



# WETLAND'S GAZETTE

Volume 2, Issue 3  
December 2006

## **Mead Wildlife Area Family Picnic**

**Article by Tom Meier, Project Manager, Mead Wildlife Area**

Over 350 neighbors and business partners of the MEAD gathered on Sunday, Sept. 10<sup>th</sup> to enjoy the new Stanton W. Mead Education and Visitor Center, its associated energy concepts, and a barbeque. This has been a long time tradition that has helped acquaint our neighbors with what we do at the Mead as well as foster friendships with the staff and Friends of Mead/McMillan. We feel it is important to acquaint the neighbors with our new facility and thank them for all the help and support they have given us.

The weather cooperated and participants enjoyed hayrides, historical display of the Mead as well as the delicious corn roast, barbeque and a variety of desserts. A silent auction was held to benefit wildlife displays which will be installed inside the building.

We feel this event has been successful throughout the many years we have held. Our neighbors and friends have continued to be very supportive of our facility and feel a personal ownership of the land and Mead. We continue to thank all of them for their support.



Brian Peters, (L to R) Kent Hall, Mike Gross, and Tom Meier looking at new signage depicting the diverse landscape that is the Mead Wildlife Area at the picnic. (Photo Courtesy of Sue Hall)

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**[www.meadwildlife.org](http://www.meadwildlife.org)**



## **The Mead—A Hunter’s Dream Come True**

### **Article by Ken M. Blomberg**

The land we call the Mead means many things to many people. For me, the Mead is a dream come true. If a person can love something as inanimate as the land, then may I go on record loving the Mead?

My love affair began some 34 years ago. As a budding natural resources student at nearby UWSP, I was initially drawn there by assignment and then ultimately, by the urge to hunt. Our wildlife classes banded waterfowl on the refuge, erected and maintained wood duck nesting boxes and field tripped the area to death. On weekends, my buddies and I returned and began exploring the interior with our guns and dogs.

My first lesson at the hunting school of hard knocks took place on the property's east end off of County Highway O. Four hunters and that many dogs scoured a mature stand of quaking aspen - textbook woodcock habitat, right? Wrong! Somebody forgot to tell us that woodcock prefer young growth aspen, fifteen years old, or less. Oh well, we got a good education and some fine exercise.

Checking and recording duck hunter success on opening day was our next assignment. This was a painful exercise, as my "lab" partner and I were both duck hunters. We shared our outdoor classroom with hundreds of waterfowlers and to our credit, completed our mission. I can't say the same for our professor, who, after dropping us off at our assigned checking station, was last seen wading off into the marsh, shotgun in hand.

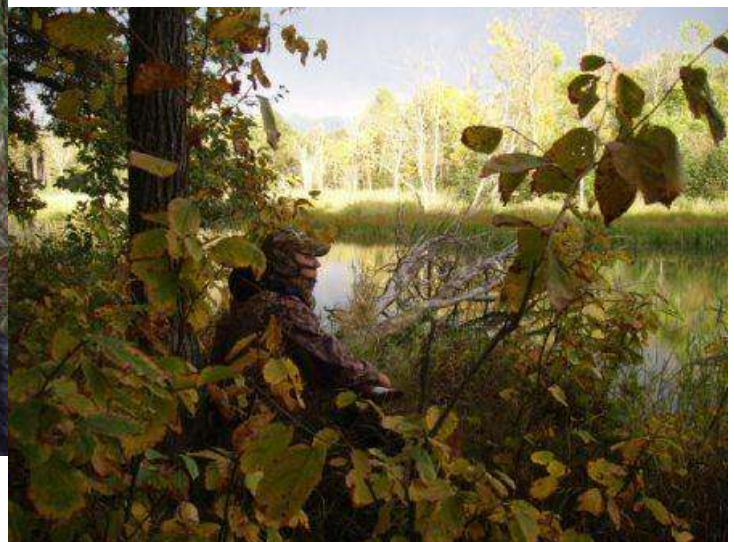
Again, on weekends, someone with a vehicle would drop several of us off early in the morning and pick us up after shooting hours in the evening. From dawn to dusk, we'd wade around the flowages and traipse the surrounding uplands for grouse and woodcock. Slowly, we explored the vast acreage that surrounded the Little Eau Pleine River valley. Wild game prepared back at the dorm and later in off-campus housing assured we at least ate well during the hunting season.

Upon graduation, my buddies followed their careers and job opportunities across the country and I, on the other hand, got lucky and landed a local job in my field. I remember wanting nothing more than to settle down and raise a family right here in north central Wisconsin. So I bought a house in the country and did just that. The fact that it was only six miles from the Mead was purely coincidental. Or, was it? (continued on page 3)

A duck hunter waits patiently along the river bottoms.  
(Photo Courtesy of Ken Blomberg)



Hunting dog waiting patiently by his Master's side .  
(Photo Courtesy of Ken Blomberg)





(continued from page 2)

Thirty-four years of exploring the Mead has led me on a wonderful journey. From Owl City on the west side, to the Dancy drainage ditches on the east and from the Halder Bridge and the Big Eau Pleine flowage on the north side, to the old Junction City lead mines on the south - I think I've surveyed about every inch of the property. And I like what I've seen.

A couple of highlights include the dog training and trial area on the east side off of County Highway O. Project Manager Tom Meier and his staff have worked for years with a diverse group of folks who use well-trained gun dogs to hunt upland birds and waterfowl. This Class 1 dog training/trial area has developed into a showcase for the rest of the state and is a glowing testament for those involved. This part of the property gets heavy use throughout the year and I'm proud to have been a part of its success.

Hunters come from in and out-of-state to the Mead and enjoy its wildlife bounties. Besides waterfowl hunting, they partake in pursuing deer, bear, turkey, ruffed grouse, woodcock, snipe, dove, crow, rabbit, squirrel, fox and coyote. The financial impact of hunter's dollars is well documented and the affect on the three county area must be tremendous, as both local and outsiders spend a great deal of money to follow their pastime.

Beyond hunting, my love affair with the Mead knows no season. Whether it's banding woodcock in the spring, training my bird dogs in the summer, or snowshoeing in the winter, I take advantage of all the Mead has to offer. Heaven knows, she gives back ten-fold. I love the Mead!

## **Bluebird Trail Update**

### **Article by Kent Hall**



In the 2006 season, the Mead SWA bluebird trail was monitored weekly by the team of (L to R) Doug Aziz & Bill Hirt. They are shown here with one of the 18 nest boxes built by Doug. Doug is a volunteer at the Mead and is a retired Executive of Wausau Papers; Bill is a Wildlife Biologist for the WDNR at the Mead Wildlife Area.

For the season, 100 songbirds were fledged (59 bluebirds & 41 Tree Swallows). Doug has expanded the trail to 25 boxes for next year and hopes to increase the number of fledgling bluebirds and swallows as well.

(Photo Courtesy of Adam Murkowski)



## McMillan Marsh Bike/Pedestrian Trail Update

**Article by Dennis Deiringer**

Located to the immediate north of Marshfield, the McMillan Marsh Wildlife Area provides quality opportunities for the outdoor enthusiast. Now that the fall, winter months are upon us, hunters set forth into some of the easy access and the hard to reach areas to pursue game such as deer, pheasant, grouse and of course duck and goose to name a few. Let's not forget to mention our trapping friends as well. I personally know some die hard bow and gun hunters that love the challenge of putting in a canoe and reaching the deep islands and bogs of the marsh that you are not able to get to without hip waders and luck. Of course you can do what I do and wait until the marsh is froze over and then explore the deep areas on snowshoe. It is breathtaking and an adventure at times, not to mention good exercise. In the winter also the local snowmobile clubs have some trails that go through parts of the trail and dike system.

In the fall of 2006 a new kiosk with information about the trail, the history of the area, an overhead photo and other pertinent information has been unveiled. You will find these new signs to be a pleasure to read. The history of the area and pictures of the artifacts that have been found tell quite a story of the change from a not to distant time. A bulletin board completes the kiosk which will have seasonal information as it comes available. These new signs are a welcome mat to the McMillan Marsh outdoor area. The signs were completed by the Schmeckle Reserve in cooperation with the DNR, Mead/McMillan Wildlife Areas. There will be an additional two signs added in the spring of 2007 at the Marsh Road entrance. These signs all follow the Interpretive Master Plan for the Mead / McMillan Wildlife Area.

The bike / pedestrian trail is open year around with the bike trail open from May 1 through September 1. No ATV's, motor vehicles, motor cycles or horses are allowed on the trail. Dogs must be on a leash from April 15 - July 31 due to nesting of waterfowl. The trailhead is located one-quarter mile off of Mann Road on Meadow Avenue.

Come and enjoy a truly diverse wildlife area not far from your home. Bring a friend, share the experience with nature at its best!



Dennis Deiringer standing next to the new McMillan informational kiosk. (Photo Courtesy of Brian Peters)



## **A Friend of the Mead is a Friend Indeed**

**Article by Jessica Huxmann**

Every so often, I come across someone who is truly looking out for the welfare of others. I met such a person in Mr. Nathan Giersdorf. Mr. Giersdorf, a student at the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point, is currently re-creating the Mead website using data collected from users, managers, and staff of the Mead and several other state wildlife properties. Though Mr. Giersdorf has never even visited the Mead, he agreed to take on the project of revising the website, in return for college credit, in mid-September. The new website should be up and running by early January of 2007.

As one who is familiar with the Mead Wildlife Area, I know how important the property and its functions are to the people of Wisconsin and to the many out-of-state visitors it receives every year. To those who have not had the same joy of discovering the treasures of the Mead, however, the incredible potential of the site may not be so apparent. It was with some shock, and great pleasure, therefore, that I received the news that Mr. Giersdorf wished to continue his attentions to the Mead website beyond his required academic commitment. Here are his exact words:

"I have been doing a little thinking about the Mead website. In December my independent study project needs to be completed. However, in December I do not just want to walk away from this project like it is just a class. For me, devoting time to the Mead website is both a pleasure and a connection to the community. I would like to volunteer my time and efforts to make updates and continue to improve the Mead website to its fullest potential. This is important because standards for the WWW change every-day, and I feel that the Mead's website can be one of the most progressive websites of it's kind.

Thank you, Nate G."

And we, the Friends and supporters of the Mead Wildlife Area, thank YOU, Mr. Giersdorf, for your generosity and devotion to our beloved Mead.



### **Wolf Pack at the Mead**

Terry Lane was lucky enough to have his camera along when he was going goose hunting one morning along the Little Birch dike when he was able to snap this photo of 2 of 3 wolf pups he encountered. The closest one was about 15 yards away. "I did not see the adults that morning, but did hear them and the pups howling in that same area 5 mornings later. They were howling less than 150 yards from me and my dog. I keep the dog leashed while I hunt there, because of the wolf presence. He gets leashed to a Tamarack while I'm there, and walks in and out on a leash. Keeps him alive."

(Photo Courtesy of Terry Lane)



## Energy Information Panels Installed in November



Mike Gross from Schmeckle Reserve explains some of the historical exhibit to visitors at the Open House.

(Photo Courtesy of Sue Hall)



Kent Hall observes Mike Gross from Schmeckle Reserve install the energy information panel in the building.

(Photo Courtesy of Sue Hall)

## More pictures from November (above) and the September Picnic (below) at the new Stanton W. Mead Education and Visitor Center

People attending the Open House enjoy the new Amphitheater September 10th.

(Photo Courtesy of Sue Hall)

Neighbors surrounding the Mead Wildlife Area were treated to a picnic September 10th.

(Photo Courtesy of Sue Hall)





## **New Signs at the Mead Wildlife Area**

**Photo's by Mead Staff**

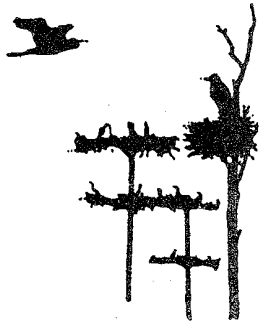
Mead staff and volunteers help install new signs at the Mead Wildlife Area this fall.

Left: Posts are leveled and concrete poured around them to hold them securely in place.

Below Left: Final anchors are installed to hold the new sign securely.

Bottom: Mike Gross and Brian Peters install new signage at near the front of the new Stanton W. Mead Education and Visitor Center.





**Friends of  
Mead/McMillan  
Association, Inc.  
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Mailing Address Label

Wetland's Gazette



**New Signage Going  
Up at the George  
W. Mead Wildlife  
Area**

(Photo Courtesy of Mead Staff)