Article & Photos by Patrice Evers

The Mead Wildlife Area's Learn to Hunt (LTH) program has made some pretty significant changes this year. Now in our 4th year, we have opened the program up to hunters 16 years old and over. As of this week, our class is full.

Our annual brat barn fundraiser for the LTH was great! Despite some rain and a chilly start to the weekend, the event was a success.



Brian Peters teaching rifle shooting



Patrice Evers and Ryan-LTH Field Day

In addition to the Friends sponsored clinic and hunt day, the DNR will host a youth waterfowl banding day and an evening wing shooting program. While these 2 opportunities are additions to the LTH program, the banding day is open to all area youth. After banding, a number of wetland/waterfowl related activities will be available at the center - including, making wood duck boxes, pond study, and making a waterfowl field guide. If you are interested in banding with us, pre-registration is required, Phone Patrice at 715-457-6771 ext.5.

Pancake Breakfast 2013

Article by Kaylee Zalewski

This pancake breakfast was different from other Pancake Breakfasts thanks to a new activity that took place. Dave Stanley led groups of visitors through the Mead by canoe. Participants learned about the safe ways to handle a canoe and a little about the Mead's history. Again this year, the Mead's Bake Sale was another success and all proceeds went towards an educational Owl mount that will be used during educational presentation. The final new addition to the Pancake Breakfast this year, were new aprons that many of the workers at the Pancake wore to set them apart from the crowd. Many visitors took notice and commented on how great they looked. There were many familiar faces as well as many new visitors who came out to enjoy the day with the wonderful weather and delicious food. Pancake Breakfast 2013 was another success thanks to all who attended or volunteered their time. **Special Thank You** to all the Donators who helped make the Pancake Breakfast a Success.



Ode to Old Bur Oak Tree

Article by Brian Peters & Photo by Pam Resech



New Beginnings:

The bur oak mentioned in following the poem has recently taken on a couple of new shapes. It has been transformed by the Wildlife Assistant volunteers and finished by Don Fox. Two benches were made; one bench will be located in the back of the classroom and the other will reside outside by the Amphitheater. There is also a mantel and plaque that will become mounted onto the masonry fireplace in the Lobby.

SMOKY HILL BUR OAK

A witness to by-gone eras.

Seasonal camps of several tribes . . . smoke and fog mix over the early morning marsh . . .

maple sap gathering, boiling, sweet syrup, sugar . . .

clay pots, stone tools, bone, wood . . .

wild rice harvest . . . abundant game, furs . . .

living well . . . moving on by season.

stories, legends, ghosts

Saws, axes, chains, horses, oxen, yokes, logs . . . too small for lumber, I survived, a lone sentinel.

A plow bites the soil, fields, crops, cows, barn, farmhouse, grainery, the aroma of hay and mint.

Floating steam-dredges, ditches, channels, water leaving, black soil, vegetable crops . . .

rains, floods, frost . . . failure, abandoned farms.

Plans . . . a dam, a reservoir, water for power . . . plans change.





News Briefs

Articles & Photos by Pam Resech & Patrice Eyers



Special Group-USSA:

In April, Patrice was fortunate enough to be invited to speak the United Special Sportsman Alliance Learn to Hunt Turkey in Junction City. If you are not familiar with this program, you should certainly check it out. This group provides turkey hunting opportunities to disabled or terminally ill children and to disabled members of our armed forces. Despite the cold and snow, a great time as had by all.



New Adventure:

In June, volunteer Dave Stanley and Patrice led a canoe tour of Berkahn Flowage as part of a Natural Resource Foundation field trip. We explored Berkahn Island which is full of Native American history, sampled for macro-invertebrates, examined the rich plant life in the flowage, and were treated to a few bird sightings as well. This will likely become an annual event, so keep your eyes peeled.

New Signs:

Wildlife volunteer Erika Taylor, currently employed with Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development Council, is working on an internship project that provides citizens with information about aquatic invasive species on the Big Eau Pleine and at locations on the Little Eau Pleine River. Erika will be posting informative signs at the Mead's boat/canoe landings. In addition, an educational display will be in the Lobby of the Center.



New Fire Pit & Grant:

The old worn out rock crusher donated by the 3M quarry got a new face lift. Harvey Mews, a new volunteer applied his masonry skills to it and created this work of art. Thank you Harvey! The fire pit is located in the center of the new "A Story in Stone Garden". The Friends also received a grant in the amount of \$500.00 from the *Norma & Stanley DeBoer Quiet Trails Fund* to help fund this geology display project.



New Bat Houses Installed:

Matt Helms from Stevens Point finished his eagle scout project over the 4th of July holiday. He installed a total of 16 bat houses. These bat houses are located around the Center along the different walking trails. There are also bat houses located on the 2 new observation decks-The Wildlife Scrape & The Sedge Meadow. Thank you Matt for your hard work and donation.

New Tracks:

A huge thank you goes out to the Marshfield Whitetails Unlimited Chapter for their recent donation. The donation will go towards the purchase of new tracks for the ATV. These tracks will enable the field staff to take the ATV out into terrain that its wheels cannot navigate.





Winged Wonders Event

Article & Photos by Pam Resech

Birds, Bats, Bees & Butterflies Oh My!!! The first ever Winged Wonders event was a huge success. The event was held on Sunday May 5th from 11:00am-3:00pm.

The event was free and open to the public. About 75 visitors enjoyed the many lobby displays and activities about our native pollinators. The Stevens Point chapter Wild Ones, Native Plants, and Native Landscaping also had a display booth and activity.

A huge thank you to the two presenters for their talks: Arlene Brandenburg-NC WI Master Gardener; Butterflies & Native Plants and Chris Cold-WI-DNR Ladysmith; Habitats & Live Raptors.

Thank you also to my planning committee: Kaylee Zalewski, Bill Seybold, Marlene Furo and Gladys Ruha for taking this new event on during our very busy Spring education period. Thank you to the many volunteers that helped with the activities on the day of the event.

With the success of this year's event plans are already in progress for next year. It will be held Sunday May 4, 2014. Mark your calendars and I hope to see you then!



Gladys assisting with the owl craft



Matching game about Bats in Wisconsin



"Fill the Bill"



Marlene helping with the bee craft



What's Your Butterfly ID-IQ?



Support Wetland Conservation

Article by Patrice Evers



New at the Mead is the 2013-14 Federal Migratory Bird Hunting & Conservation Stamp. If you have a love for wildlife and care about the future of migratory bird habitats, take this opportunity to purchase this year's stamp. The stamp cost \$15.00, but we are encouraging buyers to make a small donation with the purchase. This donation will stay local and benefit the wetland and grassland work here on the Mead Wildlife Area.



Other Upcoming Events

Sponsored by the Friends of the Mead/McMillan and the Mead Staff

Information & Photos by Pam Resch

2013 Sporting Heritage Youth Day

Wausau School Forest-Saturday August 24th

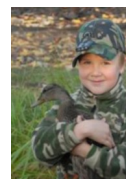
Stop by the Friends & Mead Staff's booth promoting the Mead & McMillan Wildlife Areas as a great destinations to enjoy hunting sports.



Youth Duck Banding Day

Kids enjoy an early morning adventure banding ducks-Saturday August 24th (5:30am-?)

Afterwards, donuts and some additional hands-on wetland activities at the Center



McMillan Firefighters' 25th Annual Fall Festival

McMillan Fire Station, M400 Elm Street Marshfield-Saturday September 7th (Noon—Midnight)

Stop by the Friends & Mead Staff's booth promoting the McMillan Wildlife Area

Solar Tour of the Education Center

Tom Brown, Architect will be conducting tours of the Stanton W. Mead Education and Visitor Center-Saturday October 5th (10am-4pm)



3rd Annual Halloween Spooktacular & Food Drive

A non-scary, family fun night event-Saturday October 19th (6:00pm-8:30pm)

Free Admission with a food donation (one/person) or \$2 without donation



For More Detailed Information about each Event: Visit our website: www.meadwildlife.org

Or call the Stanton W. Mead Education and Visitor Center Phone: 715-457-6771.



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Please check the label of this newsletter as your membership might have expired. If there is no date on it, you are receiving this newsletter free for now. If your membership is up for renewal or you would like to become a member visit our website; www.meadwildlife.org or stop by the Center.

Wetland's Gazette

Your Family and Friends are invited to Come and Celebrate

“Grandparents Day” — Sunday, September 8th 11am-2pm
Stanton W. Mead Education and Visitor Center

Activities:

- ♦ Build a suet or seed feed feeder
- ♦ Create owl crafts & animal tracks
- ♦ Scavenger hunt the historical exhibit
- ♦ Explore the nature trails and new boardwalk
- ♦ Enjoy the views from the new observation decks
- ♦ Tour the “Green Energy” Visitor Center



*****12:30pm Presentation—“Live Owls”**

Snacks will be provided, picnic tables are available if you wish to bring a sack lunch.

The event is co-sponsored by the Aldo Leopold Audubon Society and
Friends of the Mead/McMillan Assn. For more information visit website: www.meadwildlife.org