



WETLAND'S GAZETTE

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November 2013

A Family Fun Event on Grandparents Day

Article by Sue Hall; Photos by Sue Hall & Kaylee Lietz



A fun time was had on September 8th when families came out to the Mead Wildlife Area to celebrate "Grandparents Day".

Highlights of the event included getting to see a live owl presentation given by Janet and Amber Eschenbach with a Great Horned and Saw Whet owl along with Pam Resech and her Eastern Screech owl.

Participants got to create their own owls, make animal tracks, interact trying to see how birds feed in different habitats, create their own suet and seed feeders and do a scavenger hunt with the historical display.

They could then go outside and enjoy walking on the various trails and the new boardwalk. Several

university students in Dr. Perry Cook's Science Methods class and 8th grade students from Saint Peter's Middle School also helped interact with the 150 people who attended. The free event is co-sponsored by the Aldo Leopold Audubon Society and the Friends of the Mead/McMillan.



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Property Update

Article by Brian Peters-Property Supervisor

Greetings Friends and Neighbors;

After the early summer wet period, we experienced a reversal of the situation with significant rain missing us on all sides. We have pumped some water into several flowages, and we did finally get a good amount of rain that brought the river to flood stage and flowage water levels up to where we would like them to be. We will be going into the winter in good condition water-wise.

Buildup of waterfowl on the property prior to the opening of the waterfowl season was less than at the same time last year. It was a late spring and waterfowl nesting in general was also later than usual. Our duck banding efforts were not too successful this year. The birds were not moving around much at that time and did not come to the banding site in typical numbers. This was also the situation statewide. As in past years, waterfowl hunter use surveys are being conducted. Bird numbers have been slowly increasing and overall hunting has been good for those that scout the bird use patterns. Other hunting and trapping activities are also popular and seem to be going well overall.

Bill and Patrice worked on a wetland restoration project on state property east of Hwy. 34 and south of Co. H in Portage County. As usual, dike maintenance is an on-going task, and McMillan Marsh Wildlife Area received needed attention this summer in this regard. Patrice accomplished mowing of the most highly used dikes and trails. Firebreaks were touched up in anticipation of potential grassland/sedge meadow burning possibilities. Our LTE, Alex has been working part-time on invasive buckthorn control in selected areas. Some timber sale activity has started and several new sale areas have been established.

Thank you to all the Friends Members and volunteers who have helped with various work and projects this past year! The Mead and McMillan areas are improved thanks to your efforts.

Sincerely, Brian

In Honor of a "Beautiful Soul"

Article by Lorraine Schmutzer & Photo by Dawn Schmutzer

On Saturday August 31, 2013 a donation was given to the Mead Wildlife Area in memory of John F. (Jack) Schmutzer. Presentation of the mock check was given by John Michael Schmutzer (great-grandson) and Jack Brian Schmutzer (grandson), both are three years old. After the picnic lunch (another of Jack's favorite things) the group was given a wagon ride to share in the beauty of the Mead, even an Eagle made an appearance. What a fitting tribute to such a beautiful soul.

On May 23, 2013 Jack passed away and in lieu of flowers the family requested memorials be given to the Mead Wildlife Area. Jack's favorite haunts were the Necedah Wildlife Refuge, Sandhill Game Farm and the Mead Wildlife Area; which was his all time favorite. He had been to the Mead several times in 2013 prior to his passing. He grew up in the Milladore area and hunted the Mead in his younger years. In recent years he didn't hunt with a gun--just his eyes. He loved watching nature. He especially enjoyed watching Eagles and Swans.





McMillan Marsh

Article Dennis Dieringer

Hunting season is in full swing in the McMillan. Waterfowl, small game and bow deer hunting provide many an enthusiast an escape from the concrete streets to the trails, water and fall colored leaves.

The McMillan bike trail is now closed for the season but the trail is always open for hiking by foot which is used by all ages. The same trail is used as a snowmobile trail in the winter months when snow cover is adequate.

This summer the Town of Spencer and the Mead Wildlife Area worked together to improve Hanson road and parking lot. This is located on the west end of McMillan Marsh off of County Road F. A new culvert was also installed by the parking lot which was a huge improvement. This worked out great for both the Town and Mead as it was a joint effort that improved both the town road and wildlife parking area.

This fall the Town of Spencer and the Mead applied for a \$4000 Road Aids grant through the DNR's Capital Development system, which was granted. The Road Aids grant is a limited specialty fund that is available for town road work associated with wildlife area access on a cost-share basis. The Town added \$2000 to the amount for a total of \$6000. This money was used to improve Swamp Road and the parking lot there. This road was made wider, over 20 loads of granite was hauled in, graded, parking lot expanded and some brushing was done. Once again this was a win-win for both the Town and the Mead and was a good example of how different forms of government can work together for the benefit of all. The road and parking lot are in the best condition in quite some time.

I believe the users of the McMillan will find these improvements very satisfying especially on their vehicles. These were projects that needed to be done. With the cooperative effort between the Township and the DNR at the Mead Wildlife Area working so well together, I can see more projects being undertaken in the future.

New Kiosk at McMillan Marsh

Article & Photos by Don Fox

Thanks to a \$500 grant received from the Marshfield Area Community Foundation, a donation of one yard of concrete from Trierweiler Ready Mix and Friends of the Mead/McMillan Association funding a new message kiosk was placed in the Marsh Road parking lot at the McMillan Marsh Wildlife Area. The other kiosk is located in the Meadow Avenue parking lot off of Mann Road.



Wildlife Assistants (pictured Don Ebberts and Dick Shepherd) along with Don Fox prepared the site and installed the new kiosk.



The new kiosk placed on the bike trail will provide a second message center for the McMillan Wildlife Area for the sharing of information & brochures.



“Spooktacular” Halloween Event & Food Drive

Article by Pam Resech & Photos by Terri Hamus

The 3rd Annual Spooktacular Event was again a big hit, despite the small hail storm just an hour before start time. This made it a little difficult to light the tiki torches that lit the driveway to the Center.



Lesia Kardash-Tinkerbell and husband Keith with
Pirate kids-Isabelle and Grayson.

“This was our family’s first time at the Mead Spooktacular, but certainly not our last. Our kids really love creative, hands-on activities, so decorating their own cookies and pumpkins was a big hit. We ended a great evening by exploring the trail lit by lanterns and a nearly full moon. Thanks for hosting a great event!”



All visitors enjoyed the favorite activities of: pumpkin painting, cookie decorating, & playing games for prizes.



In addition to the favorite activities, Smokey the Bear made a Guest Appearance.



“Spooktacular”-continued



These new critters were a turkey, bluebird, beaver, swamp frog, opossum, squirrel, turkey vulture, wolf, Pileated Woodpecker, monarch, tree frog and bat. Last year's hit character "Mr. Bones" was also in attendance.

The Critter Trail also had some new characters with the help of some awesome costumes borrowed from the Wehr Nature Center and Kettle Moraine State Park-Northern Unit.



Thank you to the students from Wausau West High School and their Science teacher Mrs. Gerstenberger and family for their first time participating and being Critters along the trail.

A huge thank you goes out to all the other volunteers who helped again plan and work this great event. We could not do these community events without the additional help of volunteers.

Through the food donations from the visitors to this event, Mead was able to deliver over 300 canned goods to the St. Vincent DePaul Food Pantry in

Marshfield. Thank you to all who attended and mark your calendars for next year's 4th Spooktacular Event happening on Saturday October 18, 2014!

Additional Event photos are on the website: www.meadwildlife.org Follow the "What's Happening" link.



2013 Learn to Hunt Waterfowl

Article by Patrice Evers & Photos by Patrice Evers, Jason Hintz, Ryan Askren, & Dave Stanley

Well here's to another fantastic Learn to Hunt Waterfowl Program. This year's event introduced 12 youth and 4 adults to the wonderful world of waterfowl hunting. Our program was fortunate enough to work with a wide range of organizations, businesses, and individuals that, like us, understand the value of introducing people to the sport of hunting. The Marshfield Chapter of Whitetails Unlimited has once again been vital to the program's success by donating 3 adult model shotguns. Portage County Wildlife Fund provided financial assistance for the third year in a row. In addition, the following groups/businesses made significant contributions to this year's program:

Frogg Toggs
Buckeye Sporting Goods—Marshfield
County Market-Wausau
Ducks Unlimited-Canada
Central Wisconsin Muddy Water Retrievers
Cabela's Ducks Unlimited-Wisconsin River Flyway Chapter
Wetland Conservation League

Buck Gardner Calls
Wal-Mart—Wausau
Wisconsin Conservation Warden Association
Friends of the Mead McMillan Association
Muddy Waters Retrievers

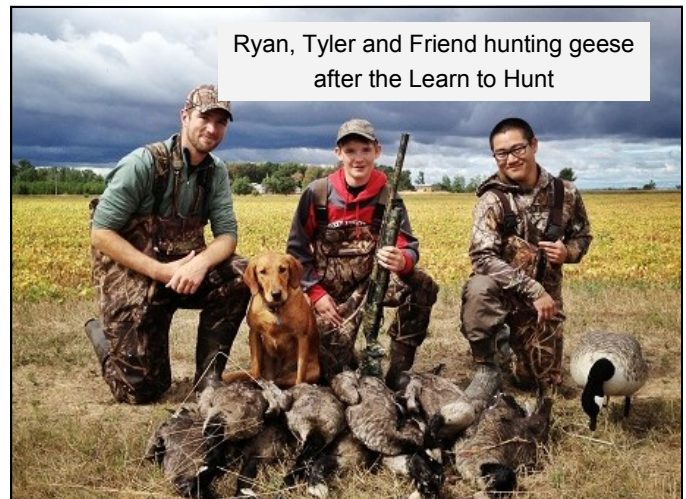
Now we all know that this program would not exist without the dedication and hard work of our mentors. Our mentors are not the "one and done" type. They build relationships with those they mentor and lay the foundation for a lifetime of memories. They are also instructing on clinic day, helping with set up, clean up, planning, organizing - everything. They are the BEST!



And with that, I should note that over 700 volunteer hours were put in to make the Learn to Hunt happen! If I were to try and list all those that dedicate their time to this program, there would be no room for anything else. So a HUGE thanks to all those that make it happen. Finally, thank you to Debbie, who ensures that we all have warm food in our bellies after the early morning hunt.



Caden, Gavin, and Austin hunting geese after the Learn to Hunt





2013-Learn to Hunt-continued

What's new?

This was our first year to work a bit with the United Special Sportsman's Alliance. Through this organization, a young man named Jordan decided he would like to try waterfowl hunting. He was a real trooper, and I think we may have learned more from him than he learned from us.

Another first was the honor of having Ben Gruber, Vice President of Kids and Mentors Outdoors (KAMO) as a mentor. KAMO is an organization dedicated to pairing mentors with kids for a variety of outdoor related activities. Ben, along with

mentor Barry Benson, were also gracious enough to take Channel 9's Lauren Magiera out to film the mentored hunt. The segment aired on "Outdoors with Lauren" in September.



Jordan hunting Berkahn Flowage by the new handicapped blind

A Mentor's Perspective

Article by Jason Hintz

As a mentor, I am very proud to tell people about the Learn to Hunt Waterfowl Program at the Mead Wildlife Area. I think it is a huge step in the right direction to getting youth involved in the outdoors. We need to change the type of entertainment provided for our youth, and get them away from the computers, television, and all the games that go with them. There is nothing more rewarding than taking a youth out waterfowl hunting in my eyes. There is a lot of amazing people involved in this program that have the same thought process as me, and I am very fortunate to be a part of this program as it continues to grow.

The youth have an idea that they are going to take a class about waterfowl hunting but I really don't think they are fully aware of what they will be embarking on. I hope with every class we teach that we gain a few kids and they will stick with waterfowl hunting and pass it on as it was passed on to me. Here in this great state we live in there are more things to hunt than just deer and turkeys. I was a deer hunter as I grew up because that was all I knew. It was the only thing that was taught to me. Today, because a good friend took the opportunity to introduce me to wa-

terfowl hunting, all I do and want to do is chase waterfowl when and where ever I can. I love to hunt waterfowl just as much as I love to help the youth learn about waterfowl hunting. We all need to remember this, *take a kid hunting today and you won't have to hunt for them tomorrow.*



Jason with daughter Aydin and son Austin (far right)
Jason's LTH mentees Caden and Gavin, with dad Ryan
(standing). Friend Perry, with son, Mitch and puppy Allie.



News Briefs

Articles & Photos by Pam Resech & Kaylee Lietz



New Theme: "Live Wild, Live Well":

Friends' Board members; Jeremiah Smith (pictured), Ellie Kafka, & Mark Lewandoski joined Wildlife Educator-Pam Resech at the Greenheck Health Fair in Wausau to promote the many outdoor healthy activities offered at the Mead Wildlife Area. The theme was taken from the WI State Fair about the many different things people can do at a state wildlife area. Even though the main source of operating budget comes from the sales of hunting, trapping & fishing licenses, state wildlife areas are free for everyone to enjoy.



New Handicapped Hunting Blind:

Eagle scout, Travis Jenneman, from Marshfield completed his project on August 31st with the help of his friends and family along with a crew from Mead; Bill Hirt & Brain Peters and Wildlife Volunteers, Don Fox & Don Ebbers. The new blind is located along the Berkahn Bike Trail north of the Visitor Center. The blind will allow easy access to hunting for hunters with disabilities. Thank you Travis for your hard work and donation!



New Wildflower Fieldtrip:

The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin hosted a Family Wildflower Walk & Seed Collection fieldtrip on Sunday, September 8, 2013. Pam Resech led the group through the native prairie gardens around the Center and ended the trip in the restored Audubon Prairie. Participants were able to collect native seeds and ask questions about starting their own native prairie gardens.



2013 Grant:

Friends of the Mead/McMillan Association received a \$750 Green Gift from Cellcom on 10/30/2013 during a presentation in the geology display. The grant was written to help fund the ongoing costs of creating the geology project-"A Story in Stone Garden".



New Storage Loft:

Jerry Harvey led the new construction project along with other Wildlife Volunteers; Don Ebbers, Don Fox, Tim Kaiser, Tom Hollar, and Dick Shephard. This storage loft was greatly needed to house the existing equipment, and as the Wildlife Education programs continue to develop, to store the newly acquired equipment & displays.



New Lesson Introduced:

Ellie Kafka assists a participant at the Heritage Youth Day held at the Wausau School Forest with Tree Identification. The old lesson got a new twist. Participants first had to be able to connect with the tree using a Frisbee. Once they had hit the tree, then they had to identify it using a dichotomous tree key. Successful youths then received the book "Forest Trees of Wisconsin" as their prize.



Gneiss (nice boulder) Delivered:

Bob Gutknecht & Shawn Bennett delivered two Gneiss boulders donated by Opelt's Quarry for the geology garden. Bill Hirt used Mead's heavy equipment to help with the unloading process.



Fall Wildlife Conservation Education

Article & Photos by Pam Resech & Kaylee Lietz

Fall education at the Mead was a pretty cool experience. Literally! Even with the cooler temperatures, over 538 students from both homeschooled and public school groups ranging from grades Pre-K to college got to experience some new lessons.



“Edible Wild Plants”-based off of the Native American culture found on the Mead. Students also got to learn how to weave a basket using cattail leaves.



“Wildlife Detectives”-students were given the task of looking for the different signs left by animals (scat, tracks, burrows and browse). Based off of the clues they collected, students had to hypothesize what type of mammal (herbivore, carnivore or omnivore) might have been visiting around the Center.



“A Day in the Life of a Wildlife Biologist” students were shown a few different techniques used by a wildlife biologist when studying deer. First the students learned how to age deer by their lower jaw bone. Students then played a game of tag which simulates habitat carrying capacity. Students came away from these lessons with a better understanding of what biologists do when researching animals and discovering that many different factors come into play when it comes to an animal's survival.

“Frisbee Forestry” is a new way for students to try their hand at Tree Identification. After instructions about how to identify different trees and use a dichotomous key, students were given the task of identifying as many of the ten marked species as possible. The students worked in pairs and were given two minutes per tree. Students loved the challenge of this activity and learned about the importance of trees to wildlife. This is important lesson because people in general tend to appreciate, protect, and cherish what they know and understand.



“Birds in Art” Artist Tour

Article by Susan Ford & Photos by Catie Anderson

The opening weekend of the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum's annual, internationally renowned Birds in Art exhibition is always delightful, filled with receptions, programs and events. A real perk is that the artists themselves are also on hand to talk about their work, lead workshops and offer insight into their creative processes.

Since by default, these artists are usually avid birders it was no surprise that 20 of them (along with Andy McGivern, exhibition curator, and his wife, Jeana, and Catie Anderson, curator of education) jumped at the chance to visit the George W. Mead Wildlife area even if it meant getting up VERY early!



Susan ready with a spotting scope

It was a blue sky morning, perfect for birding. Board member Doug Aziz and I along with local birding expert Dan Belter met the group with coffee and homemade scones. We loaded everyone into a wagon; put one spotting scope in the front and one in the back and then sloooooowly bounced across the refuge with a few stops to walk wooded areas.



A pair of bugling Sandhill Cranes

Artist George Bumann kept our list, ending with a total of 38 species. Since most of the group was not local, even the common birds elicited satisfied smiles. In fact there were actually cries of delight when a pair of Sandhill cranes, bugling in unison, flew across the marsh. Add an indulgent Bald Eagle who sat quietly on a pine branch until everyone had

a chance to see him and a tiny Marsh Wren who peeked out from the reeds, and everyone agreed it was a successful trip.

We even had a touch of controversy—all good birding trips should have some “discussion”—some of us spied what we believed was a Sora Rail while others dismissed the critter as a tailless Red-Winged Blackbird. Since I was on the pro side, I'm happy to see George included the rail on the list!

Bird List:

Northern Harrier	Bald Eagle	Osprey	Red-Tailed Hawk	Turkey Vulture
Sandhill Crane	Great Blue Heron	Green Heron	Sora Rail	Common Snipe
Wild Turkey	Canada Goose	Marsh Wren	Black-Capped Chickadee	
Wood Duck	Mallard	Blue-Winged Teal	Pied-Billed Grebe	Cedar Waxwing
Belted Kingfisher	American Crow	Common Grackle	Double-Crested Cormorant	
Blue Jay	European Starling	Mourning Dove	Red-Winged Blackbird	



Northern harrier



Field Trip Day!!

Article & Photos by Jim Peterson

The morning of October 10, 2013 dawned cool and clear, but in the fifth grade classrooms at Auburndale Elementary School there was excitement in the air. It was Field Trip Day! In a few short minutes the 78 students, three teachers, and five chaperones would be boarding buses bound for the Mead Wildlife Area. Though the trip from Auburndale to the Mead's Education & Visitor Center only takes fifteen minutes, to the students it seemed like hours. By the time that the buses turned onto Highway S, queries of "Are we almost there?" could be heard.

After getting off the buses, the students moved to the amphitheater to receive their instructions for the day. The students had been divided into four groups which would alternate between four activities: Litter Lasts and Wetlands, Disc Golf Tree Identification, Whitetail Deer Management, and Wiggly Wonders (a lesson about earthworms). The activities kept the students occupied, interested, and active.

When time to leave arrived, the students boarded the buses with mixed emotions. Happy for a day in the outdoors, grateful for the lessons learned, sad that the day had to end, and worn out from the day's activities. During the short drive back to school I could only think of how blessed we in Auburndale are to have this wonderful resource right here in our back yard.





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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



Dennis Cihlar is helping his grandson build a suet feeder at the 3rd Annual Family Fun event held on Grandparents Day.

Friends of the Mead/McMillan Association, Incorporated Board of Directors invites you to attend the:

Annual Membership Meeting
9am Saturday January 18, 2014

**Stanton W. Mead Education and
Visitor Center**

Bring a friend and enjoy a
morning at the Mead.

Refreshments will
be provided.

